

# Conservative Values as a Bridge between Russia and the West

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## Abstract

This article postulates that the ideological factor is regaining significance in today's multipolar world (summit of democracies, discourse on traditional values) and promotes the importance of an ideological and value dialogue between right-wing conservative forces in Russia (as major proponents of conservatism) and right-wing forces in Europe.

The aim of the study is to substantiate the adherence of Russia's domestic and foreign policies to the conservative value agenda, and to analyze the right-wing political spectrum of contemporary Europe.

The authors conclude that the values shared by the representatives of European right-wing movements are close to Russia's value agenda, which proves the feasibility of establishing diverse strategic interaction with the proponents of such ideological views in Europe.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, strategic planning, conservatism, New Right, anti-globalism, political philosophy, Alain De Benoist, Guillaume Faye, Eric Zemmour.

Three decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia continues the quest for its place and identity in a world that is no longer bipolar. The hegemony of the United States in the 1990s and its commitment to a single “global world,” uniform in all key aspects, in the 21st century has been facing systemic—economic, political and value—crises. The globalist model of the world order, imposed by West-governed international organizations does not suit a significant number of developing countries and their alliances—the Arab world, the Turkic community, India, and China. The pressure on Russia, which followed the 2014 Crimea events and especially the 2022 Ukraine crisis, is forcing the Russian leadership to reconsider its place in the world and to be more explicit in pursuing a political and value course that, in the absence of dialogue, would not coincide with the left-liberal globalist agenda. At the same time, many Western citizens are uncomfortable with the large-scale enforcement of left-liberal initiatives.

Conservatism comes as the most powerful antagonist and alternative to the American-style globalist discourse. So, in the context of the transition to a new model of the world order, it is important to consider the world political dimension of conservatism. In Russia, a great deal is said today about a multipolar or polycentric world. This discourse, based on the ideas of outstanding scholar and statesman Yevgeny Primakov, is most actively promoted in the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) which bears his name. However, a state-centric approach makes the political picture of the world flat as it lacks a multidimensional vision.

Any agent in world politics, including the state as the main international actor, is compound. For example, in terms of the classical state-centric approach “the position of France” means the official position of Paris, but there is no such thing as France’s single position. There are many of them, generated by the political opposition (counter-elites), interest groups, etc. The principle of “one state—one voice on the international scene” begins to fail.

In addition, the configuration of world politics is not confined to the interaction of the major powers but incorporates various transnational

dimensions of politics. Transnational spaces and identity communities that operate across national borders are becoming increasingly important. Identity manifests itself in various ways—through religion, ethnicity, historical experience (post-imperial spaces) and language, as well as ideology, which is the focus of this article. The international Communist movement and its different varieties in the 20th century are a striking example from the past.

The left-liberal values and beliefs have increasingly been opposed by forces expressing ideas that are more in line with the traditional notion of the human being and humans' place in the world: since the 1960s, by the New Right and, since the 2010s in the United States, by the Alternative Right. These ideological and political trends, although existing on the right wing of Western public life and sometimes inspired by the same authors (for example, by Carl Schmitt and Oswald Spengler) are not identical. The Alternative Right are seen by some researchers more as a populist movement (Dobrokhotov, 2020; Tsargrad, 2017).

Intellectuals and activists representing such movements are mostly positive about Russia and its commitment to traditional values (Blot, 2016). Therefore, one can assume that in terms of values some right-wing conservative forces in Western Europe (and, in part, in Eastern Europe) are natural allies of Russia.

### **RUSSIA IN SEARCH OF SELFHOOD**

A milestone event that heralded a new turn in Russia's international positioning was President Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007. Putin accused the collective West of imposing ideological stereotypes and double standards, and of adherence to "bloc thinking patterns." Also, he pointed to the unacceptability of a unipolar world model for Russia, which in practice meant commitment to an independent foreign policy (Putin, 2007).

