Prof Dr Marjan Peeters’ stay as a visiting professor at the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, 13-20 April 2018.

Upon invitation of the department of international law from The Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, Prof Dr Marjan Peeters attended the XVI Blischenko conference on Public international law, which this year was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In total, 589 participants from 48 states were at this Blischenko conference, during which Marjan held a plenary address on behalf of the Law School of Maastricht University. The conference provided 19 expert workshops, and during the expert workshop on International environmental law, Prof Peeters presented her paper *On silent objects and barking watchdogs: on the role and accountability of environmental non-governmental organisations*. This paper discusses the right to access environmental information, which is a potential powerful strategy for action groups that want to protect the environment, but also the freedom of speech – and its limits - that such organisations enjoy in view of the European Convention of Human Rights. In the same week, Prof Peeters delivered two lectures and two classes. Central themes were the Paris Agreement and the Aarhus Convention, two international environmental treaties to which the European Union is a party, while the Russian Federation is not. The lecture on the Aarhus Convention was put online for the Consortium of 9 Russian Universities situated in Moscow, Kazan, Voronezh, Perm and Ekaterinburg (see [http://humanrights.ru/en/main/64-cikl-lekciy-maryan-piters.html](http://humanrights.ru/en/main/64-cikl-lekciy-maryan-piters.html))
During the teaching events, the emphasis went to the implementation of these agreements within EU law, and the challenges that the EU in this respect faces. Prof Peeters became impressed by the international population of the (bachelor, master and PhD) students at the Peoples’ Friendship University, many coming from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, and the intense participation of these students during the teaching events. Moreover, many content-wise meetings with staff members of the International law department, including professor Aslan Abashidze (head of the department of international law, and elected member to the UN committee on Economic, Cultural and Social rights), Dr Alexander Soltsnev (international environmental law researcher), and Dr Aleksandra Koneva (international human rights researcher), were held, during which not only many issues of international environmental law and human rights were discussed, but also ideas for further cooperation were considered. Also meetings were held with the Director of the Law Institute, Dr Oleg Yastrebov (administrative law), and Marjan took part in a meeting with Vice-rector Nur Kirabaev (Dr in philosophy). Overall, the visit has brought many new and positive insights on how the Peoples’ Friendship University carries out its work and mission, with a specific emphasis on building an international community of well-educated students.

Finally, an interview was held, in which the experience with RUDN university is discussed. This is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSnsL7gczVI&sns=em