

Секция «Иностранный язык»

BELARUS IN THE EYES OF THE FOREIGNER

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## **Introduction**

From the very beginning, communication has been an integral part of our life. It develops understanding among people. Problem solving, writing, reading, understanding - none of these would be possible without communication. In the concept of communication, we are talking primarily about the exchange of information of various kinds between the subjects of communication [2]. The evolution of communication is an ongoing process. With the development of modern technology, communication methods are changing. We used different ways of communication. The first stage was various print media, then newspapers and magazines appeared. The second stage is the invention of radio and television. The third stage is computerization and the Internet [1].

But a postcard as a form of communication still does not lose its relevance. It is a convenient and pleasant means of communication that originated over a hundred years ago in Europe. The postcard serves as a symbol of openness, politeness, a positive outlook on the world. Being an easy form of communication, a postcard can be a sign of attention, an expression of politeness, sympathy, an invitation to a significant event, a reminder of something, an advertisement for a product or service, etc.

In our daily life, advertising is presented practically at every step. Advertising campaigns directed at us from the TV screen, periodicals, radio, do not go unnoticed by us. If it is not possible to launch a wide advertising campaign, you can work out and implement original advertising ideas that do not require large financial investments. Such advertising will work due to its originality.

Such an original idea can be called advertising campaign using advertising postcards.

An advertising postcard is a fairly effective way to convey information about goods and services to a rather specific target group - young, socially and economically active people aged 20-35. This audience, as a rule, is not very receptive to "traditional" advertising media. They rarely watch TV, listen to music only on the

radio, instantly changing the channel at the very mention of an advertising break and prefer highly specialized magazines. To "hook" such a spoiled consumer, the entire city must be tightly covered with banners and billboards - only then there is a chance to be seen from the car window. Or just use postcards.

In this regard, we hypothesized that through a visual representation of the country, through a postcard, it is possible to broaden the horizons of foreign respondents.

The purpose of our work is to analyze the information obtained in the process of exchanging postcards with foreign respondents within the framework of the Postcrossing.com project.

To achieve this goal, we had to solve the following tasks:

- consider the concept of communication and its forms;
- consider a postcard as a way of advertising;
- use the Postcrossing.com resource as a way to expand the cultural picture of the country;
- analyze the information received through postcards and thank-you messages;
- to determine the number of respondents and the ratio of countries with and without knowledge of the Republic of Belarus;
- submit our own block of postcards.

We chose postcards and reciprocal messages as the object of our research. And the subject of the research was the words-associations about the Republic of Belarus.

This work consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of used literature and four appendices.

## **Chapter 1. Communication. Its types and forms**

Communication is the exchange of ideas, thoughts, intentions, feelings and information between people. Communication is the main way of transferring information between people. Only in communication there is a mutual exchange of activities, interests, feelings, and also a person is formed and self-determined, revealing his individual characteristics [3].

There are five types of communication:

1. Cognitive communication.
2. Persuasive communication.
3. Expressive communication.
4. Suggestive communication.
5. Ritual communication.

Traditionally, two forms of communication are distinguished: verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal communication involves the transmission of information using the movements of the human body. In verbal communication, words of the human language are used as symbols. In its turn, verbal communication is divided into oral and written. Oral communication is most effective in terms of attracting the attention of the recipient to information, as well as receiving feedback. Written communication provides a higher degree of purity of information transfer and allows you to keep it unchanged for an indefinite time.

According to experts, three-quarters of the communicative interaction of people consists of speech (verbal) communication. In the process of communication, people mutually influence each other, exchange various ideas, interests, moods, feelings, etc. For this, each culture has created its own language system, with the help of which its speakers have the opportunity to communicate and interact. In science, various forms of linguistic communication are called verbal means of communication. Verbal communication is understood as linguistic communication, expressed in the exchange of thoughts, information, emotional experiences of the interlocutors [4].

In other words, it is the process of exchanging words, signs or information with others. Communication allows us to transfer information. We understand others through communication. Effective communication brings people closer together. Good communication is important for every person.

We use different ways of communication every day. For example, starting from our daily email to the radio we listen to. The process of communication is going on everywhere. It would be impossible to live without communication. The main goal is to clearly bring our messages to each other.