In his further speeches (especially after Crimea's reunification with Russia in 2014) Putin, in addition to the already mentioned course towards sovereignty and search for equitable international cooperation, repeatedly emphasized the need to preserve Russian

identity and traditional spiritual and moral values. Specifically, in his annual address to the Federal Assembly on April 21, 2021, Putin said that “as always during challenging times, our traditional religions stepped up to provide spiritual support to our society... Today, family, friendship, mutual assistance, graciousness and unity have come to the fore as well. Spiritual and moral values, which are already being forgotten in some countries, have, on the contrary, made us stronger. And we will always uphold and defend these values” (Putin, 2021). The Russian president’s guidelines were later embodied in a key strategic document—the updated National Security Strategy. Among other things, the Strategy states that “at present there is a growing awareness in Russia of the need to protect traditional spiritual and moral values” (Strategiya, 2021, II, 11), and that “against the background of the crisis of the Western liberal model, a number of states are making attempts to deliberately erode traditional values” (Ibid, 19). The key national priorities include “the strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the people of Russia” (Ibid, III, 25, 7), as well as “the preservation of the people of Russia” (Ibid, 1).

Strategic planning documents contrast the Russian model of cultural and social development to the Western liberal model, which implies the values of leftist liberalism—materialistic, egalitarian and scientific—that manifests itself in the radical criticism of its historical past (the age of colonial empires, gender issues, the position of racial-ethnic, sexual and social minorities), in the denial of the family as the basic unit of society (childfree ideology and positive discrimination for LGBT people in all spheres), and in restrictions on the role of Christian denominations in society (restriction on Catholic symbols in Italian schools, refusal to use Christian symbols at Christmas) (Zvezda, 2018).

However, the “liberal model” and the “West” are not synonymous—both in Europe and in the United States there is a political tradition that is completely alien to such controversial values. The supporters of these forces are potentially close to right-conservative forces in Russia. Among the factors that bring the positions of Russia and

some sociopolitical forces in the West closer together there is the civilizational one.

Throughout the 2010s, official Russian documents referred to this factor repeatedly. The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation stated: “The reverse side of the globalization processes is the increased emphasis on civilizational identity. The desire to go back to one’s civilizational roots can be clearly seen in recent events in the Middle East and North Africa... Similar processes can be observed in other regions as well...” (Concept, 2013). The theme of civilization was also addressed in the 2016 Concept: “The diversity of cultures and civilizations in the world, the multiplicity of models of state development unmistakably manifest themselves” (Concept, 2016), and in the 2023 Concept, in which Russia is positioned as a distinctive state-civilization (Concept, 2023).

### **CIVILIZATIONAL APPROACH IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

In Russian political science, one can also observe a certain interest in the civilizational factor (Spiridonova et al, 2016, p. 43; Kharin, 2013). A whole civilizational paradigm for geopolitics has taken shape (Kharin, 2013).

*Firstly*, the Euro-Atlantic track. Vitaly Tretyakov’s concept of “Two European Unions and One Europe” (Tretyakov, 2007, pp. 687-699) is a striking example of interest to us. According to the author, Russia is part of the European civilization, which also includes Europe and the United States. As part of Europe, Russia has been able to Westernize the vast expanses west of the Urals.

At this stage, says Tretyakov, the world order is outdated and must be replaced by a new—inter-civilizational one. In these conditions, the task of Russia as part of the vast European civilization, together with the other two actors, is to create a Euro-Atlantic Union. It should be based on the recognition of such values as the Christian cultural and civilization tradition, democracy, relinquishment of attempts to handle conflicts by use of force, and others. Therefore, this approach partly implies an alliance with traditionalist European powers.

*Secondly*, the neo-Eurasian approach, which emerged, just like the Euro-Atlantic one, in the early 1990s. Here we can mention Alexander

Dugin, who interprets Russia as a Eurasian civilization based on special, Eurasian values.

