

Summary

International Research on the Implementation of the Russian Constitution

The current Constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted 15 years ago in a national referendum on 12 December 1993. A line was drawn under dramatic events associated with the constitutional reforms 1990-1993. The transition began from ideas about constitutionalism to the practice of implementing the Constitution. Positive and negative experiences have accumulated during this period connected with the way that the new Constitution actually «works». The task facing the expert community is to assess in an impartial and timely manner the potential and effectiveness of contemporary constitutional mechanisms and to examine the factors that have shaped the implementation of the Constitution's principles and stipulations.

That is what a group of leading Russian and foreign experts tried to do within the framework of independent scholarly research conducted under the auspices of the International Institute of Global Development (IIGD).¹ The outcome is a complex study of constitutional realities based on a wide range of expert opinions, estimates and forecasts regarding perspectives for the development of Russian constitutionalism in the context of developments in world politics.

The experts examined, above all, the following questions: the Constitution and the socio-cultural background of the society — reality and perspectives; the Constitution and the realization of citizens' rights; the Constitution and authoritative institutions (including the elections), where the central problem is the separation of powers, the practice of constitutional justice, and local government; the Constitution and civil society — the social and «economic» constitution; and certain specific problems, notably federalism and globalization.

The work reflects the thinking of a broad range of contemporary constitutional thought by specialists from Russia, Europe (Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain) and America (the United States and Canada). The Russian authors include some of those who took a direct part in the elaboration and development of the draft Constitution of the Russian Federation in 1990-1993. The views of a new generation of scholars are also presented.

¹ IIGD is a supranational social research institute. The president of IIGD is A.E. Lebedev, president of the National Investment Council; Chairman of the Board of Trustees is M.S. Gorbachev; Chairman of the International Scientific Council of IIGD is R.S. Grinberg, director of the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, associate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences; director of the IIGD program 'Development of rule-of law state and constitutional order' is O.G. Rumyantsev. The Foundation for Constitutional Reforms acts as the manager of the programme.