



Dr. Eugenia Kurzynsky-Singer
Head of the Regional Unit

Eugenia Kurzynsky-Singer, born 1975 in Russia, studied law at the University of Hamburg (1996-2001). From 1998-2001 she was a research assistant for the Research Division on Eastern European Law (University of Hamburg, Faculty of Law). Her doctoral degree was awarded in 2004 in connection with her dissertation on "Anknüpfung und Reichweite des Vollmachtsstatuts", where agency in the conflict of laws was addressed. In 2004 she was a research associate at the Institute. At the close of 2006 she completed the second portion of the German state legal examination.

Eugenia Kurzynsky-Singer founded the Institute's Regional Unit for Russia and further CIS-nations and has been at its head since its inception in 2007. Her research interests lie in the area of civil law, particularly in respect of the countries of the post-Soviet legal realm. Special attention is dedicated to the transformation of the civil law regimes of these countries. Her post-doctoral project draws upon a general research focus of the Unit which she leads and undertakes an in-depth inquiry into a central institution of private and economic law. Specifically, her work examines the development and conceptualisation of private property under Russian law concurrent with Russia's transition from a planned economy to a market economy. The work aims to offer insight into the dynamics and legal principles driving the transformation of the legal system. German law will serve as a point of reference and comparison in the inquiry.

The **Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law** is dedicated to performing foundational research and promoting the transfer of knowledge in the fields of comparative and international private law and business law. By analysing the similarities and differences in Europe's legal regimes, the Institute studies the interaction of private rule-making, national legal systems, supranational law and interstate treaties. The research performed at the Institute also serves to lay the groundwork for an international understanding of law. This is an academic mission of considerable significance particularly within a united Europe and against the background of increasing globalisation and a corresponding internationalisation of law.

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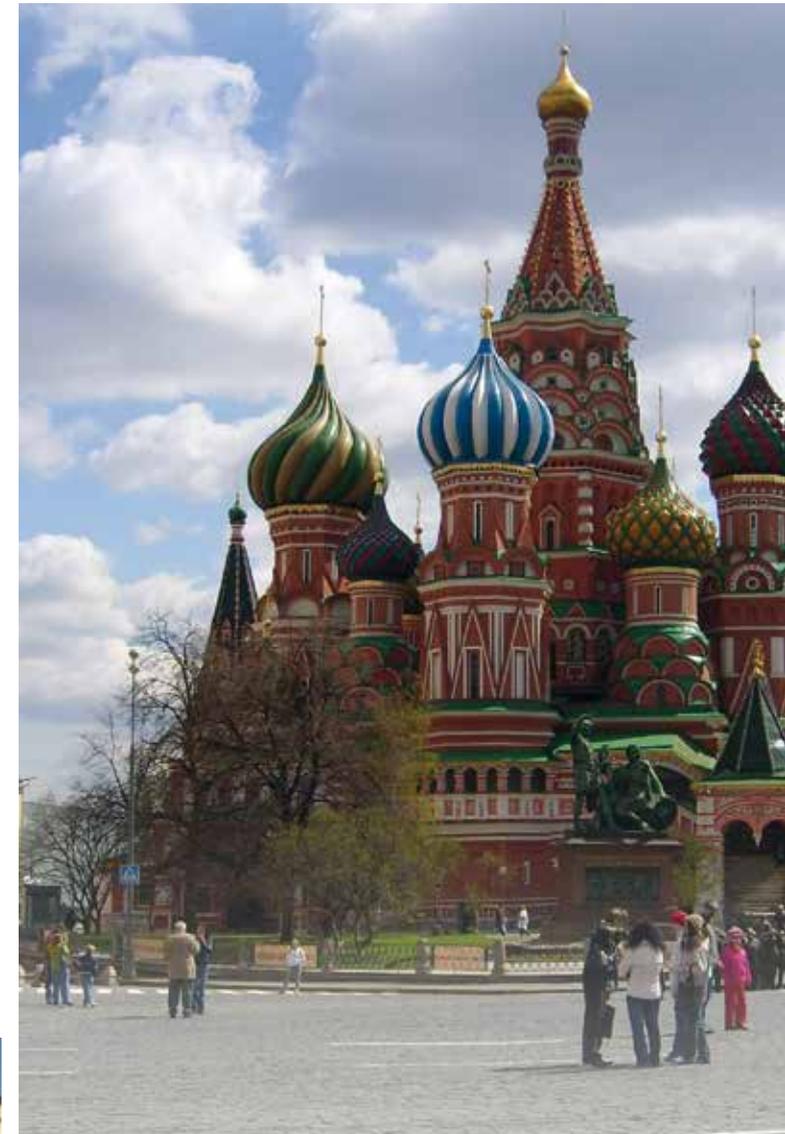
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Regional Unit for Russia and additional CIS Nations