Dugin is critical of the globalist project (Dugin, 2007, pp. 114-115), which is fraught with the creation of a world government. This project is counterbalanced by civilizational and imperial blocs. Dugin interprets civilization in a traditional fashion, and so do the representatives of other civilizational movements. In his view, civilizations are vast and stable geographical and cultural areas united by approximately common spiritual, ideological, stylistic, and psychological attitudes and historical experience. Often (but not necessarily) the boundaries of these areas are identical to those of world religions. Such a civilization may include several states. Sometimes the boundaries of civilizations run through individual states, dividing them into parts (Dugin, 2012, pp. 464-465).

According to the scholar, there are now several “big spaces” in Eurasia: European, Russian, Islamic, and Chinese. Their task is to refrain from conflicts with each other and create a new aggregate continental entity—Eurasia—“by recognizing each other as collective participants and full-fledged centers of multipolarity.” Dugin considers European conservatives as Russia’s possible allies (Dugin, 2007, p. 123).

**Thirdly**, the isolationist approach. Back in 1993, one of its brightest representatives, Vadim Tsymbursky, came up with the idea of the “Island of Russia” (Tsymbursky, 2007, p. 2011). For him, civilizations are peoples or groups of peoples whose states control a sufficiently separate habitat in the world’s geographical layout. They sanctify their geopolitics by a sacred vertical—religion or ideology. Accordingly, civilizational geopolitics should primarily consider the relationship between the core and the peoples of the periphery (Tsymbursky, 2011, p. 56).

This definition is also related to the understanding of Russia’s place in the world. Russia is surrounded by a giant inter-civilizational belt, the so-called Great Limitrophe, stretching across Eurasia from the Baltic Sea to Korea. The main part of this belt passes through the territory of the former Soviet Union, although it also includes some parts of China and Mongolia. The Great Limitrophe is not only a kind of natural border of the Russian civilization, protecting it from other

civilizations, but it also acts as an object of influence by the United States and other centers of power.

Tsymbursky believed that an alliance with Iran and China is important for Russia to confront its geopolitical rivals. At the same time, Tsymbursky criticized Westernism and Eurasianism as two old temptations that “only obscure new challenges facing Russia.” For Europe, Russia is an alien force, and alliance with the Muslims is very unlikely. So, this option rules out an alliance between Russia and various movements in Europe.

*Fourthly*, the Byzantine track. In this regard it is appropriate to mention Alexander Panarin. In discussing the opposition to the globalist liberal project that threatens human civilization, Panarin saw allies for Russia not only in the East but also in Europe. For Panarin, civilization is both a supranational super-system, a community, a certain universal essence based on spiritual and moral tradition, and also a certain stage in the development of humanity (in contrast to local interpretations of civilization in the spirit of Igor Danilevsky and Oswald Spengler). Moreover, the attributes of Panarin’s civilization include not only religion and tradition, but also knowledge and science in general. It is no coincidence that he says a great deal about the ideals of the Enlightenment. He argues that modern globalism and neoliberalism, in fact, have betrayed them, unleashing a war of the rich against the poor and of the strong against the weak. The entire world civilization is in jeopardy (Panarin, 1999; 2003).

Back in the early 1990s, Panarin wrote about the “civilization-barbarism” confrontation. “Barbarism” can come from within a culture and from outside (Panarin, 1995, p. 17). “Barbarians” can be bearers of certain radical ideologies and creeds. Therefore, according to Panarin’s logic, “barbarians” include liberal fundamentalists (Panarin, 1999).

According to Panarin, the threat to humanity came from the degrading part of the Euro-Atlantic (or, using the terminology of the time borrowed from geopolitics—“the Sea”). Panarin pinned his expectations on the Eastern cultures—India and Iran, which with their centuries-old traditions of the “Continent” were to act together with Russia as an alternative to the globalist project. However, Panarin



found allies in Europe itself: for instance, the traditionalist forces of the latter, opposing the Atlanticists.

In one of his works, Panarin refers to what is known as the “Indo-European idea,” which, he says, is characteristic of the New Right in some European countries. In his opinion, the Indo-European idea can only get rid of negative associations, as well as of Eurocentric provincialism, and retain its world-building potential, if it abandons the pagan horizontal and enters the aura of spiritual and religious verticality, which is supported by the great traditions of Russia, India, and Iran (Panarin, 2003, pp. 268-270).

