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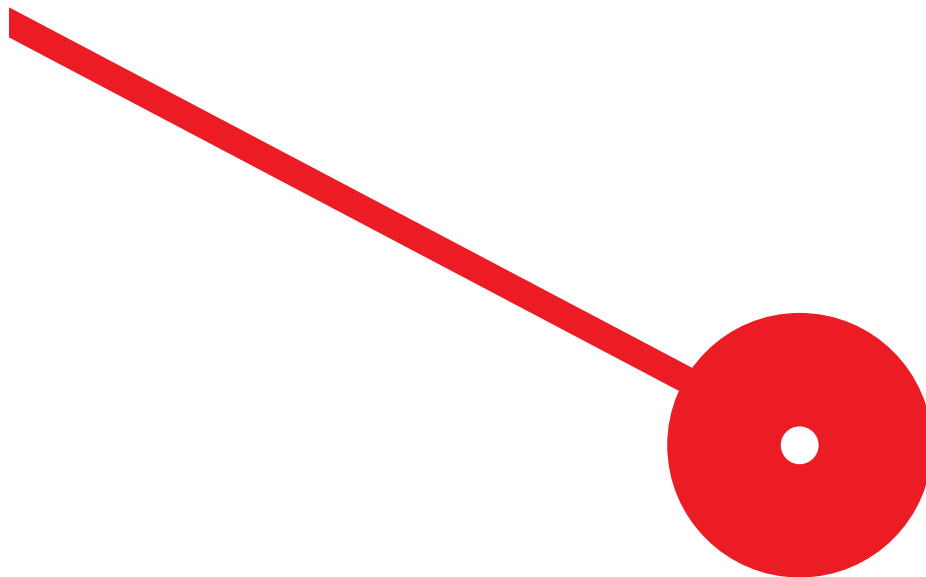
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# Working and Living in Russia: Small Guide to Intercultural Interaction

César José de Sousa Reis

2019/2020

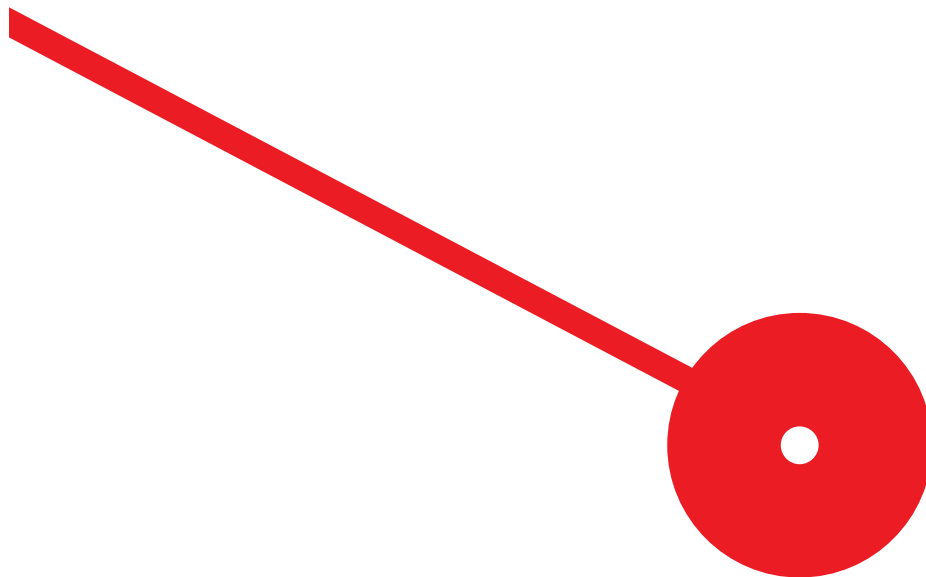




# Working and Living in Russia: Small Guide to Intercultural Interaction

César José de Sousa Reis

**Dissertação de Mestrado  
apresentado ao Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração  
do Porto para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Estudos  
Interculturais para Negócios, sob orientação de Doutora Maria  
Helena Guimarães Ustimenko**



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**Abstract:**

To address business global demands, multinationals are expanding abroad and so the expatriation process increases. Most of the times, workers are transferred to an international office to fulfil an overseas assignment and the company takes care of the whole relocation process. In addition, intercultural training is readied by the company so that the expatriate becomes culturally sensitive. However, in a globalisation-dominated world in which mobility and communication between companies and workers is so facilitated, the number of expatriates who venture on their own has also been increasing. While expatriation can occur in any country, the current dissertation focuses on expatriation to Russia, and addresses the perspective of the foreign investor wishing to invest in the Russian market, but mainly the self-initiated expat wishing to find a job in Russia. Without a company to back up, the self-initiated expat must plan and prepare all the relocation process by herself/himself. To support such a process, a booklet is provided with guidelines that serves as a starting line for expatriates looking to face the challenging and rewarding experience of living and working in Russia.

**Key words:** Expatriate, Russia, foreign investor, self-initiated expat.

## **Resumo:**

A crescente globalização dos mercados, tem feito com que as empresas, nomeadamente as multinacionais, se internacionalizem cada vez mais, o que tem levado a um aumento considerável do número de expatriados. Na maioria das vezes, os colaboradores são transferidos para um escritório internacional para cumprir uma missão no estrangeiro, encarregando-se a empresa de todo o processo de deslocamento. Além disso, uma formação intercultural é preparada pela empresa para que o expatriado se torne culturalmente mais sensível. No entanto, num mundo dominado pela globalização, em que a mobilidade e a comunicação entre empresas e trabalhadores estão tão facilitadas, o número de expatriados que se aventuram por iniciativa própria também tem vindo a aumentar. Embora a expatriação possa ocorrer para qualquer país, a presente tese foca-se na expatriação para a Rússia, abordada na perspetiva quer do investidor estrangeiro que deseja investir no mercado russo, quer principalmente do expatriado por iniciativa própria que procura encontrar um emprego na Rússia. Sem o apoio de uma empresa, o expatriado por iniciativa própria deve planear e preparar todo o processo de realocação sozinho. Para apoiar este processo, anexa-se um desdobrável com orientações para expatriados em busca da experiência desafiante e recompensadora de viver e trabalhar na Rússia.

**Palavras chave:** Expatriação, Rússia, investidor estrangeiro, expatriado por iniciativa própria.

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

### I. Acronyms

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

CCILR – Chamber of Commerce and Industry Luso-Russian

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CIS FTA – Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Agreement

EU – European Union

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HC – High Context

IVD – Individualism *vs.* Collectivism

IVR – Indulgence *vs.* Restraint

JSC – Joint-Stock Companies

LC – Low Context

LLC – Limited Liability Companies

LTO – Long-term Orientation *vs.* Short-term Orientation

MAS – Masculinity *vs.* Femininity

PDI – Power distance index

B&R – Belt and Road Initiative

SEZ – Special Economic Zone

SPIC – Special Investment Contract

UAI – Uncertainty avoidance index

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

USA – United States of America

ISCAP – Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto

MGU – Moscow State University

MGIMO – Moscow State Institute of International Relations

VET – Vocational education and training

## **II. Abbreviations**

Expat – Expatriate



## Background

The current dissertation, entitled “Working and Living in Russia: Small Guide to Intercultural Interaction”, addresses the need for a guide containing guidelines and tips for Portuguese people who are relocating in Russia. This need arises from the fact that expatriation is a phenomenon that has been widely witnessed for a long time.

Over the course of human evolution, migration has always been part of human behaviour. However, in the last decade, as a direct response to globalisation, migration has become unprecedentedly common. For different reasons and motivations, people are willing to leave part of their life behind in hope of finding “*Utopia*”.

A subset of migration that has become more relevant is sponsored expatriation or even self-initiated expatriation, which has given rise to an expatriate movement during the last decades. An expatriate (or expat for short), as defined by Castree, Kitchin & Rogers, are “professionals, skilled workers, or artists from affluent countries, often transferred by companies, rather than all immigrants in general” (2003, p. 143). However, it is not compulsory to have a company behind the whole relocation process to be an expat. Individuals who are aware that cultivating an international business experience can bring huge benefits for their career (cf. Shieh, 2014, p. 58) adventure on their own looking for a job opportunity abroad without the sponsor or support of a company. For them, unlike economic migrants or refugees, Malte Zeeck, founder and co-CEO of InterNations<sup>1</sup>, argues that “living abroad is rather a lifestyle choice than borne out of economic necessity or dire circumstances in their home country such as oppression or persecution, which is what differentiates them from refugees or economic migrants” (Alamy, 2016, para. 15).

In other words, expatriation can be 1) a business process in which an employee from a multinational company is sent to foreign offices to work (commonly as a manager, a team trainer, or a trainee); or 2) a self-initiative process in which an individual moves abroad for a limited time but considers returning, although their length of stay is still undecided (cf. *ibid.*, para. 17).

When sponsored by a company, employees go through intensive intercultural training in order to minimise unforeseen challenges and facilitate the planning and preparation arrangements by the expatriates. Moreover, the company takes care of all documentation

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<sup>1</sup> The largest global expat network with 4 million members present with communities in 420 cities worldwide.

needed on behalf of the employee as well as all logistics needs, such as ensuring a place for the employee to stay, as well as packing and shipping the employee's personal items. Ultimately, the company will do their best to provide the future expat the smoothest possible relocation and transition.

The same cannot be said for an expat who decides to move on their own. While anyone can go on a vacation abroad without facing any real challenges, expats who leave the country to live in a foreign one become completely immersed by a new culture and experience it like the locals do, which is when culture shock is experienced (cf. Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 384). If not well prepared, culture shock can result in confusion, frustration and, in some cases, an earlier, unpredicted return to the home country. Nevertheless, expatriates still go abroad for many factors. In addition, globalisation, the spread of transportation means, and communication technology have intensively facilitated intercultural interaction between companies/job applicants, resulting in an increasing international economic activity and mobility of human resources (cf. Scullion & Brewster, 2001, p. 346).

Preparing an expatriation experience without an organised expat programme by an employer is a long and complex process, particularly if the expat has no background in traveling and no knowledge in human resources to know where to look for a job, which is why a guide with fundamental tips and guidelines is useful and necessary.

### **Factors of influence and motivation for this topic**

An interest for foreign languages and cultures was developed by the author ever since the high school years. Not only did the author want to know more about these topics, but he also wanted to interact with foreigners and understand their cultural background. As the interest for the unknown, foreign environment grew, a taste for traveling and exploring was also acquired because such practices provided a conducive context to learn about other cultures first-hand.

During the author's second year of the Business Communication degree at ISCAP, an ERAMUS+ opportunity came forward. Upon learning about this opportunity, the author decided to take part since it would provide a good opportunity to broaden his horizons interculturally-wise. Since German and Russian as foreign languages were part of the

author's course curricula, the countries where these languages are spoken were the priority destinations. However, since Russia is not part of the European Union, Germany became the destination the author would apply to. After receiving a positive feedback, the trip started to be planned. In addition, cultural research about Germany was made so as to have an advantage when navigating through the German culture and its people. Since the international experience was going to take place in another fellow European country, the process was relatively easy, as far as bureaucracy is concerned. Although, parting with friends and family was not easy, communication technology and the spread of transportation worldwide, have made it simpler to contact familiar faces.

This experience allowed the author to become friends and acquainted with other students from Germany, as well as other international students from China, Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Syria, Spain and Taiwan, among others. As the exchange of cultural information about each other's native countries started to happen, the interest about culture in general was reinforced even more. So much so that in order to immerse in the German culture as much as possible, even though the author planned to stay in Germany only one semester, an extension of the programme was proposed and accepted by the author. Hence, the international experience ended up lasting one academic year instead. Such opportunity allowed to even find a part-time job at an ice-cream shop. Such lifestyle made the author wonder if that was what it feels like to be an expat who leaves her/his country to work abroad.

While taking part in a Master's degree, more specifically during the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, another opportunity to participate in an international exchange programme was disseminated. This time, given the available destination possibilities comprised mostly of South American countries, Brazil was selected. Bureaucracy processes were very complex and endless. Nevertheless, it turned out a fruitful experience.

As of November 2018, the author has been working at an International Project's Office, in the VET School of Espinho, in which ERASMUS+ European Projects are managed and developed, constantly providing an international environment and contact. More recently, the author has coordinated School Exchange Partnerships (KA229), which are constituted by a consortium of European countries that provide opportunities for students to get to know other cultures and reinforce networks by participating in mobilities overseas.

Hence, in the current dissertation the development/creation of a “small guide” is proposed with the aim to be turned into a tool that can support self-initiated expats who are considering working and living in Russia without the help of a company. Additionally, it is viable/possible that, in the future, an involvement with Russian partners at work can lead to students’ mobilities to Russia. Considering this scenario, planning, and gathering all the relevant information ahead would turn out useful.

## **Research and development**

Given that the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate why Russia provides satisfactory conditions and benefits for an expat and to write an informative booklet with guidelines for an effective relocation to Russia, the research methodology chosen to achieve it is analytical in nature and can be divided into three stages:

Firstly, an intensive research in online libraries and book selling websites was made. Its purpose was to find out how abundant guides regarding practical guidelines on relocating to Russia were. During the research, it became clear that there is no official booklet focused on the expatriation process to Russia. Even though there are many books whose central theme is the cultural aspects of Russia, these are mainly addressed to tourists, thus not describing the procedures behind becoming an expat in Russia. Literature on expatriation is available, however, it concerns the process of migration in general, rather than a specific relocation to Russia. Similarly, there are numerous websites containing information about expatriation processes, but no single website offers all the information at once, in a concise way. This fact comes to highlight the need for a comprehensive, timesaving guide.

