

Education for Sustainable Development: Russian-Swedish Project

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Editorial. Environmentalist's Day in the Year of the Environment

On June 5, Russia marked the Day of the Environmentalist, which, as noted the chairman of the government D Medvedev "coincides with the World Environment Day". In the world, this day was held under the motto "For a sensible and balanced diet". In Russia, this slogan did not become popular, perhaps because it clearly does not resemble the motto of the country's Year of Environmental Protection. Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated the professionals working in the field of nature protection, members of the public, volunteers and all the people involved in the implementation, support and promotion of environmental programs. The message of the President, in particular, said:

"This day is not only a professional holiday for the specialists working in the field of environmental protection. Today we honour scientific organisations, volunteer organizations, activists, volunteers and simply sensitive, caring people. All those who by duty or vocation contribute to a large and very important cause - conservation of nature's wealth. Effective management of natural resources is the basis for a state's sustainable development and directly affects the conservation of flora and fauna of the planet, and most importantly - the quality of life and health of millions of people. The problems of environmental management and improving the quality of the environment is one of our important national priorities. Undoubtedly, these are areas where it is necessary to strengthen cooperation of authorities, the civil society and the business community. I note that 2013 is declared the Year of Environmental Protection in Russia. And this is a great opportunity for each of us to make a personal contribution to this noble cause. Only by combining efforts, we can succeed".

In accordance with tradition, the honorary title "Honoured environmentalist of the Russian Federation" was awarded by Presidential Decree. This time it was given to Andrew Nedra - Director of the Research Institute for Atmospheric Air Protection, the city of St. Petersburg and the director of the Russian office of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Igor Chestin. The Annual National Environmental Prize was also awarded in connection with the Day of the environmentalist . One of the winners was the environmentalist Suren Ghazaryan, member of the Environmental Watch on North Caucasus, known for his struggle against the illegal occupation of land in the Kuban. He received the award "Ecology and Civil Society".

However, the Environmentalist's Day clearly didn't become a national event even in the Year of Environmental Protection. For most Russians, it simply went unnoticed. It seems that, as before, the priorities of the country and its leaders do not always coincide ...

Yuri Mazurov, Moscow State University
jmazurov@yandex.ru

Two new national parks

Two new federal government budgetary institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia have been created: **Onega Pomorie National Park** (Arkhangelsk region) and **Beringia National Park** (Chukotka). The relevant decree was signed by the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev.

Onega Pomorie National Park (with a total area of over 201 hectares) was established in the north-western part of the Onega Peninsula and in the waters of Unskaya Bay in the White Sea. The purpose of the national park is to preserve and increase natural complexes and objects in the Arkhangelsk region that are of great environmental and scientific value. The area of the national park is the habitat of flora and fauna species included in the Red Book of Russia.

One of the primary tasks of Onega Pomorie's employees will be to "protect the unique arrays of northern taiga old-growth forests", and to implement environmental monitoring. Establishing the park is also important to preserve the culture and lifestyle of the Pomor population of the White Sea.

Beringia National Park (with a total area of 1.8 million hectares) was established in the Providensky, Chukotka and Iultinsky municipal areas of Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. The purpose of the national park is the preservation of unique natural and historical sites of the highland and lowland tundra and the coast of the Chukotka Peninsula, as well as creating conditions for the development of tourism and environmental education in the region.

According to Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment **Rinat Gizatulin**, the new parks have been established in the framework of the concept of development of the system of protected natural areas of federal significance for the period up to 2020. At present, the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources is developing a package of documents regulating the mode of operation of the national parks and also their staffing.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Meeting of the "Open Government" expert council

On June 18 Russian Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev** chaired a meeting in Irkutsk of the expert council of the "Open Government" on the environmental reform. The meeting was attended by representatives of environmental management, the business community and non-governmental organizations.

The venue for the meeting was predetermined by its main content. Thus, the Prime Minister said that the Baikal pulp and paper mill will be closed for two years, and its staff will be employed in the tourism industry. He pledged more than 40 billion rubles for the development of the Baikal after the closure of the facility. The development plan will be prepared by the end of this summer.