Later, Panarin began to develop a concept that we can call “Byzantine globalism.” We understand Byzantinism as an appeal to Orthodoxy, to the spiritual origins of our culture. As for globalism, it is seen as a traditional project that Russia is destined to share with the world. He believed it important to propose such an alternative at a time when the liberal global project is being imposed onto the world. The concepts of local cultures are helpless in these circumstances.

We will not dwell here on the various scenarios that Panarin proposed. Let us only note that this concept also involves an appeal to the Greek core, that is, to the ancient culture. This brings Russia even closer to Europe and facilitates dialogue.

In his approach, Panarin was fascinated by the ideas of such powerful thinker as Martin Heidegger, a proponent of conservative positions. In fact, in their writings both philosophers turned to the Greek core of European culture. Both Alexander Panarin and Martin Heidegger criticized the advance of technicism in the West and the absolutization of rationalism. They both were entrenched in tradition which they used as a platform for their insight into the future. This commonality in their approaches (whatever their obvious disagreements) serves as a good argument in favor of a possible intellectual alliance between conservative circles in Russia and the West.

Both at the top political level and among leading thinkers, traditional values and the civilizational factor have been perceived as the conceptual foundations of Russia’s domestic and foreign policy. This

factor may become a common denominator for a multilevel dialogue with different countries, including those that are officially hostile to Russia.

### **CIVILIZATIONAL APPROACH AND CONSERVATISM**

What is civilization and what is Russian civilization?

In the case of Russia, some scholars use the term 'state-civilization' (Spiridonova et al, 2016, pp. 41-45). Such definition implies a large multi-ethnic state united on the principle of common religion or ideology, as well as "complementarity of cultures, a similar geopolitical position, and finally, a common historical destiny" (Ibid, p. 48). In fact, we have a complex, multi-level, socio-cultural organization, formed on the basis of common values and occupying a significant territory.

The core of any civilization is its values. Since we are discussing mainly traditional values, let us examine them in more detail. In this paper, we use a broad interpretation of traditional values where they are seen as expressing an ideological commitment to traditional ways and social and religious doctrines. If defined this way, the concept of 'traditional' becomes synonymous with the concept of 'conservative.' "The conservatives' main task is to preserve the existing traditions of society, its institutions and values (usually religious)" (Dezhnyov and Novikova, 2017, p. 73).

In general, conservatism is characterized by such values as religion, established order, stability, a strong state, traditional institutions (the church, the family, school, and community), gradual and prudent implementation of transformations (which conservatives did not deny, but believed they should be based on tradition).

Accordingly, individualism, egalitarianism, atheism, moral relativism, the cult of reason, revolutionism, and cosmopolitanism served as anti-values of the conservative agenda (Minakov and Repnikov, 2010, p. 6). These values and anti-values are used by conservatives in their confrontation with political opponents.

Thus, traditional values are values aimed at preserving, supporting and reproducing the basic foundations of society (religion and culture in general, the state, the family, community, etc.). In addition, they

constitute an alternative to such modern values as individualism, radical rationalism, progressivism, etc.

Using this system of values, Russia can try to build a dialogue with those civilizations, states or socio-political forces that have similar views. Besides, this system of values can be used to strengthen and optimize Russia's image in countries that lean firmly on traditional values. The matter at issue is not some kind of bloc coalitions in the style of Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations theory but, first and foremost, the solution of urgent problems.

The key task is to identify opportunities for expanding dialogue with the conservative forces in the West. In this connection, it is quite logical to proceed with an analysis of those forces and movements that fall into the category of the New Right.