Secondly, after the initial research was completed, the core research was addressed. For this task, literature from the author’s MA degree was analysed, as well as literature available in *Research Gate*<sup>2</sup> – an online social network engine for professionals and scientists composed of hundreds of up-to-date publications and papers in the field of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.researchgate.net/>



international business and other areas – and from the site *Scribd.com*, the world's largest digital library.

Thirdly, a synthesized list of topics to be covered in the guide was put together. The aim was to make guidelines that could give an overview on the process behind expatriation to Russia in a clear manner. As a result, a “step-by-step” format was adopted and implemented in the guide. After possible layouts of the guide were sketched, different digital software was explored (namely Office Publisher and Canva). Finally, Office Publisher was selected because it fits better with what the author had in mind.

Once the analysis was done and the information gathered was organised, the current dissertation was structured in five main chapters:

In the first Chapter addresses the importance of intercultural communication in business. Without intercultural competences, one is likely to fail during an overseas relocation, hence the importance of covering this matter.

The second Chapter is dedicated to understanding the business culture of Russia. As in any expatriate experience, it is important to be culturally sensitive according to the destination country. Consequently, a study is conducted to better understand what the prevailing business culture in Russia is, as well as how it developed after the collapse of the USSR. Moreover, the Russian national character, which has the power to influence business ideologies, is examined.

In order to give an overview of how Russia can serve as a potential destination for self-initiated expats and/or investors, the third Chapter is devoted to the current economic development of Russia. Herein, the geopolitical power and influence of Russia across the world is examined, as well as the business climate for foreign investors.

The fourth Chapter deals with Russia as one of the main immigrant destinations. It contains a research on the current expat situation with an analysis of the different factors that influence an expatriate experience. Furthermore, it covers various aspects that a foreigner deals with when moving abroad to Russia specifically, and lists various opportunities and challenges that they might face.

Finally, the fifth Chapter deals specifically with the information contained in the guide. Ten topics are listed in a chronological order so as to support an expat before, during and after the relocation experience, thereby improving the probability of a smoother

relocation to Russia. The information covered in the fifth chapter was put into a booklet-like format that is attached to the current dissertation in the appendices section.

**CHAPTER I – [THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL  
COMMUNICATION]**

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# **1 The importance of business communication**

For a company to be successful, an effective communication strategy must be adopted. Not only does it foster good management, but it also has deep effects on productivity and on employees' motivation. As stated by Tucker, Meyer and Westerman, an effective business communication is required for a company to maintain and have a competitive advantage over other companies (cf. 1996, p. 59). According to Nwabueze and Mileski, competitive advantage is "the ability of one organisation to outperform others because it produces desired goods or services more efficiently and effectively than its competitors" (2018, p. 52). In other words, for a company to grow successfully in the business market, an effective business communication is required. However, there are further factors that influence the outcome of a business.

Companies with big ambitions always strive to increase their revenue potential. One of the most common ways companies adopt to achieve such a feat is by finding new customers. To do so, companies try to sell their services in new markets, which can sometimes mean that the companies must operate in different locations, therefore investing in business expansion. Although adjusting to a different location in the domestic market might bring forward less difficulties, it is the international market that enjoys the largest customer base. In addition, economic globalisation has made it easier for companies to expand across international borders (cf. Yoder, Visich & Rustambekov, 2016, p. 234), and so the global trend for international mobility increases as smaller and medium-sized companies expand abroad (cf. Finaccord, 2017). Consequently, business communication is no longer confined internally within a company anymore but is rather required internationally. In a business world in which the international trades and services are more demanded than ever, in order to improve the success of negotiations, it is fundamental to understand how to navigate through different cultures by making use of an effective intercultural communication (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 384).

## **1.1 Intercultural communication in business**

International communication suggests contact between two or more different cultures. Intercultural communication, also known as cross-cultural communication, is, therefore, communication across cultures. In other words, it is the ability to communicate verbally

and non-verbally appropriately with people from other cultures while avoiding misunderstanding/conflicts. Byram, Gribkova & Starkey go as far as to define intercultural communication as the type of “communication on the basis of respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction” (2002, p. 9). Considering such an approach, it can be said that the successful interaction with someone from a different culture requires not only respect for that person’s background, but also tolerance to accept cultural differences (cf. Jandt, 2013, p. 35). As a result, it becomes relevant to acquire such competences because individuals carry with them a set of background patterns that influence how they think, feel and act in different contexts. These patterns are shaped so early in life – within the culture each individual is raised – that they become the basis of an individual’s conscious manifestations (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 384). Hence, it is not surprising that conflicts can easily occur when people from different cultures try to interact with one another. That is, when at least two social entities - be it individuals, groups, organisations, societies, etc. – with distinctive cultural-based expectations come to a disagreement on how to reach a certain goal (cf. Rahim, 2016, p. 18). Such phenomenon is called culture shock and is present in every new cultural environment (cf. Hofstede, 2010, p. 387).

The same premise is applied in business context. Namely, in an organisation formed with employees with different cultural values and beliefs, conflicts can occur any time, as a result of miscommunication or misunderstandings. This scenario becomes even more likely to happen when an organisation tries to negotiate with a foreign partner, since cultural differences and different business working methods become more distinctively relevant (cf. Kei & Yazdanifard, 2015, p. 8). One of the most common obstacles faced by multinational companies when doing cross-cultural business is the lack of ability to recognise cultural differences and similarities (cf. Liu, Volcic & Gallois, 2015, p. 66). For this reason, companies invest in the development of intercultural communication competences of their staff who are going to do overseas assignments.

## **1.2 Development of intercultural competences**

Intercultural communication, which is formed by different competences, is a skill that can be taught (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 420). Even though there are different approaches, cross-cultural training is one of the most popular and effective ways companies adopt in

order to teach their staff intercultural competences. The goal of cross-cultural training is to provide an individual with the ability to cope with a different culture and perform well in a new cultural environment, as well as to raise an individual's cultural awareness towards another (foreign) culture(s) (cf. Fischer, 2011, p. 768). Consequently, it becomes of extreme importance to develop intercultural competences before moving overseas.

Cross-cultural training encompasses different aspects. Golousova<sup>3</sup> proposes three intercultural competences that should be learned in order to successfully get along with people from foreign cultures (cf. 2017, p. 34):

### **1) Linguistic competences**

The first competence refers to the verbal capacity that derives from unconscious grammar knowledge that will allow an individual to speak and understand (by listening to) a different language (cf. Nordquist, 2020). An individual who learns basic expressions in a foreign language can only communicate to a certain extent. This way, she/he will still face obstacles when communicating with natives not only due to language differences, but also because of ignorance of idiomatic and technical expressions (cf. Golousova, 2017, p. 34). Depending on the needs and degree of involvement in the foreign environment, it is necessary to enrich speech skills and vocabulary, especially those related to the business sector-vocabulary.

### **2) Communicative competences**

The principle of the second competence is that in order to establish an effective communication one needs to be able to apply grammatical rules correctly (i.e. to master linguistic competence) and know the rules for appropriate use in social contexts. In other words, one needs to know “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, and in what matter” (Hymes, 1972, p. 277). Although the sentence “Give me a glass of water!” is grammatically correct, it would sound as a rude, inappropriate request in different situations. As a consequence, communicative competences encompass verbal elements (vocabulary, grammar, sentences, phrases) and non-verbal elements (body language, behaviour patterns, communication style).

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<sup>3</sup>In Russian: Голуцова.

### 3) Cultural competences

The premise of the third competence is that to participate fluently in a foreign culture, a degree of cultural literacy is needed. According to Golousova, an individual who is cultural literate is someone who can understand the written language and alphabet of a foreign culture. In addition, it presupposes that the individual has knowledge on the country's history, idiomatic expressions, etiquettes, as well as its business culture and vocabulary used in different environments (cf. 2017, p. 35). Thus, cultural competence becomes particularly important when dealing with high-context cultures (described in the subchapter 2.2), since communication has less encoded information orally and more encoded information contextually because it relies on the receiver's prior knowledge (cf. Hall, 1976, p. 91).

The methodology used to develop intercultural competences in cross-cultural training involves language courses and a cultural approach on how business is conducted in the country of destination. By developing intercultural communication skills, a person's mindset will shift from that of a monocultural to a multicultural one (cf. Jandt, 2013, p. 35). This mindset will promote an effective exchange of information between people of different cultural backgrounds, resulting in a higher chance of having more success in business. To have knowledge on the culture of the destination country is of extreme significance because without it there may be an intercultural misunderstanding (cf. Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2015, p. 22) which will, inevitably, lead to intercultural barriers and conflicts.

#### 1.3 Barriers to effective intercultural communication

The way people communicate is largely affected by their own culture. Different cultures give different meanings to words, to body language and to behaviours. In *Culture's Consequence* (1980), Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede (1928 – 2020) demonstrates that although individuals have similar cultural patterns at local and regional levels, they differ internationally. Due to this cultural diversity, intercultural conflict in communication is susceptible to happen and can be traced to different barriers in communication. Barna (1997) outlined six ingredients that can potentially generate conflict when communicating interculturally: assumption of similarities, language differences, nonverbal

misinterpretations, preconceptions and stereotypes, tendency to evaluate and high anxiety.

### **1. Assumption of similarities**

When people interact with someone from a culture which they have no information about, especially when the language is the same, they tend to assume that people think alike and have the same behaviours as them (cf. Jandt, 2013, p. 82). However, this assumption is a conducive behaviour to a conflict situation. Just because an individual meets someone across the globe who speaks the same language, it is wrong to assume that both share the same traditions, beliefs, religion, etc. A good example that can illustrate a conflict caused by assumption of similarities is the designations given to each floor of a building in different countries: while in the USA the entrance floor of a building is called the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, in Britain it is called “ground floor”. Hence, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in Britain is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the USA. Without this cultural sensitivity, when an American and British businessman agree to meet at an office that happens to be located “at the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of a building”, they might end up waiting for each other on different floors.

### **2. Language differences**

An obvious barrier that can easily lead to conflict is the language differences between cultures. This barrier not only accounts for the difficulties in finding an equivalent translation of an expression, an idea, a concept into another language, but it also deals with being unaware that a word or phrase can convey a different meaning depending on the context. This is often seen when slang or idiomatic expressions, which do not correspond to their literal meaning, are used. For instance, in Russia, if someone says «да нет» (yes, no), it means “yes”. However, for a foreigner fluent in Russian, it may be misinterpreting. The same is true, for example, for the word «ЛИМОН» (lemon), which under certain circumstances can mean 1 million rubles.

### **3. Nonverbal Misinterpretations**

Different cultures have different ways of exchanging messages. Messages are communicated not only through words but also through body language (such as



gestures and facial expressions) that can convey different meanings from culture to culture. In order to show politeness and respect, it is normal in Japan to express positivity with a smile – even if it is a fake one (cf. Nishiyama, 2000, p. 23). Because of their politeness, they generally do not say “no” in a straightforward way, but rather just go along with a conversation avoiding direct negative answers. As a consequence, in business context, a Westerner might be led into the wrong conclusion while trying to make a deal with a Japanese company. Another example is the “beckoning” hand gesture: while in European and American cultures it is oftentimes used as a way to call someone over as in “come here”, in some Asian cultures it is a rude gesture since it is usually used to beckon dogs. In the Philippines, it is so offensive it can lead to arrest.

#### **4. Preconceptions and stereotypes**

Barna states that culture aims to “lay out a predictable world in which the individual is firmly orientated” (1997, p. 341). With this premise in mind, preconceptions and stereotypes end up, unavoidably, being created. This means that in order to try to explain and predict the behaviours in unfamiliar or unknown cultures or races, individuals construct overgeneralised beliefs and perceptions to feel more comfortable and reduce anxiety when facing them. Although these beliefs enable individuals to rapidly respond to unfamiliar situations, they are based on certain members of a group and then applied to the entire group or nation, which is wrong because an individual’s interest or personality cannot be accountable or representative of a whole group. This is the reason why stereotypes are not accurate nor always fit the circumstance (cf. *ibid.*, p. 341). For oneself, it is understandable to enjoy watching football games but not being good at playing. Or to prefer both classical and rock and roll music. However, when individuals refer to groups from a different culture, they have a harder time understanding this complexity, so they put them in categories and create stereotypes. Stereotypes can be negative (implying a certain group is lazy, poor, criminal, etc.) or positive (implying a certain group is athletic, good at maths, etc.), but nonetheless they are harmful to communication because they ignore differences between individuals (cf. Jandt, 2013, p. 89).