The Prime Minister agreed with the Greenpeace Russia's suggestion to increase the number of employees in state environmental agencies. The main regulatory agency, Rosprirodnadzor, has only 3,500 inspectors working throughout the country. This is quite insufficient for effective work, and thousands of violations by mineral and forest users simply go unnoticed. Additionally, Medvedev did not rule out the possibility of further discussion on the division of government functions for the use of natural resources and the protection of nature. This is consistent with our proposal to create a separate government department responsible for environmental protection. The current system, which combines in a single ministry the function of extracting maximum revenue from natural resources and protecting them, is completely ineffective.



Participants of the meeting of the "Open Government" expert council in Irkutsk: Russian Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev**, **Ivan Blokov**, Greenpeace Russia, **Sergey Donskoy**, the head of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, **Oleg Deripaska**, the company RUSAL, and others.

Photo from the site of the Prime Minister of Russia

After listening to Greenpeace program director **Ivan Blokov's** report about the catastrophic situation with oil spills in the Russian oil industry, the prime minister agreed on the need to toughen penalties for failure to provide data on hazardous emergency situations.

At a meeting with the Prime Minister WWF defended the bill on standardization WWF Russia's director of conservation policy, **Yevgeny Schwartz**, emphasized the need not to let a number of industry representatives block the bill on standardization in the field of environmental protection and economic incentives for the implementation of the best technology. The bill was developed by the Ministry of Environment in accordance with the instructions of the President after the meetings of the State Council in May 2010 and June 2011 and approved in the first reading by the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

This bill should create economic incentives for the companies whose emissions and discharges together account for more than half the amount of environment pollution Russia to in the near future implement and use the best available technology (BAT), and also aims to shift to a system of integrated permits for such enterprises. In addition, the bill will restore the mandatory environmental impact assessment for especially dangerous sites. These measures should help to reduce the pollution in our country. At the same time, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) and a number of large industrial groups suggest that the bill should not be accepted, and that a new system of government management in the field of environmental protection should be created, based on their concept of ecological industrial policy. RSPP suggest an environmental reform, and developing an Environmental Code, to in particular, regulate the impact of industry on the environment by agreements between the subjects of the Russian Federation, the population and businesses.

Minister Donskoy said at the meeting that the order on separated collection of waste in the buildings of the Ministry has already been signed. It is hoped that the officials, beginning the change themselves, will set a good example to other organizations.

Source: Press Services of the WWF Russia and Greenpeace Russia.

New report on Russia's mineral resources

The Russian Ministry of Natural Resources now publishes the State Report on the status and use of mineral resources of the Russian Federation in 2011. The document presents statistics information, based on data from industry and government, on stocks and mineral resources as of January 1, 2012, their geographical distribution, production and processing amounts.

The report also contains information about investments in the restoration of the mineral resource base of the country, information on the production of the major producing and processing companies, and an analysis of the main trends of the global mineral complex.

In 2011, the funding for geological exploration of mineral resources and rehabilitation of the mineral resource base from all sources amounted to 224.7 billion rubles. 20 billion rubles was allocated from the federal budget (almost 9% of the total investment). The expenditures of the subsoil users were 204.5 billion rubles, or more than 91% of the costs incurred. The share of the budgets of subjects of the Russian Federation, as in previous years, was negligible - 172.6 million rubles.

The expenditures from the federal budget on exploration in 2011 declined slightly compared to 2010. However, the tendency remains to strengthen the role of regional exploration works, which build the geological basis of rehabilitation of the resource base of any mineral raw materials.

The structure of the resource users' investments in the restoration of the Russian mineral resource base has not changed - most of them focused on work to build reserves and resources of hydrocarbons (HC), this is 83.1% of the total cost. Investments in this sector are growing in a similar pace for the second year: in 2010 they increased by 13% compared to the previous year, in 2011 - by 16%.