### **WHO ARE "THE RIGHT"?**

There are oppositions capable of clearly demarcating "the left" and "the right." For example, the right-wing political theory postulates an elitist principle, either in the form of a normative basis of inequality as the natural order of things (in the political dimension of traditionalism) or in the form of perception of inequality as an inevitable empirical reality (as in elitist sociology). The left-wing political theory sees history as endless progress from the darkness of the past to the light of the future, as an evolution from primitive forms to more perfect ones. The right-wing political theory interprets it as either a spiraling movement or gradual degradation of political forms and morals. The left-wing political theory aspires to mechanical rationalization of the social; the right-wing political theory pursues the restoration of the principles of organic community. Finally, any left-wing theory extols the economy as the main reference point for organizing social life, while the right-wing theory often emphasizes the dominant nature of political factors (Moiseev, 2020; 2021).

The list of such counterpositions can be continued, but fundamental are the following five—different ideas about ontology, equality, history, the principles of social organization, and the dominance of the political or the economic. In this article the Right refers to the "genuine right"

who match most of the aforesaid criteria, and not the so-called “right-wing liberals,” libertarians and others positioning themselves as “right-wingers” (primarily in the economic sense).

The origins of the modern New Right are rooted in European conservatism—a set of political beliefs that questioned the “gains” of the French Revolution of 1789 and its ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The cultural and political crisis generated by the French Revolution in the late 18th century was reflected in the critical views of conservatism’s brain-fathers.

Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) extols British parliamentarianism and accuses the newly-borne French republic of barbarism and destructive zeal: “It is this inability to wrestle with difficulty which has obliged the arbitrary Assembly of France to commence their schemes of reform with abolition and total destruction. But is it in destroying and pulling down that skill is displayed? Your mob can do this as well at least as your assemblies” (Burke, p. 138). He rejects the idea of republican transformation and its proponents. Joseph-Marie de Maistre, in *Considerations on France* (Maistre, 1997), points to the impossibility of any social progress from a providentialist perspective. He views the French Revolution and the state system it created as a well-deserved divine retribution upon a corrupt and disgraced elite. In Maistre’s narrative, the actors of the Revolution themselves, who led the Assembly, appear as “mediocre men” who subjugated a “guilty nation” to the horrors of despotism.

The intellectual line of classical conservatism was continued in the 20th century by new schools of thought—conservative-revolutionary and traditionalist, which also influenced the formation of the doctrine of the New Right (Moiseev, 2021). Among the conservative-revolutionary authors it is necessary to distinguish Oswald Spengler (the ideas of cultural pessimism), Carl Schmitt (the concept of the political, ideas of political theology and political romanticism), Ernst Jünger (the idea of the change of gestalt). As for traditionalists, the doctrinal considerations of Italian thinker Julius Evola (criticism of Christianity and aspiration towards non-Christian models of

spirituality, normative elitism, and skeptical view of the modern world) were amply reflected in the ideas of the New Right (Sunic, 2011).

As followers of conservative-revolutionary and traditionalist attitudes, the New Right emphasize the preservation of Western Europe's cultural identity as one of the centers of world civilization (Panarin, 1989, p. 158). Two movements of the New Right can be singled out: the Research and Study Group for European Civilization (GRECE), with Alain de Benoist as its ideological leader, and the Club de l'Horloge, of which Yvan Blot was president. GRECE and the Club de l'Horloge shared research into the problems of Western European integration: while the questions of European "cultural consolidation" were taken up by GRECE, the political ones went to members of the Club de l'Horloge. However, cultural dominance is characteristic not only of the de Benoist group, but also of the Club de l'Horloge: its members understood cultural policy as the key to European international policy, helpful in highlighting its long-term goals and guidelines (Panarin, 1989).

According to the New Right, behind the confrontation of political and ideological doctrines was a confrontation of cultures. While the liberals saw the Third World primarily as an object of competition with the Soviet Union, the GRECE group contrasted it with another version of the Third World (*tiers monde*) as an independent historical reality based on different cultural grounds, different from both the West and the Soviet Union—so-called *tiers-mondisme*. As de Benoist believed, to understand the modern world and the role of the West in it, it is necessary to abandon the bipolar picture of the world. For example, the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran was not only anti-Western but also anti-Communist: inspired by the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism, it was equally hostile to both the West and the Soviet Union (Ibid, pp. 178-179).