Technology has changed the way we communicate. New devices appear every year. We use them to communicate. The Internet has made the development of communication easier and more efficient. We can send messages with just one click. Computers, mobile phones, laptops, radio help us communicate.

Some people think that letters and postcards are antiquated means of communication. We, on the contrary, see that the Internet has given a new impetus to correspondence by mail.

## Chapter 2. Postcrossing.com

It's no secret that fewer and fewer people are now writing paper letters to each other. And why do we need envelopes and paper if e-mail will deliver your message to the addressee in a split second to any corner of the world. But there are those who remain faithful to the good old postal service. Specifically, paper cards. And there are a lot of such enthusiasts at present.

Last year the Postcrossing.com project celebrated its 15th anniversary. A project was created to exchange postcards through real mail. This online platform was invented by a Portuguese computer student Paulo Magalhaes. He conceived to unite people all over the world, regardless of their location, age, gender, race or beliefs. "Thanks to postcards the world becomes happier," says the Portuguese.

Postcrossing is a project created for the possibility of receiving postcards from all over the world [5]. The principle of postcards exchange is based on a single base of all project participants, as well as a mechanism for issuing addresses, aimed at ensuring that the difference between sent and received postcards for each participant is minimal. At the same time, in Postcrossing, there is an indirect exchange system, that is, by sending postcards to one user, the participant receives them from another.

On the one hand, the idea seems strange: if you really want a postcard, you can buy it yourself. But exchange gives a completely different feeling, it's like receiving gifts. You wait, worry, wonder what you will get. And you also seem to be in a large global group of like-minded people - the feeling of belonging is lost in the modern world, so even such an unpretentious activity as Postcrossing helps to keep it. And in the end, this is communication, because the Postcrossing participant signs each postcard. So finding a friend for correspondence from the other end of the Earth is real!

The popularity of Postcrossing has led not only to a revival of demand for postcards, but also made them such a relevant commodity, that online stores began to appear in many countries, specializing exclusively in the sale of exclusive postcards.

In addition to pleasant surprise, unexpected delight and joy of learning, Postcrossing can be used as a means of intercultural communication, a source of linguistic and cultural knowledge.



### **Chapter 3. Postcard as one of the types of advertising**

It is most likely that advertising in human society originated simultaneously with trade. Its existence in prehistoric times is confirmed, for example, by the Egyptian papyrus announcing the impending sale of a slave. Written advertising was embodied, in addition to papyrus scrolls and wax tablets, with inscriptions on roadside stones, as well as on buildings.

However, advertising would probably never have received such widespread distribution if humanity had not once discovered the era of mass communications. The first impetus for this was typography.

Another important event was the invention and subsequent spread of the art of photography around the world by the middle of the 19th century. The photograph served as irrefutable proof of the benefits of the advertised product. It can be said without exaggeration that it was the 20th century that became the "century of advertising" - after all, it is precisely this time that profound changes and innovations in the field of organization and technology of advertising belong [5].

The postcard is the most common type of print. It is a sheetfed publication of a prescribed format, one side of which is a reproduction, drawing or photograph, and the other can be used for writing or text to explain the image.

Having emerged more than a century ago as a means for sending messages (a postcard is an open letter), this type of art has over time turned into a mass means of communication, aesthetic education and imaginative knowledge of the world around us.

An advertising card is a fairly effective way to convey information about goods and services to a rather specific target group - young, socially and economically active people aged 20-35 [6]. This audience, as a rule, is not very receptive to "traditional" advertising media. They rarely watch TV, listen to only music on the radio, instantly changing the channel at the very mention of an advertising break, magazines prefer highly specialized ones. But after a busy day, they, as a rule, do not go home, but to entertainment and leisure facilities (clubs, cafes, entertainment

centers, multiplexes, and finally, fitness centers), where they spend most of their free time. To "hook" such a spoiled consumer, the whole city must be tightly covered with banners and billboards - only then there is a chance to be seen from the car window. Or use postcards.

Decorated free postcards have long been an indispensable feature of restaurants, bars and clubs in Europe. It's nice to take with you a bright unusual picture - just as a keepsake. Or for a collection.

The advantage of the postcard is that it is not a direct advertising and it does not contain a call to any action. It allows you to express universal human feelings, such as kindness, participation, joy; helps to form positive relationships. Therefore, it is pleasant to send and receive it.

