

## Visiting SPbPU: how Telegram channel helps foreign students to conquer Russia

St. Petersburg Polytechnic University is buzzing with life: the other day the university was visited by an unusual guest — a representative of the popular Telegram channel [«Adventures of Foreigners in Russia»](#) — Arina Rylova. The meeting at the university turned into a real brainstorming session: activists of student organizations supervising the adaptation of foreign guests shared their experience, and the guest shared success stories and plans for the future.



Imagine: a student from Nigeria comes to Russia, gets lost in a pile of documents, doesn't know where to run. We become his guides, the channel representative begins the presentation. The project, which has united tens of thousands of subscribers, works as a multilingual bridge between foreigners and Russian bureaucracy. Through a bot integrated with Mincifra, the guys promptly solve migration issues, and in the channel in five languages (Chinese, English, French, Arabic, Spanish) they publish «lifehacks»: how to open an account, extend a visa or find a doctor.



But this is just the tip of the iceberg. The channel is also a social elevator. Last year our activists visited SPIEF and the Russia-Africa forum, says the speaker proudly. the guys were able to communicate with the leaders of their countries!"

The faces of the channel's heroes flash on the screen. Here is Ibrahim from Algeria — he came to study, learned Russian so that he got citizenship, and now runs a blog for his fellow countrymen. Next to him is a smiling student from Africa, whose blog about life in Russia was noticed by Yandex and invited to work. We don't just give information — we open doors," emphasizes the speaker.

In response, SPbPU's student leaders demonstrate their ecosystem of support. PolyUnion is a whole world:

- Adapters and tutors meet newcomers at the airport with signs in their native language, help with documents, and even teach them how to pay for the subway;
- The Council of Compatriots from 20 countries organizes Nowruz, Chinese New Year and excursions to St. Petersburg and other Russian cities. The guys act as a liaison between students and the university administration;
- The Women's Club creates a safe space for female students, from cooking workshops to career advice;
- The UN model turns classrooms into diplomatic arenas where foreigners hone their Russian in heated debates.



International students of Polytechnic University try to take part in activities outside our university. Our volunteer group recently visited Rzhevka, where we spent time walking dogs from the local shelter. For many students who had left their pets at home, this trip was special — they were happy to interact with the animals, play with the kitties and share their warmth with those who need it, shared Alexandra Le Gall, one of the leaders of PolyUnion and the inspirer of the 'Women's Club'.

In addition to helping animals, PolyUnion is actively involved in organizing humanitarian support for countries in difficult situations. For example, in previous years they collected aid for Syria and Turkey, and now they are organizing an action for Myanmar. Collection points are open in the main building of the university, Interclub and dormitory: there you can bring clothes, medicines, durable food and other necessary things. Everything collected through the embassy will be sent to Myanmar to support people affected by the crisis.

The Polytechnic Media Center told about joint projects with foreign students, including the development of instruction cards for foreign applicants wishing to study at Polytechnic University.

The meeting culminated in joint plans: the first candidates from Polytechnic University will take part in the Summer International Channel Rally, which will become a platform for training bloggers.

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