When talking about Europe, the New Right did not mean a technocratic "Europe of experts," but Europe as a certain type of culture. The New Right believed that an alliance between France and Germany raised hopes for a superpower-independent Western Europe in a situation where it was threatened by the Slavic Warsaw Pact from

the East and by the Islamic political and demographic pressure from the South. Neoconservative Michel Poniatowski, in his 1984 book entitled *L'Europe ou la mort* (Europe or Death), pointed to the decisive and fateful importance of France for Western Europe. He wrote: "Only France can support the spirit of Germany, which hesitates between two extremes (the status of the United States' vassal and capitulatory neutrality towards the Soviet Union) and encourage it to choose an independent Europe. Only on the basis of an alliance between France and Germany can a free Europe be built and its power revived" (Ibid, p. 200).

De Benoist, for his part, pinned hopes not only on the integration of Western Europe around France in alliance with Germany, but also on its alliance with the Third World against the "superpowers." As de Benoist argued, if the Third World is interpreted politically, and not economically (as a world outside the two "superpowers"), then Western Europe will appear as its integral part. In the strategy of wresting the Third World from the superpowers, the New Right attach decisive importance to the transformation of the ideology of *tiers-mondisme*, which has already gained popularity in Western Europe but has been "distorted" by the Left. De Benoist wrote: "There is an extreme need for the emergence in Europe of a new *tiers-mondisme*, based not on a complex of guilt (before the peoples of former colonies), not on the denial of their own culture, but on the recognition of the legitimacy of the cultural diversity of the world and on the determination to unite all those who intend to defend it against the encroachments of globalism". The New Right's challenge to superpower globalism is an attempt to reverse the weakening trend in world politics of Europe in general and France in particular, to confront the decadence of European civilization (Panarin, 2003).

One of the key methodological tenets of the New Right is "right-wing Gramscianism." They invert Gramsci's Marxist equation and insist on the value of culture—not "proletarian," but authentic European. Furthermore, they see socialism and liberalism as false and obsolete myths that must be overcome. The abolition of these myths will lead to a reassessment of values and a change in the system. The victory over

the modern world is to be won on the fronts of culture and education, which form a genuine strategy, exerting an exceptional influence on the worldview of the elites. The New Right, unlike the right-wing liberals, assume the primacy of intellectual and cultural politics rather than economic conditions.

The New Right continue the intellectual line of the “conservative revolution” in questioning the creed of contemporary liberalism—the belief in infinite progress and the need for “human improvement.” The New Right are extremely skeptical about the intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment.

Geopolitically, the New Right stand for the liberation of Europe from the shackles of globalism and American influence and for the need to “fight for the rights of peoples.” The New Right emphasize the primacy of national rights; instead of abstract and unreliable dreams of egalitarian democracy and the myth of perpetual economic progress, the New Right support a “return to the roots” and the foundations of organic societies. Under the conditions of reformatting the global world order, which first moved from bipolarity to a unipolar moment and then to multipolarity, the New Right corrected their postulate about Europe as a “third pole” between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, taking into account the post-Soviet transformation of Russia. They now see Russia as an integral part of the European world, without which Europe would be unable to become an independent center of power in the emerging polycentric world order. It is noteworthy that a video entitled *Neither Lampedusa nor Brussels, Being European*, released by Institut Iliade (Institut Iliade, 2022), one of the think tanks of the New Right, which received 5.6 million hits on YouTube, considers the “Kremlin Towers” to be one of the symbols of European civilization. It should be noted that certain prerequisites for such geostrategic Russophilia among the European New Right and their predecessors existed even during the Cold War. For example, the leader of the pan-European organization Jeune Europe (Young Europe), Jean-Francois Thiriart, put forward the concept of a “European-Soviet empire from Dublin to Vladivostok.” He saw Western Europe as analogous to ancient Greece, and the Soviet Union as analogous to Macedonia of

Philip and Alexander, which managed to unite the Greek world and ensure its hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, in the era of a bipolar world order, the idea of a strategic alliance between Russia and Europe certainly could not become widespread in the rightist populist circles due to the latter's anti-Communist attitudes. However, after 1991, this obstacle lost its relevance.

