



F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko

By email to: [REDACTED]

Our ref: 2017/0000300
February 2017

Thank you for your letter of 16 December 2016 to Nicola Sturgeon MSP, the First Minister for Scotland, about Russian language qualifications in Scotland. Your enquiry has been passed to me as the matter sits with my ministerial portfolio.

As you note, when Scotland's qualifications were revised to reflect changes in learning and teaching under Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) took the decision to remove a number of courses from the catalogue – including Russian. The decision to remove courses was made entirely on practical grounds, reflecting difficulties in maintaining standards in subjects experiencing consistently low uptake. Qualifications with consistently low candidate numbers have significant infrastructure, teacher training and capacity implications with clear consequences for ensuring standards, exam script and marking consistency from year to year. I would assure you that SQA's decision bore no reflection on the relative merit or value of Russian language or literature – which are considerable.

While Russian language courses were removed from the catalogue I would note that Russian continues to be available to learners through our Modern Languages for Work Purposes Units. Units are available at a variety of stages including SCQF levels 6 and 7, (of a comparable standard to Higher and Advanced Higher). Information on Modern Languages for Work Purposes can be found at: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/38219.html>.

In addition, Russian is also available as part of the Languages for Life and Work Award at SCQF levels 3 and 4. This Award is proving increasingly popular with schools and SQA is currently investigating the possible extension of this qualification to incorporate the more advanced SCQF levels. Information on Modern Languages for Life and Work Awards can be found at: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/57034.html>.

I trust you will find my reply helpful.

JOHN SWINNEY



Miller C (Carol-Ann)

From: [redacted] on behalf of First Minister
Sent: 28 March 2017 11:18
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: Invitation to lecture on the Middle East by V.Naumkin 3rd April
Attachments: image001.png; image003.png
Importance: High

Thank you to His Excellency Ambassador Yakovenko for inviting the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, to attend the lecture on the Middle East, at 17:00 on Monday 3 April at his residence in London.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, the First Minister will be unable to attend. Please pass on her apologies and best wishes to the Ambassador.

Kind regards

[redacted]



Office of the First Minister of Scotland
FirstMinister.gov.scot
Prìomh Mhinistear na h-Alba



[redacted]

[redacted]

From: RSVP 3 April Russian Embassy [redacted]
Sent: 26 March 2017 22:32
To: First Minister; Scottish Ministers
Subject: Invitation to lecture on the Middle East by V.Naumkin 3rd April
Importance: High



Non-Transferable



Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon
First Minister of Scotland

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
T: 0300 244 4000



Consul General Andrey Pritsepov
The Russian Federation
58 Melville Street
EDINBURGH
EH3 7HF
By email: [REDACTED]

Our ref: 2016/0014756
May 2016

Dear Consul General,

Thank you for your kind invitation to the First Minister to attend the National Day of Russia reception on 10 June.

Unfortunately, due to considerable diary pressures, the First Minister will be unable to attend. However, [REDACTED], Head of the International Relations Team, will be in attendance, to represent the Scottish Government.

The First Minister has asked me to pass on her best wishes.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
T: 0300 244 4000

Ambassador's Office
Russian Embassy in London
13 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QX

[REDACTED]

Our ref: 2017/0017658
May 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for extending the invitation, on behalf of Ambassador Vladimirovich, to the First Minister to attend the Reception celebrating the Russian National Day to be held on 13 June 2017 in London.

Unfortunately, due to considerable diary pressures, the First Minister will be unable to accept your kind invitation on this occasion. The First Minister has asked me to pass on her best wishes for the success of your event.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of First Minister

Sent: 16 May 2017 15:12

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Invitation: Reception to celebrate the National Day of Russia, Monday

12 June

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for inviting the First Minister, on behalf of the Consul General of the Russian Federation, Mr

Andrey A. Pritsepov and Mrs Alexandra Pritsepova, to attend a reception to celebrate the National Day of

Russia at the Merchants Hall, Edinburgh on the evening of Monday 12 June.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, the First Minister will be unable to attend. Please accept the

First Minister's apologies and our best wishes for an enjoyable reception.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]