## 5. Tendency to evaluate

According to Giddens, ethnocentrism is the understanding of the ideas or practices of other societies through the prism of our own culture. Ethnocentric perspectives fail to understand the true qualities of other cultures. An ethnocentric individual is unable to look at other cultures in their own terms or does not want to (cf. 2004, p. 691). That is, every person thinks their own culture or way of doing things is the right way, therefore if any other person or group is doing things differently, they will be judged negatively (cf. Jandt., 2013, p. 83). In wealthier societies, people became “pickier” on what to eat. As a result, when they see that someone is eating something else, they may feel disgusted. For instance, insects have been part of Asian menus for a long time, however some cultures would find it repugnant to eat them. From an Asian perspective, though, insects are a good source of protein. Another example of ethnocentrism is the one described by Ocampo & Zhou about a Vietnamese American boy who was teased for eating with chopsticks rather than eating with forks and knives, which was the “right way” of eating according to American standards (cf. 2016, p. 475). Negative myths (commonly known as “black myths”) also contribute to ethnocentrism and can be witnessed in Russia as well. According to Vladimir Medinsky<sup>4</sup>, some of these so-called “black myths” about Russia appeared five centuries ago. In his opinion, they are based on a significant ignorance of the country, and their origin is often political. (cf. 2008, pp. 16-20). At present, the situation has not changed much. The images shown in [Annex 1](#) are its visual expression.

The history of the world bears many examples of extreme ethnocentrism, mostly related with politics, religion, and ethnicity, which have led to war conflicts. In everyday life, the best way to counter this is to be open to different cultures and try to understand their origins rather than judge them. An individual who is often exposed to different cultures will develop the ability to see things from another perspective, according to a foreigner’s own cultural standards (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 387).

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<sup>4</sup> In Russian: Владимир Мединский

## **6. High anxiety**

When individuals face an unfamiliar or ambiguous situation, they tend to get tense and nervous (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 189). Such feelings become very relevant when an individual faces an intercultural encounter and is not well enough informed about it, consequently not knowing what is expected to do (cf. Jandt, 2013, p. 82). These feelings influence an individual's communication because, due to anxiety and tension, messages become less clear and natural. For instance, an individual who goes to a foreign speaking country and is not confident in her/his language skills is very likely to feel anxious and tense at some point during her/his visit. When an individual becomes anxious, she/he becomes defensive, which creates an environment susceptible to the other listed barriers (cf. Barna, 1997, p. 343).

By being aware of these elementary blocks that pave the way to intercultural conflict, one can mitigate or even avoid conflict situations when going for a relocation experience.

A tool that can give further insight on how greatly these six blocks can differ from culture to culture – and better understand how cultural values have effect in society and in business context – are the six dimensions of national culture which are analysed in the subchapter 2.1.

## **CHAPTER II – [UNDERSTANDING RUSSIA: BUSINESS CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR]**

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## **2. Business and interpersonal values**

Russian business style and communicative behaviours are values embedded in the Russian culture that were shaped throughout the history of the country. Yet, it was a consequence of the heritage and impact left by the Soviet Union, along with Western influences and the Russian national character, that actively moulded the current Russian business concepts as they are in modern days (cf. Wilson & Donaldson, 1996, p. 3).

During the Soviet Union (1922-1991), Russia and neighbouring territories were governed by the Communist Party which kept them united in what was known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Although lifelong employment was granted, decisions were made from the top-down and initiative and criticism were unwelcome, leaving Russians to expect a decisive and fearsome superior who takes the lead (cf. Wilson & Donaldson, 1996, p. 63). In a period in which the government considered a dangerous idea to connect with the Western world, almost every product was produced within the communist states (cf. Ember & Ember, 2001, p. 1857). As a result, every economic aspect was controlled by the state and there were no external influences (cf. Golousova, 2017, p. 45). However, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the following creation of a market economy, a window to join the global economy was opened and markets started to do business with foreigners. Moreover, democratic reforms were introduced, and Russia aimed at the development of political, economic, and cultural cooperation with other countries (cf. Basco<sup>5</sup>, 2010, p. 9).

Through ongoing political, economic and cultural periods of transition in the country, the Russian business sector has been developing rapidly and so its business style has been adapting, always with the national character – which has a serious impact on decision-making processes – in mind (cf. Golousova, 2017, p. 48).

### **2.1 Hofstede's cultural dimension model**

Based on different research (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Hofstede et al., 2010), Hofstede's cultural dimension theory was formed<sup>6</sup>. It is represented by six

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<sup>5</sup> In Russian: Баско

<sup>6</sup> Based on the famous research at IBM (1967 – 1973), Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede first identified four dimensions of national cultures: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity; Independent research from Canadian social psychologist Michael Harris Bond,

different dimensions which convey the information on how individuals from different countries perceive and understand the world as a nation, and is scored between 0 and 100:

1. Power distance index (“PDI”) – defines how much the unequal distribution of power is expected and accepted by the members of a society.
2. Individualism *vs.* Collectivism (“IVD”) – denotes the degree to which an individual feels integrated in a group (“I-consciousness” *vs.* “we-consciousness”).
3. Masculinity *vs.* Femininity (“MAS”) – refers to the extent to which dominant values are masculine (e.g. competition, wealth) or feminine (quality of life, consensus).
4. Uncertainty avoidance index (“UAI”) – is the anxiety of a society towards an unknown future.
5. Long-term Orientation *vs.* Short-term Orientation (“LTO”) – relates to if the outcome of a challenge is addressed with a focus in the present or in the future.
6. Indulgence *vs.* Restraint (“IVR”) – is connected to the degree of gratification *vs.* control for basic human needs and desires to enjoy life.

Hofstede’s cultural framework constitutes a comprehensive and practical guide that serves its purpose, which is to analyse several aspects that culture is shaped by. While the cultural dimensional model does not provide sufficient data to describe cross-cultural differences between countries, it is nevertheless a tool that helps to understand business cultures.

### **2.1.1 Russia through Hofstede’s dimension model**

Hofstede et al. (2010) research provided data that enabled to study 6 different cultural dimensions that can be represented graphically using the “6-D model tool”<sup>7</sup>. It is relevant to say, though, that the scores do not represent individuals, but the country as a whole. In figure 1, using the 6-D model tool, the scores from Russia are shown.

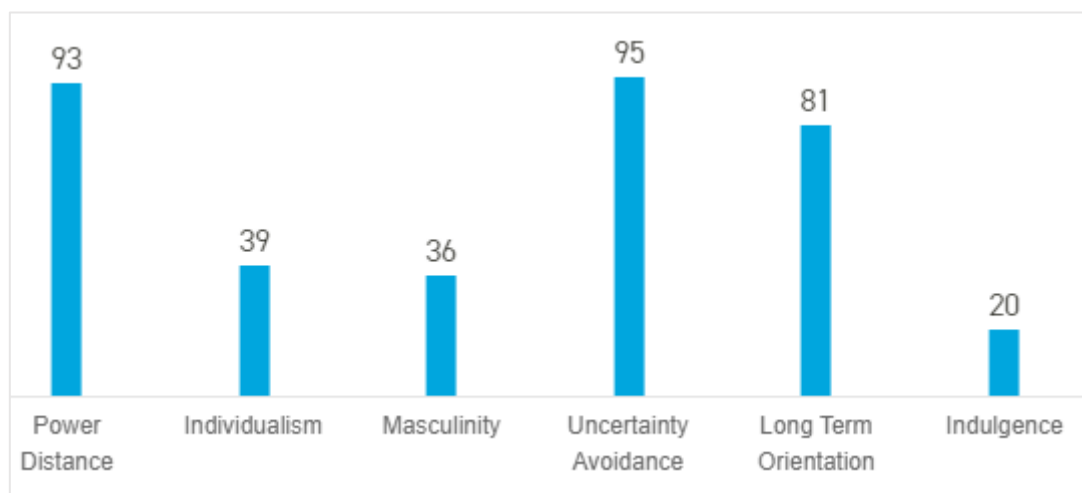
Russia has a very high PDI dimension. With a score of 93, Russia is a country that believes that a hierarchy is part of society and should be respected, and that the difference

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in 1988, led to the addition of a new, 5th dimension: Long-term *vs.* Short-term orientation. Later, yet in a different research by Bulgarian scholar Michael Minkov, in 2007, a 6th dimension was added: Indulgence *vs.* Restraint.

<sup>7</sup> Available online at [Hofstede Insights](https://www.hofstede.com/).

in power between people is acceptable. In business, this reasoning is also applied, therefore the relationship between leader – subordinate is expected and acceptable. Influenced by cultural and historical background, in Russia, a strong leader is viewed as someone with wisdom, knowledge and assertive on her/his decisions (cf. Chudnovskaya & O’Hara, 2016, p. 6). The famous proverb “I’m the boss, you’re a fool – You’re the boss, I’m the fool”<sup>8</sup> illustrates Russian traditional thinking for a strong leader who takes on the responsibilities and makes the decisions (cf. Volskaya<sup>9</sup>, 2001, p. 12). Consequently, it is expected in a company that the leader/manager controls the workflow from every subordinate of her/his department; a different behaviour could mean that the subordinate is not important to the company.



**Figure 1 – Dimensions of national culture: Russia.**  
(Source: Hofstede Insights)

Russia scores a value of 39 in the second dimension, IDV. Countries with low IDV are characterised by having members who consider themselves as a part of a bigger group and who approach situations with the group’s goal in mind (“we-consciousness”), rather than making a decision considering her/his own interests (“I-consciousness”) over those of the group. For instance, a traditional Russian family unites several generations living together (grandparents, father and mother, children, grandchildren) who look after one another (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p. 7). In business context, a collectivist trait explains why a company’s success is generally attributed to the company’s teamwork rather than its leader only (cf. Sergeeva, 2006, p. 297). Moreover, it suggests that Russians are more attached to the company and colleagues and prefer to do business with people whom they

<sup>8</sup> In Russian: Я начальник – ты дурак, ты начальник – я дурак; Transliteration: Ya nachal’nik – ty durak, ty nachal’nik – ya durak

<sup>9</sup> In Russian: Вольская.

have earned their trust, thereby explaining why Russians are more focused on people than on business and profit (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 90; Sergeeva, 2006, p. 298). As Wilson & Donaldson put it, “the concepts of independence and self-reliance are unfamiliar to most Russians and a possible cause of frustrations for Westerners” (1996, p. 70).

The third dimension, MAS, shows how a society perceives and sets priorities in life. With a score of only 36, Russia shows signs of a feminine culture, which means its members value relationships, quality of life and harmony, whereas in a masculine society its members are driven by competition, by an interest to be the best and by wealth (cf. Keith, 2013, p. 1). In business context, competition or standing out from colleagues of the same team, is seen as destabilizing, and therefore is not welcome (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p. 12). A balance between family and work is what a feminine culture aspires, as opposed to masculine societies in which work prevails over family (cf. Hofstede, 2011, p. 12).

Amongst all scores, Russia presents the highest, with a score of 95, in the fourth cultural dimension – UAI. A possible explanation for such a high score might be the influence from the social, political, and economic turmoil Russia faced after the dissolution of the USSR and its unpredictable impact in its recovery in the following years. Consequently, Russia invests significant resources into planning and defining clear goals as an attempt to create mechanisms to cope with the unexpected and have a sense of stability (cf. Fey & Shekshnia, 2011, p. 57). In the workplace, societies with a strong uncertainty avoidance index tend to have more regulation and written rules to control the rights and duties of employees (cf. Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 209). Ultimately, this will lead to clearer goals and will keep employees more relaxed (cf. Fey, 2005, p. 354).

Russia also scores high in the LTO dimension, with a value of 81. Essentially, this means that Russian society is persistent and pragmatic in its approach to solving the problem, although a far-sighted methodology is preferable for solving it. Similar to a chess game, when negotiating with Russians, they plan several moves ahead (cf. Richmond, 2003, p. 153) As a result, and in accordance with Hofstede et al. (2010) research, in societies with high LTO, from a young age, “children are taught thrift, delayed gratification, humility, and perseverance” (Mootz, 2013, p. 1). For instance, since people are taught to use money carefully and not wastefully, large family expenditures are planned wisely in the family (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p.9). In the workplace, and in society in general, such orientation is reflected in a strong propensity to save and invest, as well as in perseverance and patience when waiting for results.



In the sixth and last dimension, IVR, Russia has a low score (20), which suggests it is a restrained society. In such societies, its members give lower importance to leisure time, and tend to control their desires because they are held back by social norms. For instance, in a country whose indulgence scores are high, it is normal to show gratitude or happiness through a smile. In a restrained country, such as Russia, smiling at a stranger is viewed as unnatural because it is normal to keep a serious face. (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p. 10). It works likewise in the workplace, especially when dealing with customer service. When McDonald's was first operated in Russia and Russian employees were trained to show a (forced) smile when doing front-desk customer service, the customers found it very awkward, to the point of asking why were the employees smiling at them (cf. Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 294).

## **2.2 Russian communicative behaviour**

In *Beyond Culture* (1976), American anthropologist and author Edward T. Hall (1914 – 2009), developed a theory of context which proposed to explain cultural differences in language use. In his theory, Hall (1976) introduces the low- and high-context continuum concept, a spectrum with two ends. Whereas on one end of the continuum lies the high-context culture, identified with indirectness, on the opposite end lies the low-context culture, identified with directness:

A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite, i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code (Hall, 1976, p. 91).