The growth rate of the users' expenditures on the reproduction of the subsoil resource bases of solid minerals (TPI) is significantly ahead of the corresponding figures in the sector of hydrocarbons. In 2010, investment in exploration work on the TPI rose against the previous year by 28%, in 2011 by almost 43%. The share of non-budgetary expenditure of funds for this purpose was 12.5% in 2009 and in 2011 reached 16.5%.

The report is an official document, prepared in order to provide public bodies, scientific and social organizations, and the Russian population with objective systematic information on the status and use of mineral resources. The text of the report can be found at the web-site of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Five-year plan for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation has published an action plan for the agency for the years 2013-2018. The document defines the formulation of goals and criteria that lead to achieving its performance objectives, within the framework of the main activities of the Government of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2018.

In particular, the plan identifies the following tasks: creating conditions for the formation of a favourable environment; protecting the population and vital functions from the effects of natural hazards; providing international legal registration of the external borders of the Russian Federation, including the outer limits of the continental shelf; guaranteeing the supply of natural resources for the sustainable social and Economic development of the Russian Federation. The full text of the plan can be found at the web-site of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The public council under the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment approved the agency's priorities for the years 2013-2018 at its meeting on June 27. The public council was invited to review the action plan of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation. The task of the assembled was to review the main goals and targets identified in the plan.

The plan consists of four special sections: creating conditions for the formation of a favourable environment; protecting the population and vital functions from the effects of natural hazards; providing international legal registration of the external borders of the Russian Federation, including the outer limits of the continental shelf; guaranteeing the supply of natural resources for the sustainable socio-economic development of the Russian Federation. The stated goals of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment fully correspond to the two main areas of public policy - creating conditions for efficient and effective environmental management and ensuring environmental safety.



Members of the Public Council under the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources at the meeting on June 27, from left to right: Prof. **Sergei Bobylev** (Moscow State University), **Ivan Blokov** (Greenpeace Russia), **Igor Chestin** (WWF Russia)

Photo from the web-site of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia

The priority goals stated in the plan will define the ideology of the activities of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources for the period up to 2018. Following the meeting, the members of the public council decided to conceptually approve the selected priority targets in the Ministry's five-year action plan.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Future of Environmental Management in Russia: Results of the Foresight Study

In 2012 the Moscow State University Foresight centre together with the Higher School of Economics held the series of various expert procedures. Approximately 300 experts were invited to participate in the research. One of the outputs of the above activities was the identification and ranking of global challenges and the most important emerging trends related to the environment that will influence Russia. According to experts, two different *global economic trends* can create the best opportunities for the S&T development in Russia: 1) the greening of the economy and “green growth”, and 2) the growth of offshore oil and gas production and the accelerated development of the Arctic. This result reflects the existing uncertainty in the choice of a long-term way of scientific and technological development, a kind of “bifurcation point” between the energy and raw materials based scenario and innovative-active direction of Russia's long-term technological development.

The expert assessment of the threats to Russia created by *social trends* is more balanced and includes, first and foremost, the increased morbidity due to air pollution and the urban population growth. In the survey, the experts noted the following windows of opportunity that appear in Russia in response to social challenges: the development of competitive technologies in monitoring of the atmosphere, the development of “eco-technologies” and the introduction of a new regulation system of admissible impact on the environment. It is expected that the number of Russian cities with high and very high levels of air pollution will decrease from 128 in 2012 to 50 in 2020, and the number of people affected by high pollution loads will reduce from 54 to 21 million (State Program of the RF “Environmental Protection until 2020”, 2012).

