



In memoriam

In memory of Vladimir Didyk

We write these words to honour the memory of Vladimir Didyk, Research Director of the Institute for Economic Studies at the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Our colleague and friend, he suddenly passed away all too young on 10 July, 2015. Since the early 1990s, Vladimir participated in international scientific collaboration and was one of the enthusiastic Russian pioneers of research cooperation in the Barents Region and beyond. He was the leader and a participant of a large number of joint research projects with researchers from Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United States, Finland, and Sweden. We express our gratitude to all our colleagues from these countries who sent us letters of condolence and support. The more than 50 letters show that Vladimir had many colleagues and friends in the international research community working with him for many years.

Vladimir Didyk was born on 29 March, 1957 in the L'vov region in Ukraine. From 1963 to 1974 he studied in secondary school, which he finished with a gold medal, and entered the economic faculty of L'vov Polytechnic Institute. In 1979 he graduated from the Institute with honours, qualifying as an engineer-economist (in economy and organization of construction) and worked for three years in road construction organizations of the Ministry of Road Construction of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1979–1982).

In 1982 he came to the Kola North and the town of Apatity in the Murmansk region to work at the construction company Apatitstroy, a construction giant in the field of civil and industrial construction in the region. He worked there until 1989 as an economist and senior engineer on labour and wage issues. Vladimir started working in the Institute for Economic Studies of the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IES KSC RAS) in 1989 and rose professionally from junior researcher to a prominent scientist and respected leader (junior researcher, head of department, scientific secretary, research director, director).

His whole career was devoted to the prosperity of the far northern part of Russia, but he never forgot his roots in Ukraine. With great warmth he spoke about Ukraine, took time to meet his classmates, cherished his mother tongue, and enjoyed doing the Ukrainian folk dance *hopak* at corporate parties, impressing guests of the Institute along the way. After entering the world of science in 1989, Vladimir defended his PhD thesis in 1995 on “The principles and methods of forming organizational structures of management of construction firms under the market conditions”. In 2004 he was awarded the academic title of associate professor in “Economics and management of national economy”. His professional interests included investment activities, and in recent years, problems of socio-economic development of municipalities in the North and the Arctic, where he stood out as a specialist of the regional economy, and problems of the North and the Arctic. He was one of the leading developers of the draft strategy of socio-economic development of the Murmansk region until 2025.

Vladimir is the author of over 100 scientific publications, including five monographs, and many of his articles and reports were published internationally. He was the scientific leader and an executive in charge of research carried out under contract with Russian state authorities and organizations as well as with foreign universities and research organizations. He contributed to the development of analytical reports and expert evaluations of drafts laws, legal acts, and other federal and regional documents.

For many years Vladimir participated actively in international scientific cooperation. He was one of the first Russian students in the Arctic Study Programme at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland in 1993, and, as Dr Lassi Heininen, coordinator of the Program at the time, wrote in his letter of condolence, “Vladimir was both clever and worked hard and never gave up easily”. He was also a visiting researcher at the University of Tromsø, Department of Economics, in 1995 and in the Centre for Regional Science (CERUM) at the University of Umeå in 1996. These first international cooperation experiences were very important for him. He recalled with gratitude his colleagues from Rovaniemi, Tromsø and Umeå who involved Russian researchers in cooperation in the early 1990s and who gave a lot of attention and support to the newcomers. He always remembered the invaluable support which he received from his foreign colleagues after the car accident where he was injured in 2000.

Vladimir was the leader and a participant of more than 20 joint international research projects. He always understood and stressed the importance of international scientific cooperation in the development of Russian science and our Institute. He was open and interested in new knowledge, and international research cooperation inspired him to implement new ideas in his organizational and research work. He gave his last presentation “*Development challenges of a mining single-industry town in the Russian Arctic: the case of Kirovsk, Murmansk region*” on 5 June, 2015 at George Washington University (Washington, USA), at the conference “Promoting Arctic Urban Sustainability in Russia” in the framework of the international research project ARCSUS (Arctic Urban Sustainability), of which he was part since 2013.

Vladimir Didyk realized his talent as an academic and as an organizer. His research, international collaboration, and educational work showed him to be an erudite and active manager, who skilfully combined scholarly pursuits and educational activities and thereby contributed to the prosperity of the Murmansk region and the Russian North. Taking an active part in educating professional staff, he was a lecturer of economic disciplines and supervised diploma work in the branches of St. Petersburg State Economic University (Apatity) and Kostroma State University (Kirovsk). Vladimir participated in establishing the international organization of the University of the Arctic and was a member of the Board of the International University of the Arctic. He was a scientific adviser to postgraduate students, a member of the Dissertation Council of IEP KSC RAS, and willingly promoted talented young people. His professionalism, diligence, and sense of responsibility earned him collegial respect and recognition both in the Russian and international scientific communities. Throughout his career, Vladimir was honoured with diplomas and awards of municipal administrations, the Government of the Murmansk Region and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Vladimir was the head of a large and happy family. He was a wonderful family man. Together with his wife Ludmila, he brought up three good children, who received an excellent education in leading universities of Russia and abroad.

Vladimir was attentive to everybody and always ready to help. On the wall above the desk in his office he kept a note with the words of N. Shmelev, Russian economist and Director of the Institute of Europe of Russian Academy of Sciences:

“To build a normal, human, socially oriented society we do not need any special theories... We need something else: mere common sense, plus the four rules of arithmetic, plus a bit of compassion for the people”.

We will remember Vladimir as
an open-minded researcher,
hard-working man, faithful friend
and as an exceptionally kind person.

*Vladimir Didyk's colleagues and friends
at the Institute for Economic Studies,
Kola Science Centre RAS*

Larissa Riabova, Ludmila Ivanova and Nina Rumyantseva