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Regional Unit for Russia and additional CIS Nations

The Regional Unit on Russia of the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law focuses on the law in the countries which have emerged from the former Soviet Union. The civil law of Russia represents a particular point of emphasis. The Regional Unit addresses the process of transformation of the civil law regimes of these countries and is engaged in a legal dialogue with the nations of the post-Soviet realm. The Unit is headed by Dr. Eugenia Kurzynsky-Singer.

| Law in the Post-Soviet Realm

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in a redrawing of the geo-political map of Eastern Europe as well as of the regions of the Caucasus and Middle Asia. The countries which emerged from the former Soviet republics have subsequently developed national legal systems of their own which are oriented on the demands of the modern market economy. The notion that private law establishes the true legal framework of a civil society finds growing acceptance in these countries. The process of legal transformation, illustrated not only by the new civil law codifications but also by many other new statutes enacted in the successor states of the Soviet Union, has now advanced to the point where the new legal systems are ripe for comparative law analysis.

At the same time, the nations of the post-Soviet realm have demonstrated a distinct interest in the reception of European law, particularly German law. This interest can be explained by the fact that these countries never fully abandoned their affiliation to the continental European legal system during the era of socialism. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, Russia had in fact adopted European – and to a great degree German – civil law on a broad and significant scale, a historical development whose effects extend into the modern day civil law of Russia as well as the other nations of the post-Soviet realm.

| Research on the Civil and Economic Law of the Post-Soviet Countries

A recurring task of the Unit is to follow, analyse and draw attention to the legal developments underway in the focus countries, such developments occurring as part of a complicated and fluid process of economic, social and legal transformation. The advances being made in the various individual nations – the now independent former Soviet republics – often reveal themselves to be quite dissimilar and uneven. Special attention is to be paid to Russian civil law as its legal rules and institutions continue to strongly shape the region.

Legal developments are analysed in the context of the ongoing political, social and economic change. The quick switch in political systems and the associated alterations of the legal framework in the countries of the region lend themselves to unique insights into the operation of the law and its interplay with society. In particular, the reception of Western legal rules and principles (so-called *legal transplants*) represents an interesting topic for research.

| Legal Dialogues and International Cooperations

The Unit continually pursues opportunities to study compelling legal questions which arise in the individually targeted countries and to address important bilateral topics in cooperative projects with researchers and institutes located in the respective countries. These cooperations have proven to be ideal vehicles supporting bilateral research into specific problem areas. This approach has, particularly, allowed different perspectives on the examined legal systems to be joined together in a manner that greatly fosters new and valuable understandings. As research findings are compiled in both German and Russian, publication is possible not only in Germany but also in leading Russian legal journals. To a certain extent, through the help of cooperation partners research is translated also into the language of other focus countries, e.g. Georgian.

While reforming their legislation, the countries of the post-Soviet realm thoroughly consider worldwide legal experience and expertise. In addition to

contributing to the legal dialogue which ensues from these experiences, the Unit is active also through its participation in advisory projects undertaken in the context of international cooperations as well as through its own scholarly activities pursued in the framework of cooperations. The latter efforts are particularly diverse, including both academic presentations on German law made – sometimes in Russian – under the mantle of guest lectures and seminars at the universities and other academic institutions of the focused-upon region, and also publications in the legal journals of these same countries.

| Support of Junior Scholars

An additional important aspect of the Unit's work is formed by the supervision of scholarship recipients completing research stays at the Institute. In this vein, a post-doctoral scholarship programme for junior legal researchers from the Caucasus and Middle Asia was recently conducted under the sponsorship of the Volkswagen Foundation. Over the course of a nine-month stay at the Institute, the programme allowed participants to perform comparative research on a self-chosen topic relating to the civil or economic law of their home country. The scholarship recipients were intensively supervised in the completion of their research projects. Furthermore, they were able to participate in a seminar on German law which was conducted in Russian and was attended also by other Russian-speaking guests of the Institute. Alongside this particular post-doctoral scholarship programme, the Unit regularly supervises additional Institute guests hailing from Russia and other nations of the post-Soviet realm who have been awarded research scholarships funded by organisations such as the German Academic Exchange (DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Max Planck Society.

| Regular Discussion Forum "GUS-Runde" (CIS-Roundtable)

Since spring 2007 the Unit has organised a regular discussion forum on the legal, political and societal developments of the post-Soviet realm. The forum's goal is to foster an informal and voluntary exchange of ideas. The participants, comprising German and East-European jurists, report on their first-hand experiences in the CIS-nations.