Advertising cards have a number of advantages: low production costs, an original and unobtrusive distribution method, the use of the target audience to achieve the highest result, since a person himself chooses an advertising card, exactly the one that attracted his attention with its originality or interesting information.

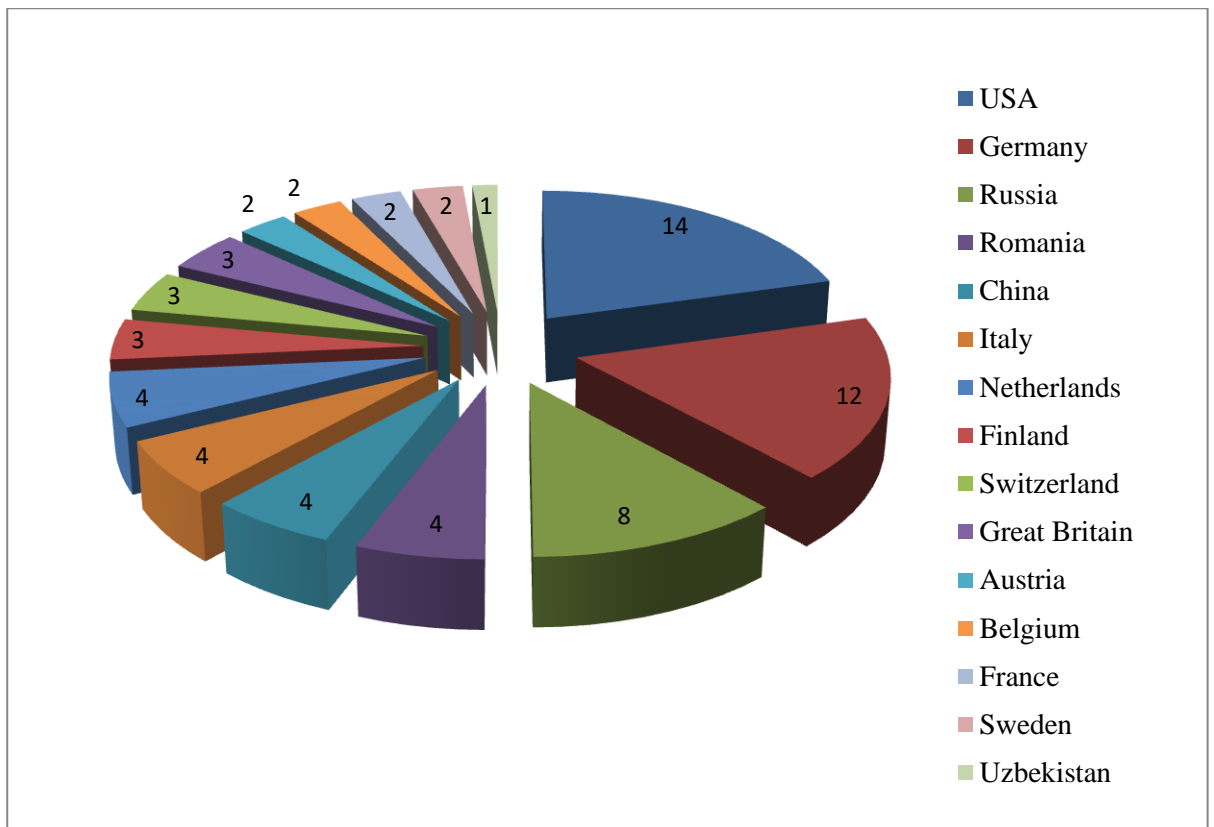
## **Chapter 4. Reflection of information about Belarus in postcards and thank-you messages**

In September 2020, we got acquainted with the Postcrossing.com resource. The basic idea is that by sending your postcard to one of the project participants, you know that someone will send the postcard to you. This exchange is obtained indirectly, that is, by sending a postcard to one user, you will receive a postcard from another. Exchanging postcards with people from all over the world has long gained popularity among those who like to make new acquaintances. After registration, you are given access to the shipment. At the very beginning, you can send five postcards. The system gives you the address and profile of the person completely randomly - it itself chooses the person to whom you send the postcard. You study a person's profile, look at the postcards you have and choose the most appropriate one. Someone collects only postcards with cats, cars, Harry Potter or Moomin trolls. We saw quite unusual requests in the profiles: to make a card from a pack of tea or a package of cornflakes, draw a snail on a postcard, find a card with a picture of borscht, or simply congratulate a friend or relative on the upcoming holiday.

