



## **Soil-geographical and ecological tour in West-Russia: 20 years anniversary**

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Soil-geographical and agro-ecological tour in Russia celebrated in this summer its 20 years anniversary! More than 800 students, PhD students and researcher from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden and France participated at the tour since 1993. The majority of the participants were students studying soil science, geoecology, geography, agriculture and ecology.

The tour is based on a classical Russian zonal approach: a cross-section of climatic zones starting from south taiga, through deciduous forest, forest steppe, steppe, dry steppe, to semi dessert and transition to the desert zone. In each zone the specifics of climate, vegetation, nutrient cycling, and of course soil genesis as well as soil use by forestry and agriculture are described. Half of the soil group units of WRB classification (2006) are presented on about 35 soil profile pits and are described with focus on pedogenic processes and soil forming factors. The following soil groups are described in details by horizons according to WRB soil classification (2006): Arenosols, Podzols, Albeluvisols Histosols, Gleysols, Luvisols, Phaeozems, Chernozems, Kastanozems, Calcisols, Vertisols, Leptosols, Fluvisols, Solonetz, Solonchaks.

In addition to natural conditions, large-scale experiments designing agricultural landscapes (stone steppe), biosphere reserves and conservation areas (Tula-Schneisen, Divnogor'je, Baskunchak), as well as collective agricultural farms (previously kolkhoz) are visited to evaluate the anthropogenic effects on ecosystems and especially on soils. The 2.5 weeks bus journey through many villages and small towns, visits of museums and historical monuments, introduction in the settlement development of different regions provide a broad presentation of Russian history, traditions, life style, and contemporary state. So, combination of very diverse educational part focused on soil and environmental conditions with anthropogenic impacts and local history as well as recent socioeconomic developments make the tour unique and very attractive for BSc and MSc students and soil science professionals.

Detailed information about the next tour is under: [www.uni-goettingen.de/soilrus](http://www.uni-goettingen.de/soilrus)