

Dear friends and colleagues, staff members, and students of the Faculty of  
World Economics and International Relations!

Dear HSE fellows!

Three years ago, I asked the University management to let me retire as Dean of my beloved and wonderful faculty. We agreed that the first step would be for me to combine the duties of dean and academic supervisor. And while I began to get a little tired of the former, the latter continued to spur me onto new ideas and achievements.

I think I have done quite a few useful things in my life. My friends and I, for example, have created the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy. We founded the Valdai Club, now prospering. Together with Fyodor Lukyanov, we launched the publication of *Russia in Global Affairs*, one of the best journals on international relations in the world. Clearly, a most exciting achievement was the creation, together with you, of our faculty, which is now undoubtedly among the leading training and research institutions in this country and beyond.

I am grateful to fate. I thank Yevgeny Yasin and Yaroslav Kuzminov, who fifteen years ago persuaded me, a hitherto non-university person, to create a new faculty on entirely new academic and organizational principles. I remember with warmth and gratitude Igor Faminsky, who had previously founded a small—just one-seventh of the present—faculty of world economics, which served as the basis for establishing ours.

Then followed long and creative collective efforts to build a “seamless” faculty, where political economy is taught as it was originally conceived—with no gaps between economists, regional study experts, political scientists, and international relations specialists. Five years ago, we were joined by orientalists, who became one of the main pillars of the faculty, and I started promoting oriental studies—the most promising of the humanities.

We are proud of our graduates, who not only achieve personal success and prosperity, but also try to make the world a better place. That's what we teach them.

I will turn seventy next year. I wanted to retire before the anniversary. I always wanted to retire at the peak of the faculty's development and my career as its head. But COVID got in the way. It would have been improper to do so at a time of crisis. But now the crisis is becoming permanent and customary.

All these years I have been discussing with the University management who could head our faculty—a constellation of world-class minds with a super strong student team.

And I am happy to be handing over the reins of power to Anastasia Borisovna Likhacheva, now one of the youngest deans in the country. She embodies the best our faculty has: originally trained at the HSE as an economist, she completed our MA international relations program, and defended her thesis on the role of water in modern geoeconomics and geopolitics. For several years, Anastasia Borisovna successfully headed the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, our flagship research institute, and was the faculty's deputy dean for academic work. She's got a brilliant mind and she is a person of scrupulous honesty. And I am proud to have her among my closest associates and followers.

I have no doubt that she and her peers—and we have grown a splendid team of successors—have own fresh views, different from mine, on how the faculty and our beloved University should develop further.

I am handing over the faculty to her and to you. But I will not be staying away from its activities and the life of the University. At the suggestion of Nikita Yu. Anisimov, I will remain the academic supervisor of the faculty and I will help develop our Alma Mater. I will supervise a number of key research projects. I will continue to encourage all of us, and the elite, to follow the path that we, based on our analysis, consider right for our beloved country. And there is a little bit of our contribution to Russia's beginning to win today—our forecasts that have come true and our recommendations that have been taken into consideration.

I was a tough manager as dean, but I always sought to provide maximum freedom of thought and opinion, and create a friendly and warm human atmosphere at our faculty. There is almost no squabbling! We have a cool and smoothly working management team, and in principle, I could stay on for many more years with it. But I also know that in order to continue to lead and reach new frontiers, the faculty needs young blood and fresh ideas. My “weight” may sooner or later begin to slow down our movement forward.

Anastasia Borisovna, other faculty members, and our wonderful students should know that they can continue to count on my support, my authority, and my experience.

The highest value for me, except for serving the family, society, and, therefore, you my friends and colleagues, and my country, is personal freedom. In the remaining years I want to get closer to my ideal, have a little more time to read, think, and write. Otherwise, accustomed to lead, I will begin to lag behind. And, of course, I dream of wandering in fields and forests more—hunting is my favorite hobby. Yet my main passion is to influence ideology and the views of the political and intellectual elite. Needless to say, I will not give it up either.

I am retiring, but I am not leaving. I will stay with you to continue to develop the faculty and lead it to new, I am sure, shining heights.