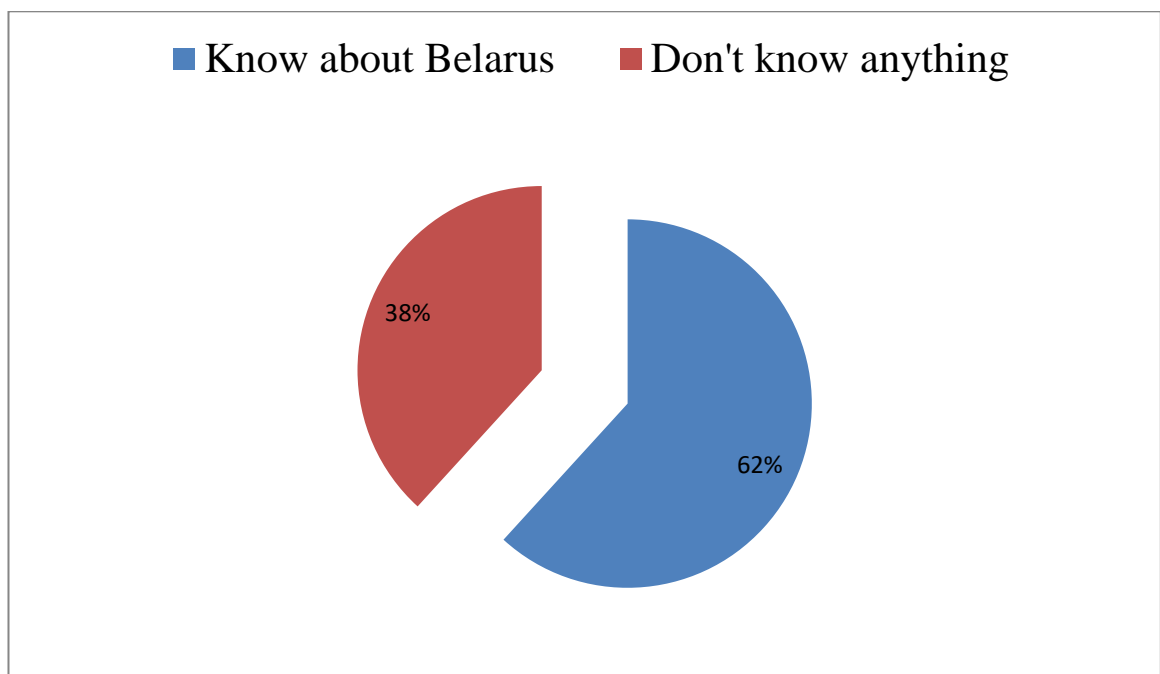
But we were interested in it primarily as an opportunity to improve the English language, since this resource is designed for live communication between people from different countries. Having studied the structure and specifics of the work of this project, we saw that in their profiles its participants most often ask to tell something about ourselves or the country we live in. It became interesting what foreigners know about the Republic of Belarus and we added a request to our profile to write only three words with which they associate our country.

During our participation in this project, we received and sent a total of 68 different postcards (Appendix 1).

The most active and frequently dropped out were such countries as the USA and Germany (14 and 12 postcards were received and sent, respectively).



After analyzing the received postcards (38 cards) and thank-you messages (30), we were surprised that 38% of our respondents did not know anything about the Republic of Belarus.



If we look more detailed, then Germany occupies a leading position in this list - 10 people. Then comes the USA - 6 people (Appendix 2).

Next, we gathered all the word associations (100 words) that we received in the process of correspondence and divided them into 9 groups: cities, famous people, nature, animals, food, events, general concepts, descriptive adjectives and words that seemed interesting to us ( Appendix 3).

We attributed some association words to two groups at the same time, for example, the adjectives *cold*, *little* and *cute* were mentioned not only in the “descriptive adjectives” group, but are also part of phrases in the “nature” and “general concepts” groups.