Expert assessment of the impact of global *technological trends* in Russia is largely consistent with the priorities of the national environmental policy. The overwhelming majority of experts pointed out the importance of recycling and disposal of toxic substances (96% of the experts), recycling and reuse of waste water (94%). The implementation of these trends could also lead to a fundamental transformation of existing markets. Another important technological trend that creates opportunities for Russia is the development of supercomputing technologies and storage systems that are suitable for modelling and prediction of climate, cryosphere and ecosystems change (noted by 90% of experts). Other windows of opportunities for Russia come from the advanced technologies of deep processing of hydrocarbons (indicated by 85% of experts), development of new technologies for their production (80%) and the development of stranded hydrocarbons (75%). The realization of these trends over the long term will lead to increased economic efficiency of oil and gas industry, which is within the scope of the “Energy Strategy of Russia until 2030”. The use of new technologies of oil and gas production and deep processing of hydrocarbons can significantly change Russian markets of petrochemicals, chemicals, machinery and transport.

It is significant that the trends associated with green growth and green economy were not considered a priority by the Russian experts. Their importance was specified by a significant, but smaller proportion of the experts: the trend “Spread of materials with new properties, including energy-efficient, and green construction technologies” was indicated as an important one by 79% of the experts, “The emergence of eco-friendly transport” – by 76% of the experts, “Development of alternative energy technologies” – by 71% of the experts. It is the implementation of these trends together with the development of appropriate institutions and regulatory mechanisms that can dramatically transform the existing Russian markets by changing key players (for example, due to the emergence of the market of secondary raw materials and products based on the processing of wastes and wastewaters, the environmental equipment markets, markets of resource-saving technologies, etc.) or consumer preferences (markets for environmentally-friendly materials and green products).

Among the *environmental challenges* the greatest opportunities for Russia are connected, according to experts, with the trend “Climate change”, and the effects are seen far enough – only in 2024. Russian climatologists believe that this trend creates a near-term threat including the increasing intensity of dangerous and extreme hydrometeorological processes, and in the medium term it can create both threats and opportunities.

Despite the fact that the threats and windows of opportunities will appear later than 2020, it’s high time to work out the response procedures. It is a serious challenge for science, technology and innovation policies implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation.

Nina Alekseeva , *Moscow State University*
nalex01@mail.ru

Meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee

A delegation from Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment took part in the 37th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC), held in Phnom Penh (Kingdom of Cambodia). As part of the work, the WHC on 18-19 June 2013 discussed the state of preservation of five Russian natural objects on World Heritage List of UNESCO: Western Caucasus, Lake Baikal, Pristine Komi Forests, Golden Mountains of Altai and Volcanos of Kamchatka.

The decisions made by UNESCO WHC on these issues reflect the real state of affairs in the Russian natural objects. Russia's efforts to fulfil the obligations arising from the UNESCO Convention and

previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee sessions were generally assessed positively.

In addition, the WHC supported Russia's intent to prepare proposals to adjust the boundaries of the World Heritage sites Western Caucasus and Pristine Komi Forests to the format prescribed by new UNESCO nominations. These decisions of the 37th session are also important in the context of the prospects for socio-economic development in North Caucasus and the Komi Republic.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee member states noted with satisfaction the progress made in the preservation of Lake Baikal. This development has been stimulated by Russian 18, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's announcement on closing the Baikal Pulp and Paper Mill, made June 2013, as well as the existing Russian ban on the development of new mineral deposits within the Central ecological zone of the Baikal natural territory.

According to Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment **Rinat Gizatulin** it is of particular importance that the examination of all issues on the Russian sites on the World Heritage List was held in the format of discussions with representatives of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and experts from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). "We appreciate this attention to the protection of nature in Russia paid by international organizations and, most importantly, their deeply professional, balanced and unbiased assessment of the actual state of affairs," said R. Gizatulin.

The Deputy Minister also noted the constructive cooperation between the Russian Federation and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and IUCN, and expressed his appreciation for the sincere and substantive interest in the preservation of the unique natural heritage of Russia shown by the partners from Germany, Switzerland, India, Serbia, South Africa, Namibia and other countries.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Eco-TV in Russia

As part of Environmentalist the first digital eco-TV in Russia was presented - **SkyLeaf Eco TV**, which will broadcast 24 hours a day online. Currently, discussions are underway to establish an extensive network of bureaus and broadcasting stations throughout Russia. There are plans to open their own TV studio in the city of Sochi. The founder of the first eco-channel is the international environmental movement Terra Viva, which is chaired by **Nikolai Drozdov**.