Hall then adds that although no culture is 100% HC or LC, they can be positioned towards one of the ends of the continuum. In the case of Russia, different studies have concluded that Russia's communicative behaviour tends to be of a HC culture (cf. Sternina & Sternin, 2003; Sokolskaya, 2015; Piroșcă, 2016). In a HC culture, the communication style used by its members is implicit, i.e., not much is verbalised. Information is, in contrast, connotative and the body language plays a big role (cf. Bai, 2016, p. 2). In written communication, uncited references are very common, as well. In her paper, Sokolskaya analyses various examples in literature, newspapers, and magazines, as well

as in recipes and manuals that show that implicit communication is part of Russian's communicative behaviour (cf. 2015, pp. 2-3). Such type of communication is common in collectivist cultures (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 113), such as Russia's, as discussed above. As Ember & Ember state, "Everyday conversation is filled with metaphors" (2001, p. 1853) in which the speaker expects the receiver to understand the hidden meaning behind the message without having to be specific because there is a "highly complex view of shared cultural identity" (ibid.) between the speaker and the receiver that will enable the decoding of the message. As Hall puts it, to be specific would be an "insult and a violation of his (the receiver's) individuality" (1976, p. 113), because it would mean that the receiver is only able to follow a conversation/context if a detailed communication is made.

## **2.3 Russian high-culture behaviour in typical situations**

### **2.3.1 Attitude towards face-to-face communication**

Communication with people is a very important aspect in everyday Russians' lives. Russians are fond of face-to-face conversations and are very sociable. In a conversation with Russians, any topic is welcome to be discussed: personal achievements, talents of own's children, professional concerns and even politics and philosophy (cf. Sergeeva, 2006, p. 291). Even between strangers, conversations can easily start, anywhere, without any ritual (cf. Richmond, 2003, p. 140). For instance, in public transportation, it is a common thing to see strangers talking to each other (asking for the correct exit, for the best route, etc.) (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p. 43). Even though the degree of formality when addressing an individual changes depending on the bond between interlocutors, Russians are easily drawn to chatting and do not hesitate to start a conversation with anyone. In a contrastive study between Russian and American communicative behaviour, Sternina & Sternin stated that "a Russian may start a conversation with both an acquaintance and a stranger irrespective of the fact whether the person is free" (2003, p. 17), hence reflecting not only HC culture traits, but also the collectivist values of the society.

One cultural aspect that is susceptible to contribute to the fact that Russians are communicative in nature and will easily interact with people is the reduced interpersonal space when compared to Westerners (cf. Pavlovshaya, 2011, p. 247; Richmond, 2003, p. 142). A study that aimed at gathering the preferred interpersonal distance in 42 different

countries revealed that Russia is one of the countries where the interpersonal distance is the smallest (cf. Sorokowska et al., 2017), which explains why Russians will stand very close to each other when communicating (cf. Richmond, 2003, p. 142). Being close to each other reveals yet another typical Russian behaviour characteristic, which is to create physical contact between interlocutors (e.g. patting on the shoulder, touch on the arm). This behaviour aims at producing a comfortable atmosphere in a conversation with an acquaintance or friend. (cf. Pavlovshaya, 2011, p. 247). In addition, Russians are very sincere and emotional, so the manifestation of facial expressions and gestures that represent their true feelings are oftentimes shown when talking (cf. Sternina & Sternin, 2003, p. 18), further attesting Russian's HC culture.

### **2.3.2 Friends and relationships**

High-context cultures are characterised for privileging strong bonds and long-term relationships (cf. Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 113). Such characterisation can be said of the Russians, who view friendship with high regards (cf. Pavlovshaya, 2011, p. 119). As the Russian proverb goes “It's better to have one hundred friends than to have one hundred rubles”<sup>10</sup>. Such behaviour can be explained by the fact that Russians consider a friend as someone who they can trust, rely on, and help solving personal problems (cf. Wilson & Donaldson, 1996, p. 70). A survey conducted by Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM), in 2018, showed that psychologists are not very popular in Russia because when Russians have problems they turn to family and friends instead. From many personal and professional visits to Russia, intercultural communication specialist Richmond observed that “friends and familiar faces are the key to getting things done in Russia, and foreigners who cultivate close relationships will have a big advantage in doing business with Russians” (2003, p. 113), which describes another feature of a collectivist society.

However, it is to be noted that, from a Russian perspective, there is a distinctive difference between a “friend” and an “acquaintance”: a friendship takes time to develop and is not to be taken lightly. Nevertheless, when Russians consider someone as a friend, they will accept and treat the person as if she/he is a member of their own family (cf. Richmond,

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<sup>10</sup> In Russian: Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей; Transliteration: Ne imey sto rubley, a imey sto druzey.

2003, p. 116), and therefore such kind of friendship commonly lasts a lifetime (cf. Pavlovshaya, 2011, p. 122). Such behaviour allows to explain the reason why Russians are known for not smiling much to strangers; instead, though, smiles, which are warm and sincere, are reserved for friends (cf. King, 2008, p. 165).

### 2.3.3 The Russian hospitality

The concept of hospitality has a long-time tradition in the Russian society. It is so important and holds such a significant meaning to the Russian culture that there are three words to describe its qualities: гостеприимство, радушие, and хлебосольство<sup>11</sup> (cf. Vasco, 2010, p. 88).

- 1) Гостеприимство – as a portmanteau of the госте (guest) and приемство (accept), it denotes the willingness to receive a guest/stranger in the host's house and even offer her/him shelter for the night.
- 2) Радушие – pertains the courtesy and close friendship of the host towards the guest.
- 3) Хлебосольство – formed by the words хлеб (bread) and соль (salt), it means to offer bread and salt to the host, wishing to see her/him delighted with the best possible treatment, making sure nothing is missing, i.e., the intention is to treat a guest cordially and generously,

Although the three words pertain similar meanings and are traditionally used in similar contexts, they have different implicit connotations that depend on the context – and, in this case, on the bond between the host and the guest. To use the word appropriately requires being aware of its cultural significance, something that is typical from HC cultures. For instance, “хлебосольство” denotes a longstanding Russian greeting/welcoming tradition that consisted in offering bread and salt to guests of honour as a welcome gift (cf. Richmond, 2003, p. 167), which were a symbol of health and prosperity, respectively (cf. Sorokina, 2020). The two proverbs “bread is the staff of life”<sup>12</sup> and “you don't know a person until you eat a bushel of salt (with him)”<sup>13</sup> attest to their traditional importance in Russia, and to the Slavic lands in general. This tradition

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<sup>11</sup> Transliteration: gostepriimstvo, radushiye, and khlebosol'stvo.

<sup>12</sup> In Russian: Хлеб всему голова; Transliteration: Khleb vsemu golova.

<sup>13</sup> Человека не узнаешь, пока пуд соли (с ним) не съешь; Transliteration: Cheloveka ne uznayesh', пока pud soli (s nim) ne s'yesh'.

persists until today and is usually witnessed at political and diplomatic events (cf. Ember & Ember, 2001, p. 1852). For instance, it was observed on June 9, 2018, when the Portuguese football team was in Russia to play for the 2018 FIFA World Cup<sup>14</sup>.

When celebrating events such as birthdays, a wedding, holidays, a housewarming, – or even if there is no meaningful reason at all – it is very traditional for Russians to invite to their house not only friends and relatives, but even unfamiliar people (for instance, a friend of an acquaintance) because the concept of a guest is very valued in Russia (cf. Volskaya, 2001, p. 17; Pavlovshaya, 2011, p. 180). Such context will provide an ideal scenario for the host and guests to get to know each other (particularly the unfamiliar ones) since, for a Russian, there is no better way to get acquainted than around a table, eating and drinking (cf. Richmond, 2003, p.118; Sergeeva, 2006, p. 290).

All in all, though, no matter what is the occasion, it is expected that Russians will provide total dedication to their guests by treating them with an enormous feast, where large quantities of food, drinks and entertainment are always assured (cf. Richmond, 2003, p. 167; Volskaya, 2001, p. 22): “Hosts and hostesses must show unfailing generosity, even with unexpected guests, and guests must receive that hospitality with a show of willingness to be served, fed, and pampered. Drinking together and toasting are important aspects of these rituals” (Ember & Ember, 2001, p. 1865). Foreigners/outlanders who are invited by Russians and are not aware of this tradition will find it perplexing on why there is so much consideration for the guest (cf. King, 2008, p. 180). However, such concern in satisfying the guest is intrinsic to the Russian culture. Consequently, it is performed naturally assuming the guest is aware of it, thus denoting the coded communication that HC cultures are characterised by.

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<sup>14</sup> Video available on YouTube: [The Portuguese national football team is greeted in Russia.](#)

**CHAPTER III – [ECONOMY AND INVESTMENT PROSPECTS IN  
RUSSIA]**

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### 3 Economic overview

Ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> country with the highest GDP in the world (cf. World Bank, 2019a), Russia has been classified as one of the biggest economies in the world over the last years. Although the collapse of the Russian rouble (due to the falling of oil prices and economic sanctions imposed by the USA and the EU following the annexation of Crimea, in 2014) led Russia through a financial crisis from 2014 to 2016 – which resulted in negative or low economic growth in that period – data shows that Russia has returned to a modest growth since 2017 (cf. IMF, 2020a).

With widespread borders that cover over 17 million km<sup>2</sup>, Russia not only is the biggest country in the world, it is also the richest when it comes to natural resources whose value is estimated to worth \$844.58 billion which represents 60% of Russia's GDP (cf. Tkachev & Fadeeva<sup>15</sup>, 2019). According to the “*Statistical Review of World Energy 2020*” report by multinational oil and gas company British Petroleum (BP), Russia is the 2<sup>nd</sup> world's top oil and natural gas producer, as well as the 5<sup>th</sup> top electricity generator (cf. 2020, p. 16, 34 and 59). Furthermore, in 2019, it was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest partner for EU export of goods (4%) and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest partner for EU import of goods (7%)<sup>16</sup> (cf. Eurostat, 2020).

According to the International Monetary Fund database, over the last decade, Russia has been able to maintain a trade surplus (cf. IMF, 2020b). In 2019, Russia exported approximately \$420 billion worth of goods around the globe and imported approximately \$243 billion, which resulted in a \$177 billion positive trade balance. Russia's main export partners were China (13%), the Netherlands (11%), Germany (6.6%), Turkey (5%), and Belarus (4.8%); in contrast, Russia imported mainly from China (22.2%), Germany (10.3%), the United States (5.5%), Belarus (5%), and Italy (4.5%), in the same year (cf. IMF, 2020b).

The sectoral distribution of Russia's economy is quite diversified. There are three major sectors that contribute the most to its GDP: the service sector, the industry sector, and the agriculture sector. The service sector has a preponderant weight of 54% to the GDP, and accounts for 67,8% total employment. It is followed by the industry sector with a 32,1% impact on the GDP and which is responsible for 26,58% of the employment. In the

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<sup>15</sup> In Russian: Ткачѳв & Фадеева.

<sup>16</sup> [Russia-EU – international trade in goods statistics.](#)

agriculture sector, with a weight of 3,4% on the GDP, there is a 5,62% labour force employment (cf. Statista, 2020a, 2020b).

### **3.1 International economic and geopolitical alliances**

Following the sanctions imposed by Western countries in 2014, it became even more clear for Russia that it is a risk for the economy to depend too much on imported goods because they (1) can be unpredictably prohibited by sanctions and (2) are subject to exchange currency volatility (cf. CMS Russia, 2019, p. 177). With such considerations in mind, Russia has been actively involved in cross-boarders cooperation development and started to reinforce economic and political bonds with non-Western countries, especially in Asia.

Russia is a member of various international and regional organisations that further contribute to its economic development by fostering regional and international trade across the globe, as well as domestic production. Some important key-coalitions Russia is part of include the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); a union of the 5 emerging global economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); and the Sino-Russian relations.

#### **3.1.1 CIS**

Along with Belarus and Ukraine, Russia is a founding member of CIS, which was formed in 1991. Following the Soviet Union collapse, Russia aimed at having the former Soviet states<sup>17</sup> benefiting from bilateral economic cooperation as they started to reengage with one another. As a result, the CIS was formed (cf. Willerton & Cockerham, 2018, p. 188). The CIS would ultimately lay the groundwork for better condition for business trade among the nations and increase their economies' competitiveness. In 2012, amongst the CIS framework, the Free Trade Agreement (CIS FTA) was signed<sup>18</sup> and put to force in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. During the following months, other CIS countries signed the treaty as well. This treaty, whose rules and norms were in accordance with those of

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<sup>17</sup> Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan (and Russia).

<sup>18</sup> The [Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Agreement](#) (in Russian).



the WTO, *inter alia*, removed any custom duties concerning the import and export of goods originating from any of the CIS FTA members' territory (Article 2), thereby ensuring free access of goods of national producers to the markets of the CIS countries. CIS FTA members who benefit from the treaty are Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan.

Today, CIS is a form of cooperation between equal independent states and regional interstate organisation recognised by the international community (cf. CIS, 2020) formed by nine members (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), one associate state (Turkmenistan) and two observer states (Afghanistan and Mongolia).

### **3.1.2 BRICS countries**

Established in 2006, BRICS was a Russia's initiative to create an intergovernmental association between developing economies all over the world. BRICS is a union formed by the five emerging global economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa<sup>19</sup> that aims to achieve a geopolitical partnership in different spheres with countries that are not under Western influence (cf. Lo, 2016, p. 8).