And it turned out that foreign citizens know very little about our republic. The most numerous groups in terms of the number of word associations turned out to be “descriptive adjectives” (11 words): *small*, *beautiful*, *kind*, *safe*, *etc.* And also the group "general concepts" (8 words). Most often, respondents mentioned *President A.G. Lukashenko* (8 mentions) and the capital of our republic - *Minsk* (6 mentions). Least of all associations are associated with our national cuisine and food. As it turned out, *potato* is the only known product - 4 people indicated it.

In connection with these "discoveries", we decided to write information about the Republic of Belarus when sending postcards, choosing the most interesting places, events, describing significant Belarusians.

And also after analyzing the available list of postcards, we decided to create our own, which would display the very significant places and people we are talking about. First of all, we decided to issue postcards, which will depict our small homeland "Oshmyanshchina" and the nearby places (Appendix 4).

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that the times of carrier pigeons and ornate handwritten explanations have replaced modern means of communication, the letter and postcard remain one of the most relevant forms of communication and information transfer.

Postcrossing isn't just about exchanging postcards, it's an incredibly fun way to communicate with interesting people from all over the world, and a great opportunity to make friends abroad. The emotions that you feel when you receive a message from a mysterious stranger are difficult to convey in words. This is a pleasant surprise, and unexpected delight, and the joy of learning, and, of course, aesthetic pleasure from the views on the postcard. This broadens your horizons, as you start looking for information about the country from which the postcard was sent.

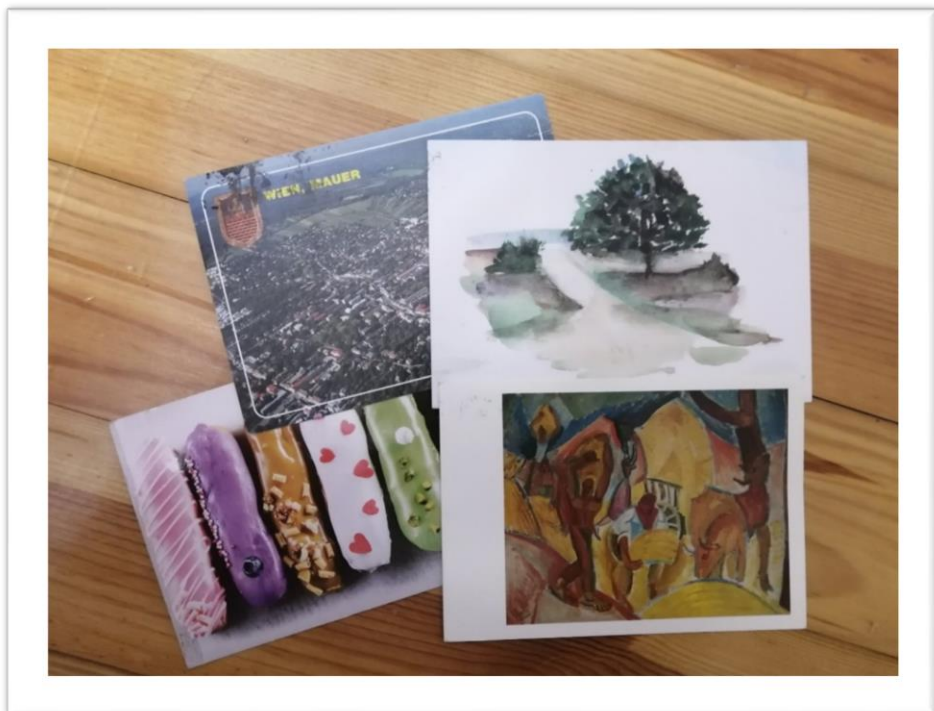
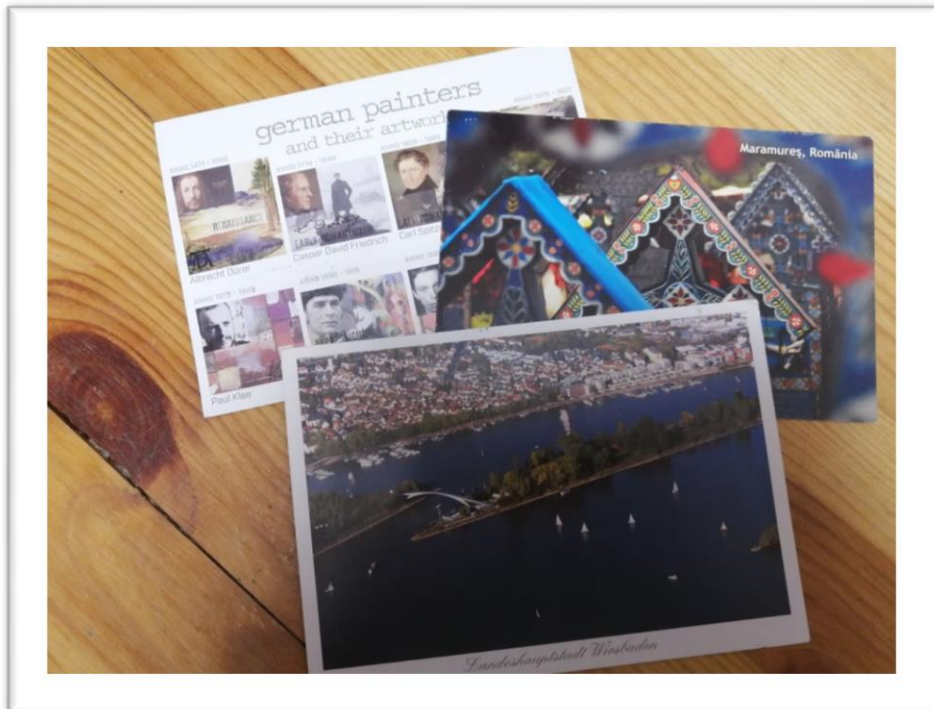
In this regard, we analyzed the postcards and response messages we have and came to the following conclusions:

