

**Universal Periodic Review
(44th working group session)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information**

Russian Federation

I. RATIFICATION OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS

TITLE	Date of ratification, accession, acceptance or succession	Declarations/Reservations	Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies	Reference to the rights within UNESCO's field of competence
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Ratification: 01/08/1962			The right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Ratification: 12/10/1988			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Not ratified			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community
Convention on the Protection and	Not ratified			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community

Promotion of the Cultural Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)				
--	--	--	--	--

II. REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

A. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks

1. The Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993¹ enshrines the right to education in article 43(1) and “guarantees the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, material and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations, or of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, language or religious grounds shall be prohibited” (article 19(2)).
2. The Federal law on education of 2012² provides for compulsory “primary general education, basic general education, secondary general education” in article 66(5), which corresponds to 11 years. Article 5(3) further provides for “free of charge education in accordance with federal state educational standards of pre-school, primary general, basic general and secondary general education, secondary education vocational education, as well as on a competitive basis, free higher education, if the education of this level the citizen receives for the first time.”
3. Recommendation n° 147.283 of the previous UPR cycle covered enhancing efforts aimed at ensuring the realization of the rights of children to preschool education. While pre-primary school is free, no explicit legal provision has been identified making it compulsory.
4. The country recently adopted the following text:
 - State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019 – 2025: includes “creating favorable conditions by means of teaching for adaptation of children of migrants to

¹

<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/3f32c27e6ebf2c4e55180ccaa357d417d3d8ce56.pdf>

²

<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/778a477af793614d3ddb9d408fabadd7d24d0a1a.pdf>; https://legalacts.ru/doc/273_FZ-ob-obrazovanii/

Russian society”.³

Legal age of marriage

5. According to the Family Code of 1995, the age of marriage is 18 (article 13(1)), however, exceptions allow for marriage from 16 years with permission of the local public authorities (article 13(2)). Furthermore, the latter article allows for this age to be lowered by way of law.

Persons with disabilities

6. In line with Recommendation 147.289 of the previous UPR cycle, “for the period 2017-2018 the Concept for the development of psychological services in the education system in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 was approved. The professional standard "Educator-psychologist (psychologist in the field of education)" was introduced. On the basis of the Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution "Russian Academy of Education", the Federal Resource Center for the Psychological Service of the Education System was created.
7. Additionally, a professional skill competition "Abilympix" is held, the purpose of which is to provide effective vocational guidance and motivation for people with disabilities to obtain vocational education, to promote their employment and socio-cultural inclusion in society.”

Indigenous people

8. It was recommended in the previous UPR cycle (Recommendation N°147.293), that Russia should increase efforts to promote and preserve the languages of indigenous peoples, including through the education system. According to the 10th consultation national report⁴, “the current federal list of textbooks includes 222 textbooks in 11 native languages. Russian schools also study literature as an academic subject in the language of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, and in some constituent entities of the Russian Federation, additional geography or local history”.

Rural areas

9. Increasing access to free basic education for those living in rural areas was raised in the previous UPR cycle (Recommendations N°147.232 and N°147.233). It was reported that “Pedagogical workers living and working in rural settlements, workers' settlements (urban-type settlements) have the right to compensation for the cost of housing, heating and lighting”⁵, which contributes to ensuring the provision of education.

Enrolment rates

3

https://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/Russian_Federation_10th_Consultation.pdf

4

https://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/Russian_Federation_10th_Consultation.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

10. The gross enrolment rates (GER)⁶ in 2019 were:

- In pre-primary education: 86% in total, 85% for girls and 87% for boys;
- In primary education: 104% in total, 104% for girls and 105% for boys;
- In secondary education: 104% in total, 102% for girls and 105% for boys;
- In tertiary education: 86% in total, 93% for girls and 80% for boys.

Government expenditure

11. In 2020, the percentage of GDP allocated to education was 3.7% and the percentage of total government expenditure allocated to education was 8.9%.⁷ The Incheon Declaration of 2015 recommends to national governments an allocation of at least 4 - 6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and/or at least 15 - 20% of their total public expenditure to education.

Digital education

12. The Ministry of Education has developed a draft Concept for the development of a digital educational environment for teacher education.⁸ A single federal portal⁹ was created “where a databank of the best electronic educational programs and resources for organizing training for programs of additional professional (pedagogical) education is located”.

Discrimination in education (UNESCO consultations)

13. The Russian Federation submitted its national report for the 9th and the 10th Consultation on the implementation of the Convention and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.

B. FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Constitutional and legislative frameworks

14. The constitution of the Russian Federation under Article 29 states that “everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of ideas and speech”, that “everyone shall have the right to freely look for, receive, transmit, produce and distribute information by any legal way”, and that “the freedom of mass communication shall be guaranteed. Censorship shall be banned”.¹⁰

15. The Law on Providing Access to Information on the Activities of Government Bodies and Bodies of Local Self-Government was adopted in 2009 and provides users with the right to request information held by public

⁶ UIS data

⁷ sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org

⁸

https://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/Russian_Federation_10th_Consultation.pdf

⁹ <http://fedproekt.ru>

¹⁰ <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-03.htm>

authorities.¹¹

16. Defamation is a criminal offense under section 128.1 of the criminal code, with a maximum sentence of up to 5 years imprisonment for slander.¹²

17. In 2022, among other laws and amendments relating to curtailing the spread of 'fake news', the Russian Federation made amendments to articles 31 and 151 of the criminal code, introducing prison terms of up to 15 years for those convicted of knowingly disseminating false information about military operations, and 5 years imprisonment for those discrediting or calling for obstruction of the Russian military.¹³

Implementation of the law

18. The Law on Mass Media of 1991 and ordinances issued by the Government¹⁴ set down that the oversight agency Roskomnadzor remains the licensing body for all media.¹⁵ The agency operates under the Ministry of Communications and Mass Communication.

Safety of journalists

19. Since 2006, when systematic reporting began, UNESCO recorded 23 killings of journalists¹⁶ in the Russian Federation, 8 of these killings have been marked as unresolved [as at 31 January 2023].

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

20. Russian Federation should be encouraged to:

- i. Introduce at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education;
- ii. Consider revising the Family Code of 1995 to ensure that the only exception to lower the age of marriage below that of 18 is made by judicial decision and that the absolute minimum age of marriage is set at 16;
- iii. Consider increasing the percentage allocated to education to at least 4%-6% of GDP and/or at least 15%-20% of public expenditure in conformity with the Incheon Declaration;

¹¹ <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/28858>

¹²

http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_10699/8a73d26dba7976d6c43cc94aa1515368fef256f0/

¹³ <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203040007>

¹⁴ <https://rkn.gov.ru/chamber-of-commerce/p716/>

¹⁵ <https://rkn.gov.ru/eng/>

¹⁶ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory/country/223799>

- iv. Continue to submit regularly comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting instruments, and notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education;
- v. Share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's Observatory on the Right to Education¹⁷ and Her Atlas.¹⁸

B. FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- 21. The Russian Federation is recommended to decriminalize defamation and incorporate it into the civil code, in accordance with international standards.
- 22. The Russian Federation is recommended to review its media and digital legal frameworks to seek alignment with international human rights law.
- 23. The Russian Federation is recommended to continue investigating the cases of killed journalists and to voluntarily report on the status of judicial follow-up to UNESCO and to the SDG 16.10.1 monitoring processes.

C. RIGHT FREELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY (CULTURAL RIGHTS)

- 24. The Russian Federation is encouraged to ratify the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The UNESCO Culture Conventions promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, The Russian Federation is encouraged to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and civil society organizations, as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young people and persons with disabilities) and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

D. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

- 25. The Russian Federation did not submit its National Report on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017) for the

¹⁷ <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/index.php?action=countries&lng=en>

¹⁸ <https://en.unesco.org/education/girls-women-rights>

consultation period from 2017 to 2020. Therefore, the Russian Federation is encouraged to report to UNESCO on its implementation actions, especially noting legislative or other measures adopted by it with the aim to ensure application of these norms and standards in national law, policy and practice paying a particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure the implementation of human rights of scientific researchers themselves (rights of association, freedom of research, expression and publication, etc.) and human rights obligations related to the practice of science generally: the human rights related to access to and uses of scientific knowledge through education; the sharing of benefits of scientific progress and its applications; the principle of non-discrimination, requiring in this case active promotion of women and girls entering scientific careers; protection for the rights of human subjects of research; and promotion of the science society interface. Furthermore, the Russian Federation is encouraged to expand input on issues covered by the 2017 Recommendation in its national report to the UPR to allow further discussions thereon at the Human Rights Council and the formulation of specific recommendations. Within this framework, the Russian Federation is urged to consider expanding the scope of application of freedom of expression to include scientists and scientific researchers and also to address the relevant dimensions of the right to science in its reporting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the assessment of responses thereto.