Russia's commitment to maximising BRICS' potential is reflected in the "*Concept of Participation of the Russian Federation in BRICS*"<sup>20</sup>, approved by Russian president Vladimir Putin, in 2013. The *Concept* declares that BRICS states aspire to reform the current "obsolete international financial and economic architecture" that gives no chance to other market economies to emerge globally, tackle common and global problems and challenges, and complement each other's economies (pp. 2-3). Specifically, the BRICS countries aim at developing the following spheres: international security; trade and economy; industry; energy; science, technology, and innovation; agriculture and healthcare (pp. 6-13).

Through annual summits that have been organised since 2009<sup>21</sup> and allow to assess year-long developments within the BRICS framework, dialogue and different projects have

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<sup>19</sup> Initially known as BRIC, the union was formed by Brazil, Russia, India, and China; in 2010, with South Africa's ascension to the group, the acronym was updated to BRICS.

<sup>20</sup> [Concept of Participation of the Russian Federation in BRICS](#).

<sup>21</sup> [List](#) of BRICS summits since 2009.

been discussed. One of the most noteworthy projects includes the creation of the New Development Bank (NDB). The NDB focuses on “mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries” (cf. NDB, 2020a), and ultimately serves as an alternative financial institution to Western-dominated IMF and the World Bank. In total, over 50 projects have been approved as of 2020, in which a few of them were proposed by Russia and amount to over \$1500 billion for projects related with the development of infrastructures, the energy sector and environmental protection, among others (cf. NDB, 2020b).

As one of the most significant geopolitical alliances of the century, as of 2019, BRICS represented over 40% of the global population and 25% of the world’s GDP (cf. World Bank, 2019b), which plays an important role in world politics and global economy.

### **3.1.3 Sino – Russian relations**

Russia and China, who have long maintained strong economic and political bilateral relationship, are emerging markets who have been considered by different authors to be potential superpowers (cf. Rosefielde, 2005; Yueh, 2013). The Sino-Russian relationship was reinforced in 2001, after signing a 20-year strategic treaty<sup>22</sup> with the aim to strengthen peaceful relation and foster economic, diplomatic, and geopolitical collaboration between the countries. In 2006, Russia and China proved their continuous partnership development with the creation of BRICS, along with Brazil and India (and later joined by South Africa). Due to the immense energy resources Russia is blessed with, and considering the booming economy of China and demand for natural resources, energy partnerships have also been established over the last years: in 2013, a \$270 billion oil deal was signed to supply China with oil over the following 25 years (cf. Weaver & Buckley, 2013); in 2014, a \$400 billion gas deal was yet again signed with China. This time, gas was to be pumped into Chinese factories through the “Power of Siberia” pipeline<sup>23</sup>. Lo and Bekkevold argue that as an energy-relationship Russia and China reached the level of development demanded by their geographical proximity and economic complementariness (cf. 2019, p. 69).

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<sup>22</sup> The [Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation](#).

<sup>23</sup> [Russia signs 30-year gas deal with China news](#).

With the purpose of promoting economic integration and inter-regional connectivity, in 2019, Russia has endorsed and began constructions on the Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative (commonly known as the “New Silk Road”), a strategic China-Western Europe transport corridor that goes through Moscow (cf. PortNews, 2019). This transport corridor, which includes the construction of railways and highways, sea and air communications, power lines and pipelines, will become Russia’s fastest trucking route between Europe and China, thereby fostering economic development in many Russian cities. Anticipating the advantages and opportunities created by the B&R Initiative, Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Augusto Santos Silva stated that “Portugal looks forward to contributing to a new Maritime Silk Road, namely through the development of the existing infrastructures on its Atlantic façade” (2018, p. 3).

In terms of trade, statistics show that, in 2019, China was Russia’s leading export destination for commodities, as well as the main import partner (cf. Statista, 2020c), proving Russia’s strong economic ties with China.

With such international geopolitical experience and influence, Russia and China are a strong economic alliance that can ultimately challenge the United States’ hegemony (cf. Slobodchikoff, 2017, p. 93).

### **3.2 Portugal – Russia relations**

Although Portugal and Russia each stand on the most western and eastern ends of Europe, respectively, a relationship between both countries has been maintained since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it was first established (Embassy of the Russian Federation in Portuguese Republic, n.d.). Bilateral relationship between Portugal and Russia was reinforced in 1994, when a Treaty of Friendship<sup>24</sup> was signed in Moscow. This Treaty looked not only to improve the diplomatic relations between the countries (Chapter 1), but most importantly their economic (Chapter 2), as well as cultural, scientific, and technological relations (Chapter 3).

Diplomatic conversations have been promoted through high-level events and visits. For instance, on June 20, 2018, a meeting to promote the dialogue was held in the Kremlin, in Moscow, between the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and the President of

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<sup>24</sup> [Diário da República \(official gazette of Portugal\) n.º 238/1995, Serie I-A of 1995/10/14](#) (in Portuguese).

Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa. Prior to this meeting, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa had stated that “Portugal would like to expand its relations with Russia in all areas, including economic and cultural” (PAJ, 2018). Meetings and regular contact have also been kept between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal<sup>25</sup>. In addition, there is an Embassy of Portugal in Moscow, as well as an Embassy of Russia in Lisbon.

The bilateral trade between the two nations has progressively increased over the last decades. Although there was a decrease of 16,4% in the import of goods and services from Russia in 2018 when compared to 2017, Portugal has still imported over €1.300.000 worth of goods and services from Russia (cf. GEE, 2020), a value that is only topped by the results of 2017 itself, over the last decades. Regarding the export of goods and services from Portugal to Russia, there was an increase of 13,8%, in the same period. To further ensure the growth of the economic flow between countries, in December 2018, Portugal and Russia signed a roadmap<sup>26</sup> to promote the strengthening of economic and trade cooperation (cf. Government of Portugal, 2018). Furthermore, to facilitate economic cooperation and bilateral trading between the Portuguese and the Eurasian markets, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Luso-Russian (CCILR) was inaugurated by Portuguese and Russian entrepreneurs in May 2019 (cf. AICEP Portugal Global, 2019).

Cultural, scientific, and technological synergies have also been mutually sponsored. From December 2017 to February 2018 the Moscow Kremlin Museums<sup>27</sup> hosted an exhibition dedicated to Portuguese history and culture. Conversely, the Sharing Foundation, which promotes multicultural and multilingual learning, organised the VI Week of Russian Culture and the I Russian Economic Forum, in October 2019, in Oporto<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, there is still a demand for Russian language in Portugal. For instance, the Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto (ISCAP), in Oporto, offers degrees in which Russian as a foreign language is integrated. Other example is the Centre for Russian Language and Culture “Pushkin Institute” of the Piaget Institute, in Viseu, which offers Russian courses at different language levels. Other universities throughout Portugal (e.g. in Lisbon, Coimbra, Braga and Aveiro) also offer university degrees in which the Russian

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<sup>25</sup> [News about ongoing contact between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and Portugal](#) (in Russian).

<sup>26</sup> Portuguese Republic news on [Economic development Roadmap signed by Portugal and Russia](#) (In Portuguese).

<sup>27</sup> Moscow Kremlin Museums news on [exhibition on the history and culture of the Portuguese colonial empire of the 16th–18th centuries](#).

<sup>28</sup> [Porto celebrates the culture and economy of Russia](#) (in Portuguese).

language can be learned. On the other hand, the Portuguese language is also being promoted and taught in different language centres in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Omsk, and Kazan<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, universities such as the Moscow State University (MGU), the S. Petersburg's University, and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), ran by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, have been teaching the Portuguese language for a long time.

In the technological field, Russia was well represented in Europe's largest Web Summit technology conference, which took place in November 2019, in Lisbon, with around 300 ICT professionals from Russia (Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Portuguese Republic, 2019).

All in all, a steady effort has been made to foster the economic and cultural relationship between the two countries, including politics, education, culture, science, and social exchanges. The various beneficial initiatives in diverse areas that each country has been endorsing about each other shows that a bilateral agenda for the future is in place, as well as the commitment to maintain and amplify current ties. Considering such scenario and adding the promising economic environment, favourable conditions are thus offered for Portuguese expats looking to relocate to Russia, as well as entrepreneurs wishing to establish or invest in the Russian market.

### **3.3 Foreign investment prospects**

Another aspect that also has the potential to influence economy is foreign direct investment ("FDI"). Foreigners are encouraged and free to pursue different business activities in Russia, as long as they meet some requirements. According to the "*World Investment Report 2020*" by UNCTAD, Russia's FDI inflows have been increasing: in 2018, there was an influx investment in the Russia market of approximately \$13 billion dollars, while in 2019 it increased to more than double, reaching approximately \$32 billion dollars (cf. 2020, p. 12). In addition, according to a recent report by Baker & McKenzie,

Russia successfully paid off a substantial portion of its foreign debt and amassed the fourth largest foreign currency reserves after China, Japan, and Switzerland. These

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<sup>29</sup> As advertised in [Academic.ru](https://academic.ru).

achievements, in conjunction with prudent macroeconomic policies and renewed government efforts to advance structural reforms through major projects, improved business and investor confidence, with new opportunities emerging in such sectors as telecommunications, retail, agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals and the power industry. (2020, p. 6).

Considering the progress of the local regime for foreign investment, allied with the growing economy factor, ideal environment for setting-up or expanding a business is provided, particularly in the most developed regions, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. In its latest report, consultancy StartupBlink ranked Moscow in 9<sup>th</sup> place in the latest ranking of cities of the world with the best ecosystems to receive start-ups (cf. 2020, p. 24). In addition, the *Doing Business*<sup>30</sup> report from the World Bank shows that Russia is ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in terms of ease of doing business and 40<sup>th</sup> when it comes to starting a business, out of 190 economies (cf. 2020a, p. 4). Moreover, the process of starting a business in Russia has been simplified yearly over the last decade in various business aspects such as dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, paying taxes and the protection of minority investors (cf. World Bank, 2020b<sup>31</sup>).

Although FDI share only represents 1,87% of the Russia's GDP (cf. Global Economy, 2020<sup>32</sup>), Russia shows great economic potential, and investors can benefit from its natural resources (such as oil, gas and metals), as well as skilled workforce.

### **3.3.1 Legal framework**

For a foreign investor to start a business in Russia, it is necessary to first consider the types of companies that can be registered. The most common types are Limited Liability Companies (LLC) and Joint-Stock Companies (JSC) (cf. CMS Russia, 2019, p. 15). LLCs are common for subsidiaries and for joint ventures since they are easy to establish, maintain and finance. They can be set-up by one person or several people and can operate in almost any kind of business. JSCs, on the other hand, can be public or private and usually run activities provided by the Russian law, such as banking or an insurance company (cf. Dentons, 2018, p. 9). The description of these companies is found in Part I

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<sup>30</sup> A part of an annual series' publication (started in 2004) by the World Bank Group that measures the regulations that foster business and compares them across 190 different countries.

<sup>31</sup> [Business Reforms on Doing Business](#) over the years in Russia.

<sup>32</sup> [Russia's FDI impact in the GDP](#).

of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation<sup>33</sup>, in Article 4 and 6, respectively. In addition, their general rules for establishment and general procedures can be further read in the specific law of each type of entity, namely in Federal Law on Limited Companies<sup>34</sup> and in the Federal Law on Joint-Stock Companies<sup>35</sup>.

Foreigner investors in the Russian market should also be aware of the rights that are specifically addressed to foreign investors. Such legislation is regulated under the Federal Law on Foreign Investments<sup>36</sup>, which states the terms and conditions of entrepreneurial activities by foreign investors in Russian territory. According to the aforementioned legislation, foreign investors are entitled to the same benefits and legal treatment as Russian's (Article 4: 1), placing every investor, Russian or foreigner, on equal terms – as long as it does not interfere with constitutional fundamentals of morality, health and other rights of persons, as well as the state security and defence (Article 4: 2). Furthermore, foreign investors are entitled to the same rights and interests provided in the Federal Law (Article 5: 1) and are guaranteed legal protection against nationalisation or expropriation (unless mandated by federal laws). In such cases, foreign investors are to be reimbursed of the losses inflicted (Article 5: 2). Amongst other guarantees, the Federal Law ensures foreign investors the right to make investments in any form allowed by the Law and make fully use of its profits upon completion of any taxes and fees stipulated by the Law (Article 11), acquire private and government securities (Article 13), take part in privatisations (Article 14), and acquire land plots, other national resources, buildings, structures and immovable property (Article 15).

Since the Federal Law No. 160-FZ was put to force, in 1999, various mechanisms and incentives have been launched aiming to improve the business climate, thereby fostering an appropriate environment in which entrepreneurs can invest and/or set-up a business.

### **3.3.1.1 Special Investment Contracts and Special Economic Zones**

A well-known mechanism that encourages the innovation and modernisation of the economy is a form of cooperation between the state and private investors known as

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<sup>33</sup> [The Federal Law No. 51-FZ: “The Civil Code of the Russian Federation – Part I”](#), dated November 30, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> [The Federal Law No. 14-FZ “On Limited Liability Companies”](#), dated February 8, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> [The Federal Law No. 208-FZ “On Joint-stock Companies”](#), dated December 26, 1995.

<sup>36</sup> [The Federal Law No. 160-FZ: “On foreign investments in the Russian Federation”](#), dated July 9, 1999.