- the resource "Postcrossing.com" can be used not only to improve the level of proficiency in a foreign language, but also to expand the linguistic and cultural understanding of the countries;
- using a postcard, you can advertise your country;
- foreign citizens have a rather poor understanding of the Republic of Belarus;
- it is necessary to diversify the list of issued postcards;
- we need to focus on national cuisine, natural parks and reserves, as well as small towns by issuing postcards.

Summarizing all of the above, it can be noted that, despite the fact that Belarus has firmly established the status of a peace-loving state in the world and our country is a full-fledged member of the world community, actively participates in international relations, is perceived abroad as a reliable, predictable partner, is still remains for many "Terra Incognita".

## List of used literature

1. [www.odiplom.ru/lab/rol-kommunikacii-v-sovremennom-obszestve](http://www.odiplom.ru/lab/rol-kommunikacii-v-sovremennom-obszestve)
2. [www.kalamtime.com/blog/evolution-of-communication](http://www.kalamtime.com/blog/evolution-of-communication)
3. [www.idaten.ru/psychology/vidi-tipi-formi-komunikaci](http://www.idaten.ru/psychology/vidi-tipi-formi-komunikaci)
4. [www.moodle.kstu.ru](http://www.moodle.kstu.ru)
5. [www.ru.wikipedia.org](http://www.ru.wikipedia.org)
6. [www.adhard.ru](http://www.adhard.ru)









## Appendix 2

The name of the country	Know about Belarus	Don't know anything about Belarus
the USA	8	6
Germany	2	10
Russia	8	
Romania	4	
China	3	1
Italy	2	2
Netherlands	2	2
Finland	1	2
Switzerland	2	1
Sweden	2	
Austria	2	
Belgium	2	
France	1	1
United Kingdom	2	1
Uzbekistan	1	
Total:	42	26

### Groups of word associations

- 1. Cities:** Minsk (6 times), Mir (3), Nesvizh, Gomel, cute little towns (3).
- 2. Notable People:** Lukashenko (8), Mark Chagal (3), personal friends (2), family (granny), Worf (the character from Star Trek).
- 3. Nature:** wildlife (4), lakes (3), forests (4), Baltic.
- 4. Animals:** bison (6), stork (2).
- 5. Food:** potato (4).
- 6. Events:** war, Chernobyl (5).
- 7. General concepts:** cold weather, nature (4), kindness (2), independence (2), courage, castles (3), small population, childhood.
- 8. Descriptive adjectives:** cold (2), small (4), beautiful (2), distant, kind (2), pristine, quite, safe (3), old (2), cute (2), little (3).
- 9. Words that seemed interesting to us:** kolkhose, vyshivanka, Russia but not Russia.