It is expected that the channel SkyLeaf Eco TV will be headed by the famous TV presenter and, apparently, the most famous figure in the country in the area of wildlife protection, Doctor of Biological Sciences, Professor Nikolai Drozdov. His main workplace remains the geography department of Moscow State University.

Photo by Natalia Mushchinkina, web-site of the newspaper Zeleny Mir (Green World)

The environmental channel will tell about scientific expeditions, do live broadcasts from nature reserves and show films about nature. "This channel is one of the first examples of public television," reports the press service of the environmental movement. "It is aimed at the widest possible audience, people of all ages, nationalities and social groups, regardless of their mentality, cultural and economic backgrounds. The main objective of the project is to create a single, global environmental media space."

The supervisory board of SkyLeaf Eco TV will include more than forty well-known people, including the Chief Inspector of the Russian Federation for the Protection of Nature Natalia Sokolova, the First Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Natural Resources, Environmental Management and Ecology Maxim Shingarkin, Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management Konstantin Tsybko, the First Vice-President of the Russian Geographical society Arthur Chilingarov and many others.

Source: Web-site of the newspaper Zeleny Mir (Green World).

Eco-innovation in the context of green growth and sustainable development

A Russian-Swedish educational seminar with this name was held at the Department of Geography at Moscow State University 3-4 June 2013, on the eve of World Environment Day and the Russian Day of the Environmentalist. This seminar was the final one in a series of events organized in the framework of the Russian-Swedish project on Education for Sustainable Development, which began in 2008 and has lasted successfully for 5 years.

The project was initiated in 2008 by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, SEPA, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation. For the implementation of the project a consortium of leading Russian and Swedish universities was formed, which from the Russian side included the Russian Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation (today RANHiGS - the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation) and Moscow State University, and from Sweden the universities of Lund and Uppsala and Luleå University of Technology.

After successful completion of the first phase of the project in 2009, it was decided to continue the project. The aim of the second phase of the project, initially designed for 2010-2012, was defined as exchange of experiences in the field of education for sustainable development, as well as the identification and improvement of new educational methods for the education of civil servants in the field of sustainable environmental management in Russia. An important indicator of the success of the project was another decision to extend it to 2013.

The final seminar in the framework of this project - Environmental Innovation for green growth and sustainable development - was dedicated to the introduction of environmental innovation in Russia and Sweden, and their role in the transition to sustainable development. The seminar was organized for teachers of higher education interested in the effective implementation of the ideology of sustainable development and has collected more than 40 teachers in the Moscow region, as well as Vladimir, Kazan, Saratov, Yekaterinburg, Irkutsk and Minsk.

The main part of the presentations was given by Swedish university lecturers: Prof **L Ryden**, Dr. **O Hage** and **K Boström**. Along with them, thematically important messages with a focus on eco-innovation were introduced by Russian experts: Professor **Yu Mazurov** (Moscow State University), Dr **E Gubin** (Tomsk Polytechnic University) and Dr **A Chulok** (Higher School of Economics). The lectures aroused great interest among the participants, which resulted in active discussions and proposals to continue the dissemination of experience of similar seminars in other regions of Russia.



The seminar was opened by the scientific project supervisor, Dean of Geography of Moscow State University, Academician **N Kasimov**. A welcoming speech to the participants of the seminar was held by the head of the Department of Economics and Trade of the Swedish Embassy in Russia, Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. **Martin Öberg**.

Dr A Avdonina, representing the Vladimir branch of RANHiGS shared her experience on the development of the activities initiated under the project. After organizing such a seminar for civil servants in Vladimir, the branch staff are actively developing scientific and educational contacts with universities in Sweden, which allows to get acquainted with the latest developments in Sweden by the introduction of interactive methods in the educational process: the Swedish lecturers regularly conduct video lectures, which are very popular among students of the academy.