Special Investment Contract<sup>37</sup> (SPIC). These were established with the aim to develop advanced technologies that can compete in the global market or are currently unavailable in the Russian market. While a private investor under a SPIC gets to develop and implement hi-tech products, the Russian government provides tax-benefits and other incentives to facilitate its implementation, such as reduction in tax profits, simplified procedures to receive a land plot or infrastructure to start a project, and subsidies (cf. KPMG, 2019, p. 7). The projects under a SPIC can be conducted up to 15 to 20 years, depending on the investment involved, and can be applied by investors with any capital, hence no minimum mandatory amount is required.

Another mechanism that has the potential to attract foreign investors are the Special Economic Zones (SEZ)<sup>38</sup>, a large-scale federal project introduced in 2005 with the aim to attract investment in economic and technological branches in order to create new competitive products and develop transport infrastructure. Benefits and incentives for investors include ready-to-use infrastructures, free custom zones and tax preferences which allows to save up to 30% on initial investments. As of 2020, there are 33 active SEZ, divided in four different areas of activity (15 for industrial production, 7 for technology and innovation, 10 for tourism and recreation, and 1 for port and logistics activities), where, in 15 years, more than 800 companies have been registered, of which more than 160 are foreign investors from 38 different countries (cf. RUSSEZ, 2020).

Considering the legal framework for investment, the creation of both SPICs and SEZs favours the internationalisation of Portuguese companies in the Russian market. Portuguese companies can gain competitive advantages by establishing strategic partnerships with Russian companies in their respective sectors of activity or expand their business to a respective SEZ area of activity. According to Global Tenders (2020), prospects for cooperation include important key sectors, such as the development of transport infrastructures, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, e-commerce, innovation and technology, mechanical engineering, tourism, automotive industry, and nanotechnology.

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<sup>37</sup> Introduced by the [Federal Law No. 488-FZ “On Industrial Policy in the Russian Federation”](#) (in Russian); In August 2019, the legislation was changed and the mechanism “SPIC 2.0” was established; The latest amendment was introduced in July 2020 by Government of the Russian Federation under the [Decree No. 1048 “On approval of the Rules for the conclusion, amendment and termination of special investment contracts”](#) (In Russian).

<sup>38</sup> Regulated under the [Federal Law No. 116-FZ of July 22, 2005](#)



Moreover, it is possible to employ Russian skilled workforce and have access to ready-to-use infrastructures. Finally, the strategic location of Russia and its transportation corridors facilitate the access to Europe and Asia-Pacific.

**CHAPTER IV – [EXPATRIATION TO RUSSIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES]**

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## 4 Immigration overview

Even though migration has become a worldwide practice, Russia turns out to be one of the favourite countries for living abroad. The United Nations discloses that, as of 2019, Russia is home to around 12 million international migrants, making it the 4th country hosting the largest number of international migrants in the world. (cf. 2019, p. 11).

To continue attracting skilled workers and as a plan to support economic growth, the *State Migration Policy Concept 2019-2025*<sup>39</sup> was signed in 2018 and put to force by the Russian President Vladimir Putin. This new migration policy aims at simplifying the process of foreign migration admission by reducing bureaucracy processes and improving immigration accessibility, thereby attracting more expats and other skilled workers to live in Russia. It is no coincidence that, in light to the newly approved policy, a bigger migration influx was registered in 2019. According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), in 2019 alone, there was an influx of 701.234 international migrants, which is the highest influx ever registered and 23% more than the previous year of 2018.

### 4.1 Expats in Russia

Expats in Russia are usually qualified specialists or highly qualified specialists<sup>40</sup> (HQS) who have got an invitation from a company or were transferred from a multinational company to work in its different international premisses (cf. Expat Info Desk, 2020). Leading executive recruitment company Antal Russia confirms the previous information: in its annual job market survey series, it was found that the biggest share of expats only moved to Russia after an invitation from a company, i.e., after having secured a job first. The next most common reason was the transfer between international offices, followed by expats who were specifically looking for a job in Russia (cf. 2017, p. 5).

With the continuing number of foreign companies establishing in Russia<sup>41</sup> following the significant economic progress over the years, the number of expats has, too, risen. In fact,

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<sup>39</sup> Decree [On the Concept of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019-2025](#), dated October 31, 2018 (in Russian)

<sup>40</sup> High-qualified specialists are foreign workers with experience, skills and expertise in specific areas, whose monthly salary is no less than RUB 167,000 (~€1812). Considering that the cost of living in Russia is lower than most Western countries, an HQS salary represents a very high salary in Russia.

<sup>41</sup> [2018 Forbes article](#) with a list of the most successful foreign companies (in 2018) that have established in Russia.

according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 52.179 work permits were issued in 2019 for qualified specialists and highly-qualified specialists, a number that has been gradually increasing over the last years (cf. MIA of Russia, 2020). Since Moscow and St. Petersburg are the main economic centres in Russia, the highest concentration of expats is located in these two cities. Nevertheless, other cities, such as Kazan, are also home to a significant number of expats (cf. Shannon, 2019).

#### **4.1.1. Self-initiated expats: stories of success**

In an article in the Russian newspaper *Vedomosti*<sup>42</sup>, Svetlana Romanova<sup>43</sup> cites some examples of well-succeeded self-initiated expats, namely the cases of the 50-year-old Frenchwoman, Florence Gervier D' Allen, who founded the company "Rose Fairy"<sup>44</sup>, in 2007, and grows rare fragrant varieties of roses in a greenhouse in the Kaluga region; the 34-year-old Dutch, Paul Commander, who created, in 2010, the store-Atelier of men's suits "Costume Code"; the American citizen Jeffrey Moskowitz, who founded the Type-top cleaning company (TTK), in 2003, and who works with more than 130 Western companies in Moscow ("How foreigners", 2015).

In 2019, in an article titled "They found their happiness. How do foreigners who have moved to Russia live?"<sup>45</sup>, published in the online Russian newspaper *Argumenti i Fakti*<sup>46</sup>, it is possible to read about the life story of the German citizen Daniel Folmann, living in Yagodnoye, Nizhny Novgorod region, who decided to make organic homemade cheese. In a short interview, he declares: "I bought equipment, bought the old building of the village school, got animals. (...) In Germany, you would have to save up for years to buy all this."

In a section dedicated to expats, it is possible to read in RB Rusbase<sup>47</sup> different news about expats from all over the world that are living and working in Russia<sup>48</sup>. Most of them hold small and medium-sized businesses in different activity spheres. Among them, there

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<sup>42</sup> In Russian: ВЕДОМОСТИ.

<sup>43</sup> In Russian: СВЕТЛАНА РОМАНОВА.

<sup>44</sup> Фея Розы.

<sup>45</sup> Original, in Russian: Нашли своё счастье. Как живут иностранцы, переехавшие в Россию.

<sup>46</sup> In Russian: АРГУМЕНТЫ И ФАКТЫ.

<sup>47</sup> RB Rusbase is an independent technology and business publication website that dedicates to the creation of content showing that building a business in Russia is both possible and necessary.

<sup>48</sup> [Stories of expats working and living in Russia](#), from RB Rusbase.

are many successful witness reports: Judd Knight, born in Africa, has spent most of his life in the United States and the United Kingdom, and is currently KFC's Director of innovation in Russia, the CIS, and Central and Eastern Europe; Some years ago, 32-year-old Holly Roberts opened her own business in Russia - a private kindergarten "Britannia School". Mark Babatunde, a 33-year-old Nigerian, works as a teacher in a Yakut village school, where he teaches Chinese.

There are also expats involved in the agricultural sector. Some of them are among the biggest farmers in Russia, e.g. German-born Stefan Dürr, owner of one of the biggest farms in Siberia, and British-born John Kopiski, seen by his Russian neighbours as a true Russian. In the interview he gave to RT<sup>49</sup>, he speaks namely about the stereotyped ideas he got about Russia before coming to the country.

## **4.2 Becoming an expat**

The factors that drive to an international relocation varies from individual to individual. Nomad tribes used to roam looking for pastureland for their livestock; later, communities moved because they were looking for lands that were more fertile; expats have their own motives, as well. In a report prospectus issued by the financial market research, publishing and consulting company Finaccord it is claimed that "the total number of expatriates worldwide amounted to around 66.2 million in 2017" (Finaccord, p. 16), a number that is likely to keep on growing over the following years, given the increasing number of small- and medium-sized companies expanding abroad.

Traditionally, there are two types of factors: the push and the pull factors (cf. Davin, 1999, p. 49). While push factors are a set of reasons that reflect on the dissatisfaction of an individual's current country and/or life situation, push factors comprise in a set of reasons that attract an individual to another country:

Factors such as poverty, lack of economic opportunity, land shortage and low living standards at home function as push factors, while prosperity, opportunity, available employment, and higher living standards in the place of destination are pull factors. The

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<sup>49</sup> RT (formerly Russia Today) is a Russian international multilingual information TV channel funded by the Russian government.

individual's decision to migrate involves a process of weighing up potential costs and benefits. (cf. Davin, 1999, p.49).

A survey conducted by Ranstad Workmonitor (2019), showed that 64% of its employers would consider relocating as long as they could improve their career situation and find a balance between professional and personal life. Ranstad Workmonitor's survey and other surveys conducted by Allied Van Lines (n.d.) and Impact Group (2018) all come to the agreement that the most common reasons behind an international relocation are career advancement and the search for a job with a higher salary. In a more poetic perspective, 22% of millennial expats (aged 18 – 34), stated that they relocated abroad looking to find a purpose in their career (cf. HSBC Expat, 2016). In addition, other reasons and motivations, such as the wish to work in a multicultural environment, to move closer to family or even the need for an adventure or a change in life, also play an important role when weighting the cons and pros of an international move.

In general, individuals are willing to relocate abroad if it means that it will improve the chances of a better quality of life. In the Portuguese case, a study conducted by Lobo, Ferreira & Rowland, and sponsored by the Presidency of the Portuguese Republic, concluded that 70% of Portuguese youth aged 15 – 24 are open to the idea of moving abroad (cf. 2015, p. 40), given that there are more and better job opportunities, as well as conditions for a better quality of life (cf. *ibid*, p. 44).

### **4.3. Working and living in Russia**

In a country whose economy is significantly improving, and policies are being reinforced so as to attract investors, companies are establishing branches in different cities and so career prospects and opportunities tend to increase. However, although the process of doing business in Russia has been simplified over the years, Russia's dynamic economy and vast culture can also present some challenges for expats not only in business, but even in everyday life situations.

#### **4.3.1 Opportunities and challenges**

Although Russia has a highly educated workforce – even considerably higher than the average of the OECD countries (cf. OECD, 2019, p. 42) – shortage of skilled workers has

been a serious issue for quite some time. A report by the RSPP – Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs highlights that 64% of its member companies consider that shortage of skilled workers is one of the main problems in business (cf. 2014, p. 30). This factor contributes to labour shortage in the country, as it was stated in 2017 by the Russian Economy Minister, Maxim Oreshkin<sup>50</sup>. In addition to labour shortage, Russia has one of the lowest fertility rates with 1.6 children born/women (cf. Central Intelligence Agency, 2020), meaning that the proportion of young people is declining and the elderly is increasing, thereby making it harder to fill the skills-job gap and to contribute to the demographic crisis.

The Russian government has always been supportive and welcoming to international migration. The current skills-job gap situation presents, this way, a good opportunity for expats to find a job and move to Russia.

Expats looking for a job should give special consideration to international companies because career growth is promising, and it is more likely the companies are hiring foreigners and/or English-speakers. According to Antal Russia, expatriates in Russia are mostly employed as managers or specialists. Furthermore, over 3/4 of them work in international companies (cf. 2017, p. 3). Nonetheless, job positions that require the English-speaking skills, such as a translator or an English teacher are always in high demand as published by multilingual publication website Russia Beyond (2019).

According to EF English Proficiency Index, which ranks countries by their average level of English language skills, Russia is ranked in the 48<sup>th</sup> place, in the low proficiency category (cf. 2019, p. 7). This can be explained by the fact that after WW II, when the United Nations was established, Russian was – and still is – one of the six official languages. With the dominance of Russian over other languages and as a means to promote it between closer nations, Russian was the language that was predominantly used in communication. Furthermore, Western influences were unwelcome. After the disintegration of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall, consistent actions were initiated to enter the world global market, and English finally began to spread in Russia to the point of becoming the most popular foreign language in international communication (cf. Ustinova, 2005). As Borzykowski showed in her BBC's article, multinational companies are now, more than ever, adopting English as their official

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<sup>50</sup> Reuter News: ['No miracles': labor shortage set to hit Russia's GDP](#) (Retrieved 11/07/2020)

language. Although it is claimed that nowadays 1/3 of Russians speak English (cf. Russian Beyond, 2015), it is mostly in the main cities where multinationals are located, tourists are common and cultural diversity is larger. Thus, English-speaking skills become a valuable asset for an individual relocating in Russia.

However, since January 1, 2015, according to Article 15.1 of the Federal Law about the legal status of foreign citizens<sup>51</sup>, foreigners moving to Russia will need to prove their knowledge on the Russian language. More precisely, they need to demonstrate their command over the Russian language, on the history of Russia and the basics of the legislation of the Russian Federation. The only exception applies to HQSs, who can skip this process. While sponsored expats going through cultural training are prepared with the support of the company, self-initiated expats will need to study Russian, ideally in advance. In fact, since having knowledge of the Russian language is a big plus, a higher chance of finding a job position will become likely. Jon argues that “an employer will favour a candidate with better command of Russian over one who does not speak a word of the language” (Jon, 2018), which is standard in most countries. To mitigate language barriers, mastering at least basic knowledge of the Russian language before moving to Russia is important, not only in personal and social life, but also for job finding (cf. Sergeeva, 2006, p. 290). This becomes even more relevant for expats living outside of any major city (cf. Expat Info Desk, 2020).

One positive aspect about expat jobs is compensation packages. Antal Russia showed that, on average, an expat has available 7 benefits in their compensation package (in contrast to locals who only have 5, on average) (cf. 2017, p. 12). Respondents’ answers enabled to verify that, among other benefits, the most common include bonus schemes, mobile phone allowance, voluntary health insurance, car or car allowance and flexible work. When comparing with the locals’ benefits, the biggest discrepancy is found in the housing allowance (which was shown to be 39% more often in expats contracts than among locals), followed by the car or car allowance (31% more available for expats than for locals). In addition to the benefits, 62% of the respondents answered that an annual bonus was also received (p. 11).

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<sup>51</sup> [Federal Law No. 115-FZ "About the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation"](#), dated July 25, 2002.



As far as accommodation is concerned, many options are available, from city apartments to expat gated compounds that are usually located in the city's outskirts. Accommodation in Russia is usually associated with high costs in relation to salary. In a popular city such as Moscow, where there is a high demand, a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre costs around 700€ monthly, whereas in the city's outskirts can cost around 400€. In St. Petersburg the price is almost cut in half, costing, on average, 400€ for a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre, and around 280€ in the city surroundings (cf. Numbeo, 2020). Outside of the major metropolitan areas, prices are cheaper. Although accommodation can be expensive, moving abroad implies considering other expenses. In this case, according to Expatistan cost of living index, Moscow and St. Petersburg are still considered cheaper than many Western European capitals. In a list that considers 76 different European cities, Lisbon is ranked 43<sup>th</sup> and Oporto is ranked 54<sup>th</sup> as the most expensive city, while Moscow is found only in 67<sup>th</sup> place and St. Petersburg in 72<sup>nd</sup>. (cf. Expatistan, 2020).

Joining expat communities and attending events with other expats is guaranteed to help foreigners settle and adapt much quicker since opinions and advice from expats who are living for a longer time in Russia can be collected.

**Table 1 – Opportunities and challenges**

<b>Aspect to consider</b>	<b>Challenges / Cons</b>	<b>Opportunities / Pros / Alternatives</b>
Labour shortage and immigration encouragement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More opportunities to find a job.</li> </ul>
Paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for a work and temporary residence permit (unless the company takes care of it);</li> <li>• Private or international health insurance.</li> </ul>	
Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not many people can speak English;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By learning Russian there is a higher chance of landing in a better job position;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication misunderstandings;</li> <li>• Time to learn another language must be taken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoother adaptation to the country.</li> </ul>
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive in city centres;</li> <li>• High demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many accommodation options;</li> <li>• Possibility to join an expat community.</li> </ul>
Culture and social life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural shock if unprepared;</li> <li>• Different currency;</li> <li>• Cold climate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experience;</li> <li>• Personal and professional growth;</li> <li>• Many winter and summer outdoor activities;</li> <li>• Global networking potential;</li> <li>• Improved career prospects;</li> <li>• Development of intercultural competences;</li> <li>• Experience a unique culture.</li> </ul>
Cost of living and expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical insurance;</li> <li>• Accommodation;</li> <li>• Transport;</li> <li>• Phone and internet;</li> <li>• Leisure activities;</li> <li>• Food and clothing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheaper than major Portuguese cities and other European capitals;</li> <li>• Attractive salaries and compensation packages can balance out.</li> </ul>
Getting around in Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic in major cities is intense.</li> <li>• Lack of public transport in some rural areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable public transportation systems.</li> <li>• Well-developed transport infrastructures.</li> </ul>

## **CHAPTER V – [SMALL GUIDE FOR INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION]**

## 5 Designing the Small Guide: information covered

The concept of the guide proposed by the author consisted of a tutorial, step-by-step format. Although the guide is intended for expats (in general) that are relocating in Russia, it is specifically addressed to Portuguese self-initiated expats, i.e., those who do not have a sponsor and plan to relocate on their own. The information displayed in a way that covers the different moments of a relocation process – before, during and after – and is presented briefly, clearly, and in a sequential order.

As a result of the research conducted by the author, ten different topics that promote intercultural interaction and adaptation were selected, which will be the focus of attention in the guide. These topics are as follows:

**Table 2 – List of topics for the small guide**

#	Topic	Description
1	Getting to know Russia	This first segment will serve as a presentation of Russia. Therefore, the information contained here will include quick facts about the country.
2	Learning Russian	Thanks to modern technologies, there are countless digital tools available on the internet that allow a person to learn a foreign language at a moderate speed. However, and considering that an exam certification proving the knowledge of the Russian language will be required, Russian language classes are recommended. This segment will therefore include some schools and language centres in Portugal where an individual can learn Russian, as well as digital tools to support this process. Depending on the level of Russian language proficiency that an individual already has, this step can be skipped.
3	Finding a job	In order to go to Russia, a job must first be secured. As a result, self-initiated expats should know where to look for vacancies that are available and/or in demand, as well as which services are most used in Russia to advertise job offers. Hence, this segment will contain active job search engines.
4	Visa process	After receiving an invitation letter from a company and agreeing to the terms of work, an expat can apply for a work visa. Afterwards, different documents and an application must be submitted to the Russian Consulate. This section will cover the necessary documents

		that need to be collected in order to successfully apply for a work visa, and where it can be done.
5	Medical healthcare	Although according to Article 41 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation <sup>52</sup> medical care is free for any resident of Russia, any other medical care requires a medical insurance policy. Therefore, an expat should apply for an international health insurance plan, the scope of which may vary depending on the expat's preferences (which should consider medical history, specific needs, etc.). Different health insurance services will be listed in this segment, as well as other considerations regarding health insurance.
6	Finding accommodation	Usually, large companies-employers support expats in finding housing. However, this is not always the case. To cover this situation, this segment will list various online sites where ads for various accommodation options can be found.
7	Packing and shipping	An important decision for an expat when going abroad is to carefully choose what to take, what to ship and what to leave behind. On the other hand, it is uncomfortable and expensive to travel with multiple heavy bags. This segment will list recommendations of items that should be prioritised when moving abroad and suggests different companies that specialise in international shipping.
8	Getting around in Russia	The Russian public transport system is known for its accessibility and efficiency. Although the metro is the preferred means of transport in Russia, it can only be found in metropolitan areas. The author finds it important to include this information, since traveling is part of an expat's experience, hence, this segment covers the different types of transport that are available. In addition, it will include information on how an expat can drive using her/his own national driving license.
9	Communications	Communication is an essential aspect for those who move abroad because it allows them to stay in touch with family and friends. In addition, this may also be necessary in business situations. Since Russia has an extensive telecommunications network, this segment focus on the various telephone services that an expat can use and on how to get a SIM card immediately after arriving to Russia.

<sup>52</sup> [The Constitution of the Russian Federation](#)

10	Social life and leisure	Russia has a cultural and historical legacy that can be explored by engaging in different activities. By taking part in cultural and sports activities and events, expats may integrate and adapt more smoothly in Russia. Hence, this segment includes different possible leisure activities.
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As it has been referred previously, intercultural training aims to provide knowledge to handle cultural differences and raise a person's cultural awareness towards a foreign environment (cf. Fischer, 2011, p. 768). Self-initiated expats, who are likely to miss intercultural training, are susceptible to intercultural conflicts. In an attempt to mitigate them in day-to-day situations, this guide also has a section where suggestions and relevant cultural etiquettes are highlighted.



The general objective of this dissertation was to get a deeper understanding about the expatriation process in general and to analyse the role of intercultural communication not only in everyday life, but also in the running of business transactions. The specific objective was to demonstrate how Russia can be a potential market for foreign investment and a destination to consider for (self-initiated) expats.

To achieve these goals and better understand the behaviour and business culture of Russians in their own environment, a broad study was conducted. The method to achieve it consisted in contrasting Hofstede's cultural dimension theory with literature related with the Russian culture and its origins. The findings are supported by Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, which shows that, above all, Russia is a collectivist society whose communication behaviour is mostly implicit, and that its business culture is deeply affected by the strong Russian national character.

As a response to the specific objective of the current dissertation, two paths regarding working and living in Russia are covered: as a foreign investor and as a traditional expat.

By analysing the current economy situation and legislation in Russia, it is important to highlight that Russia is putting a lot of effort into attracting foreign investors and workers in general. Russia has made significant changes in its legislation to reduce bureaucratic barriers which have resulted in better conditions for investors to engage in labour activities. Different mechanisms that offer various benefits to investors have been implemented. For instance, by investing in a project within the framework of a SPIC or a SEZ, an investor can have access to already made infrastructures, to research and development in science, technology and medicine, to tax reductions preferences and to young and well-educated skilled workforce ready to be employed. In addition, foreign investors can benefit from Russia's favourable location, from the continuous development in transport infrastructures and from the international transport corridors that make it easy to carry out transportation to and from the domestic market, to the CIS country members, to Europe, to Middle East, to Asia-Pacific, and even to North America.

While there is a section dedicated to the foreign investor who wants to invest in the Russian market and/or wants to establish a company taking advantage of the Russian legislation and the business climate, the main focus of this dissertation is the traditional self-initiated expat who is looking to find a job and live in Russia.



The key findings concerning this topic showed that the reasons that most lead to self-initiated relocation is career advancement and the search for a job with a higher salary. By analysing the surveys conducted by companies who are often connected with expat groups, such as Antal, Finaccord and the HSBC group, an assessment of the current situation of expats in general terms, and in Russia in particular, was carried out which confirms these conclusions. However, while this information was able to provide a general overview of the situation, the small sample and data available specifically on Russia represent a limitation of this study.

Nevertheless, it was shown that the Russian government supports international migration. This has mainly to do with the demographic crisis Russia is facing, and the subsequent skills-job gap. Legislation addressing qualified specialists and HQS has also been changed so as to make it more appealing for immigrants in general. In this context, this situation presents an opportunity for the self-initiated expat who is looking to settle in Russia. To support this process, a small guide containing guidelines for different phases of a relocation process was developed and is attached in the appendices section.

It is a difficult task to predict every challenge an expat might encounter in a specific foreign country throughout her/his overseas experience, which makes an expat's lifestyle an ever-growing research. The expatriation experience is usually over after the repatriation process, which is when the expat is done with her/his overseas assignment and/or decides to return to her/his home country. Although some post-expatriate opportunities were covered, they were not thoroughly researched. Therefore, an interesting follow-up of the current dissertation could cover the following repatriation topics:

- Assessment of the whole expat experience: such assessment would allow to examine what can be achieved during an expat experience and what is the investment that it entails. Furthermore, by focusing on individuals who have already gone through expat experiences, there can be an identification of expatriation good practices and what lessons can /could be learned.
- Assessment of the knowledge acquired during an expat experience: for expats who were sponsored by a company, transfer of the acquired knowledge to the competent human resources management is pertinent. This will enable human

resources to adjust the company's intercultural training courses, which will become improved and more effective. This way, future expat assignments will be better prepared.

- Reverse cultural shock: another important aspect of the repatriation process is that it can result in new cultural challenges of re-adaption to old habits, which is common in long-term expatriate experiences.

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# Appendix I – [Small Guide]

Part 1/4

## STEP 1 – Getting to know Russia

Know your facts right!

Official name	The Russian Federation (Rossiyskaya Federatsiya)
Alphabet	Cyrillic. Formed by 33 letters.
Time Zones	11 different timezones
Currency	Ruble = 100 kopeks ; P (RUB)
Capital and major cities	Moscow; St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod.
Electricity	220 volts, 50 Hz. Two-pronged plugs
Country telephone code	+7; Cities have an area code: Moscow is 495 and 499; St. Petersburg is 812.
National symbols	National anthem, coat of arms, national flag (white - blue - red), Double-headed eagle, Red star and Mother Russia.
Religion	Russian-Orthodox 71%; Atheists 15%; Islam 10%; Other Christians 3%; Other religions: 1%

## STEP 4 – Visa process

Bureaucracy time!

Once your employer applies to the Migration Service of Russia, an invitation letter will be issued and sent your way. In the meantime, you can gather the other necessary documents:

- a passport with two blank pages and at least over six months within the validity date at the time of moving;
- fill out the electronic version of the Russian visa application form in the Consular department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation website;
- A recent passport photo that is 3.5 x 4.5cm in size, has a white background, good luminosity and your whole face.
- Travel insurance that covers medical and hospital expenses with a minimum of €30.000 in case of a serious accident. It also needs to be valid during your whole period of stay and throughout the whole country. Prioritise insurance companies that work in Russia, such as Allianz Care and MAPFRE.

Once you gather all the documents, take them to the Embassy of the Russian Federation or the VISA Application Centre of Russia in Lisbon to apply for the Visa, at least 1 month within your travel. The whole process will cost around 100€ to 150€, depending on how urgently you need the Visa.

## STEP 2 – Learning Russian

Enhance your experience in Russia to the different level!