A significant part of the seminar was devoted to working on seminar topics in small groups and presenting their results in plenary sessions. In addition, an important part of the seminar was ample opportunities for informal contacts with the Swedish experts and with each other.

At the end, a representative of the Agency for the Swedish Environmental Protection (SEPA), the coordinator of the Russian-Swedish cooperation on the protection of the environment, Mr **Å Mikaelsson** presented the participants with personal certificates.



The seminar, by all accounts, achieved its goals, met the expectations, and was successful and rewarding in many ways. When summarizing, the participants expressed words of gratitude to the Swedish and Russian organizers, as well as suggestions to continue the practice of the Russian-Swedish cooperation in the field of education for sustainable development.

The Russian organizers have received many positive responses to the seminar after its completion as well. The seminar participants thanked for the opportunity to develop professional contacts with the representatives of Swedish universities, as well as with colleagues from the Russian universities. Many participants shared their contacts and best practices in the field of eco-innovation and the application of best practices in this field in Russia.

Information about the workshop (in Russian) can be found at the web-site of the geographical faculty of Moscow State University: http://www.geogr.msu.ru/news/news_detail.php?ID=8185

Alla Pakina, *Moscow State University*
allapa@yandexl.ru

Environmentalists and "foreign agents"

Russian non-governmental environmental organizations have held a press conference at the Interfax news agency, where they spoke about the fact that the Law on foreign agents already causes problems for environmentalists, who are working in the interests of Russian society. Greenpeace Russia, WWF Russia, the Nature Conservation Center, SPOK (Karelia) and the Siberian Environmental Center (Novosibirsk) explained how the law makes life difficult for environmentalists.

"The law has two articles listing what is considered political activities, and what is not. Some important areas of social work of NGOs cannot be considered political. These include the environmental direction," explained **Igor Chestin**, director of WWF Russia. However, despite the fact that the activities of the organizations SPOK (NGO working in Karelia) and the Siberian Environmental Center (Novosibirsk) have exclusively environmental focus, they have been issued a warning.

"Our organization's charter stipulates that we can make suggestions to government authorities. And thus, what Ministry of Justice used call social activities, has suddenly become politics," said the chairman of the Council of the Siberian Environmental Center (Novosibirsk) **Alexander Dubinin**. SPOK and the Siberian Environmental Center will fight for the right to protect the environment. In the meantime, they face closure if they do not agree to work under the label of "foreign agent". And they do not agree, which is both logical and reasonable.

In public consciousness, the term "foreign agent" is associated with operating for the interests of a foreign country. But environmental groups cannot be called foreign agents, because they work in the interests of Russian society. And interestingly, the purpose of nature conservation is often contrary to the interests of foreign companies. There is also the paradoxical situation that sometimes the governmental agencies do their best to sell Russian natural resources to foreign companies. One example would be the situation with the Yugyd Va national park.

Moreover, the young Russian civil society is not yet ready to collaborate with organizations that have been pasted labels. There are already examples of this. *"We call on the authorities and the prosecution not to put labels on environmental organizations, but to make full use of their potential to oversee compliance with environmental legislation, as stipulates the state policy in the field of environmental development approved by the President of the Russian Federation,"* said **Ivan Blokov**, director of Greenpeace Russia. *"Only by joint efforts of civil society and the state, we will be able to stop the process of destruction of the global environment and preserve our natural heritage,"* he stated.

This is why the NGOs participating in the press conference said they do not believe it possible to register as foreign agents under any circumstances. The press conference participants addressed the President of Russia with a proposal to take all necessary measures to bring the Law on foreign agents in accordance with the Russian Constitution or abolish it, and also demanded that the Prosecutor General's Office immediately withdraw the public warnings about the submission and registration as foreign agents issued to environmental organisations.

The environmental organizations believe that rather than searching for foreign agents in the ranks of the defenders of nature, the prosecutors should fulfill their direct duties: to protect the rights of citizens and to draw attention to law violations against the environmental activists.

Source: Press Service of Greenpeace Russia.