You can attend Russian language courses in Instituto Superior de Contabilidade do Porto (Porto) or in the Pushkin Institute (Viseu), among others; For private lessons, you can try finding a teacher close to your residence in SuperProf.

Alternatively, Russkij Suvenir: Uchebnyj Kompleks po RKI (by Irina Mozeloya) and "The New Penguin Russian Course: A Complete Course for Beginners" (by Nicholas J. Brown) are a perfect reading for English speaking adults who are just starting to learn Russian and are planning to go to Russia or to a Russian speaking country.

If you want to do it for free, the internet offers many options. Apps like Duolingo and Babbel offer game-like content which makes it very intuitive and appealing for the user to learn. Websites, such as RussianPod101 and LR - Learn Russian offer user-friendly structured content and information in text, audio and video format.

### Considerations and suggestions:

Take a dictionary and/or a book with common phrases with you!

Communication may be possible using body language, hand-signs or an interpreter, but being able to engage in conversations in Russian will enhance your experience in a more meaningful way!

## STEP 5 – Medical Healthcare

Health is wealth!

There are two types of major health infrastructures: policlinics (or health care centres) and hospitals, which can be found in major cities.

Any temporary or permanent resident in Russia is entitled to free public healthcare, which can be accessed via Obligatory Medical Insurance (OMI).

Nevertheless, in addition to that, an expat should apply for an international private medical insurance (that will be included in the travel insurance) to have access to better equipped facilities and a wider range of medical services.

Some of the largest health insurance companies operating in Russia include Allianz Care, Cigna Global, Lusitana Sol and IATI Seguros.

### General considerations and suggestions:

Upon your arrival, inform yourself on the closer hospital, clinics or pharmacies that you can rely on if necessary.

If there is any prescription medicine that you are taking ask your doctor if it is possible to have a larger quantity of medication. This will make you more comfortable and will give you more time until you find a qualified and registered chemist or a hospital pharmacy that can prescribe the same medicine.



## STEP 8 – Getting around in Russia

Learn how to travel and save time!

Public transportation services in Russia are one of the most reliable and well-developed in the world. Transportation is very cost-effective: it is affordable, efficient and punctual!

In metropolitan areas, metro is the most popular way of transportation, as well as the cheapest. Bus is also popular to get around since there are many routes that can take you to suburban areas or even long distance travels. Other services like Trolleybus, Tram or a Taxi are also common although less used.

Tickets or travel cards can be bought in multiple locations of a city or even online. Bus ticket can be bought from the bus driver, although they are a little more expensive.

### Considerations and suggestions:

Metro Stations are well known for its architecture and history!  
In some cities, such as in Moscow, expats are allowed to drive a car in the first 6 months of stay using their native's driving license car. Beyond that period, one needs to take a driving test in Russia.  
If you are using public transportation often, acquire a smart card which will allow you to travel without limit for a period of days.  
If you're going to travel across the country, use the bus or the plane depending how far away you're going.

## STEP 10 – Social life and leisure

Enjoy your experience to the fullest!

Moving abroad can be very lonely at times. Luckily, the vastness of Russia's culture provides different activities and events all year long.

From art museums to theatre or fancy restaurants to nightclubs, a wide range of options is available. One of the most popular Russian art forms is ballet. Operas, symphony concerts and musicals are, as well, activities that are very popular in Russia.

If you prefer outdoor activities and enjoy watching nature, hiking or jogging is very popular. The weather in Russia provides the perfect scenario for winter sports, such as Ice Hockey, Biathlon, Skiing races and Ice skating. Football is, as well, one of the favourite sports by Russians and is very common.

Away from major cities, a more traditional cultural experience can be felt. Tatar heritage is very strong in cities like Kazan, and Siberian cities have ethnic communities living under cold winters.

### Considerations and suggestions:

Take part in expat community forums and look out for upcoming events nearby. This will enable you to meet other people, including other expats who can give you valuable information and hints for your stay in Russia.

# Working and Living in Russia

SMALL GUIDE FOR INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION

Have you ever thought about moving to Russia but didn't know where to start? Does experiencing the vast and rich Russian culture, first-hand, excite you? Are you fond of adventures?

**Then this guide is for you!**

Moving out of Portugal to live and work in Russia can be a challenging experience, yet very rewarding. To ensure a smooth relocation, a process of different steps and considerations must be taken. Thus, this booklet provides an overview that serves as a starting point for expatriates looking to move to Russia without a sponsor company.

While this process can typically be followed by any Portuguese moving to a country outside of the European Union, the booklet focuses primarily on the expatriation process to Russia.

Let's start the adventure!

Meet you in Russia!

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## *Working and living in Russia* in 10 steps

**STEP 1** Getting to know Russia

Learning Russian **STEP 2**

**STEP 3** Finding a job

Visa process **STEP 4**

**STEP 5** Medical healthcare

Finding accomodation **STEP 6**

**STEP 7** Packing and shipping

Getting around in Russia **STEP 8**

**STEP 9** Communications

Social life and leisure **STEP 10**

### **STEP 7 – Packing and shipping**

Pack and ship wisely to save money!

You can send items to Russia via surface (road and sea) or air shipment. To do so, contact **shipping companies**, such as UPS, DHL and FedEx, which operate in Portugal and ship internationally.

If you're shipping large items (e.g. car, furniture), container shipping is the most economic option, but it can months for delivery. Air shipping is the most expensive method, but it is also the fastest.

Prices vary depending on the volume of the package and on its weight. Contact companies at least 3 months before you move to make sure to find availability, and confirm prices and transit time.

Make a declaration of value (an inventory with all your items and its estimated price). In case of loss or damage of goods, the total value is the compensation amount that the shipping company should provide you.

#### Considerations and suggestions:

If you need to receive certain personal belongings as soon as possible (e.g. clothes) you can opt to send them via air shipment, so you can collect them upon arriving, and the rest of the belongings by sea container.

Make a list with the belongings that you will require ahead so you don't forget anything. Include warm clothes for the cold Winters!

### **STEP 9 – Communications**

Keep in touch with family and friends!

Roaming fees can be expensive, so buying a SIM card is a must! SIM cards are sold all over the cities at phone shop and retail chain stores, such as Evroset\* or Svyaznoy, or at the offices of websites of the phone providers.

The major mobile network providers are:  
Mobile TeleSystems (MTS), MegaFon, BeeLine.  
Others, such as Tele 2 and Yota are also available.

Mobile phone plans are associated to a city. To save money, it is important to buy the SIM card in the city where you will live. If you adhere to a phone plan in a city but make calls from another city, rates will be higher. Internet service is included in mobile plans.

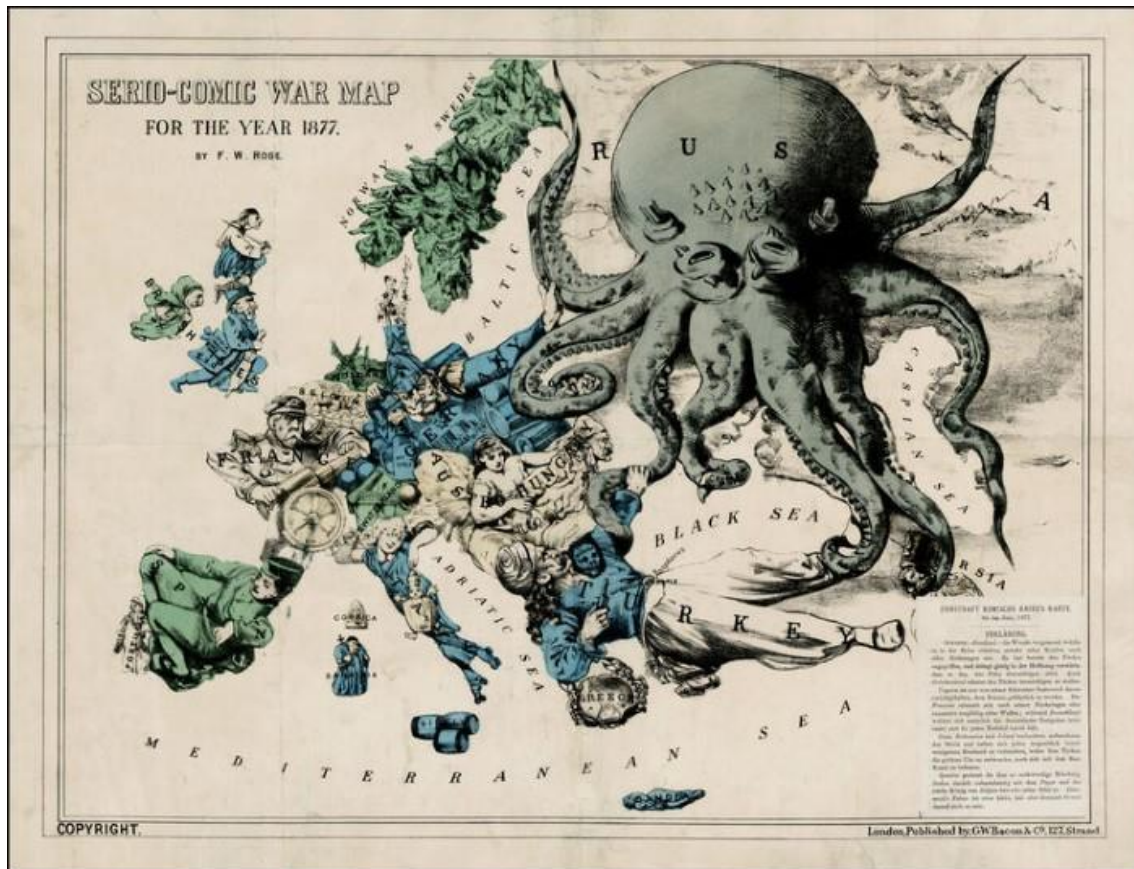
Prices vary. On average, for 1000 rubles (approx. 11€) one can have a mobile plan with unlimited internet data and over 1000 minutes for calling.

#### Considerations and suggestions:

Have your passport when buying a SIM card;  
Make sure your cell phone supports foreign SIM cards;  
Use the online mobile tariff calculator [moneymatika.ru](http://moneymatika.ru) to find a mobile plan that best fits your needs!



## Annex I – [Visual representation of negative myths about Russia]



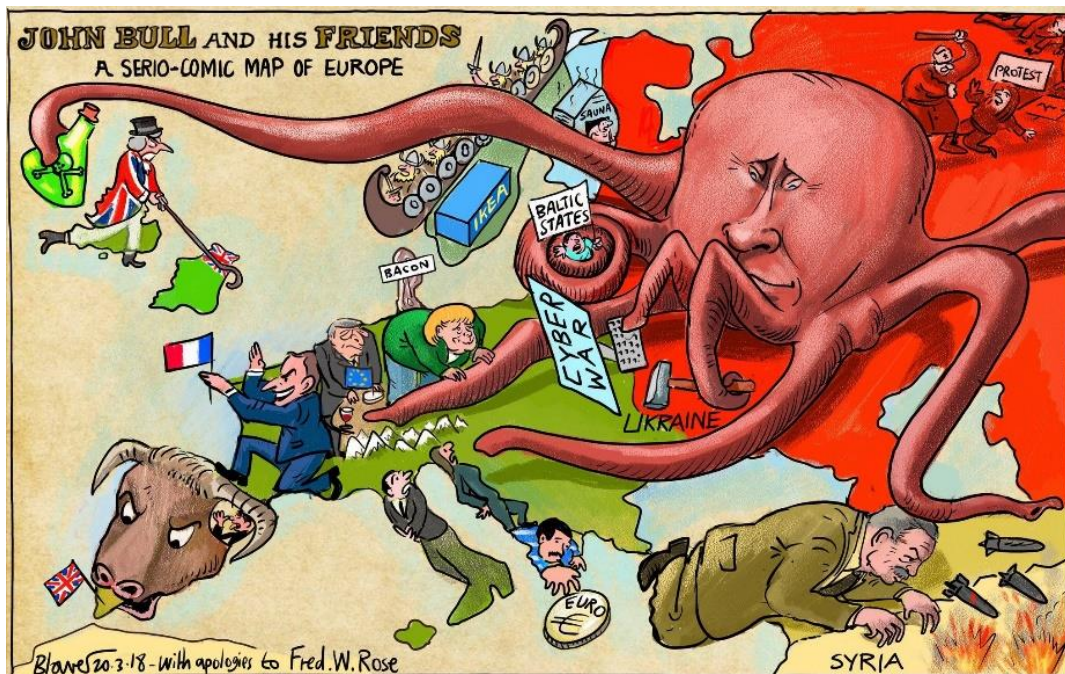
A caricature from the book *Медведи, казаки и русский мороз. Россия в английской карикатуре до и после 1812 г.* [Bears, Cossacks and Russian frost. Russia in English caricature before and after 1812] by В. Успенский, А. Россомахин and Д. Хрусталёв. (S. Petersburg: Арка, 2014).

Available in <http://русмир.рф/publications/228838/>



A caricature on the times of the USSR. Available in

<https://zen.yandex.ru/media/id/5d5991e992414d00ae94a7eb/pravda-li-zapad-pobedil-sssr--5d59ab1ac31e4900adeb0a37>.



A cartoon from 2018. Available in

[https://colonelcassad.livejournal.com/4062702.html?utm\\_source=embed\\_post](https://colonelcassad.livejournal.com/4062702.html?utm_source=embed_post).