The successes of the political parties that positioned themselves as “right-wing” in recent decades are obvious: Alternative for Germany is the third largest political party in the German Bundestag, Lega Nord and Brothers of Italy have strong factions in the Italian parliament, and the National Rally (formerly National Front) has a faction in both the French National Assembly and the European Parliament. All these political parties are skeptical about globalism and European integration as such.

On the eve of the 2019 European Parliament elections, the National Rally presented its manifesto entitled *For a Europe of Nations. Manifesto for a New Commonwealth in Europe—the European Alliance of Nations*, which proposed an image of an alternative concept of European integration based on the primacy of the sovereignty of nations. At the global level, the Lepenists see a Europe of Nations as an actor in a polycentric (multipolar) world order. It seems that in this case it is an attempt to formulate a national-European alternative to the neoliberal world order. In the preface to the manifesto Marine Le Pen explains her vision of the conceptual foundations of the new European integration project. She writes: “The European Alliance of Nations that we want to promote is based on freedom—a fundamental value of our civilization, born in Athens and Rome, a humanist value that Europe has taught the world. This Europe of nations and citizens will be founded on the protection of individual freedom and therefore of democracy, and, at the state level, on sovereignty within the framework of loyal and fruitful cooperation, granted voluntarily. It postulates the protection of identity and recognizes the right of every people to self-determination in a multipolar, respectful, and peaceful world. Faced with great empires that want to structure the world of the 21st century, this Europe has ambitions of power and influence” (Rassemblement National, 2022).



In this excerpt, the influence of the New Right intellectuals on the right-wing segment of European politics is evident. The idea of “freedom born in Athens” as the root cause of Europe is a key idea of Dominique Venner’s recent work *Un samourai d’Occident* (The Samurai of the West) (Venner, 2013). The ideas of upholding indigenous identities and the right to self-determination in a multipolar world are a key aspiration contained in GRECE’s concept of ethnopluralism (Benoist, 2011a; 2011b). These ideas are also close to Russia’s foreign policy course.

Drawing on the example of France, it is worth noting the significance of the nomination for presidency of Eric Zemmour, a right-wing intellectual. He is a consistent opponent of European integration in its current form, of the policy of multiculturalism and suppression of European identity, and of Islamization and the left-liberal migration policy of great replacement (*grand remplacement*). Shortly after the news of Zemmour’s nomination in September 2021 his rating reached 13 percent (Le Figaro, 2021), as of February 2022, it was at 16.5 percent; and in the elections held on April 10, 2022, the radical thinker got 7 percent of the votes. The case of Zemmour can be considered a fresh example of the growing popularity of right-wing ideas in modern Europe.

We should also note that on the eve of the 2019 European Parliament elections Marin Le Pen’s National Rally and Alternative for Germany concluded a strategic alliance that resulted in the emergence of the Identity and Democracy faction. Just as European integration within the framework of the EU was promoted largely thanks to the Franco-German tandem, the integration of political alternative movements is also carried out through the close cooperation of French and German rightist populists. This parallelism of integration processes among both mainstream Euro-globalists and rightist anti-globalists demonstrates that Euroskeptics and national-sovereignists are not so much anti-European forces, opposing Europe as such, as they are alter-European forces in search of a European alternative to neoliberal globalism, a kind of alternative model of European integration. The inter-European approach has long been used by Eastern European scholars in their

analysis of Central-Eastern Europe: “...one should speak not of a prevailing ‘anti-Europeanism’ but of a kind of ‘inter-Europeanism’—that is, an attempt by CEE countries to return to ‘genuine European values,’ which include national statehood, Christian religion, traditional morality and work ethics” (Biryukov and Kovalenko, 2013). Focusing on the need for Eastern Europeans to abandon isolationist anti-Europeanism in favor of alter-Europeanism, contemporary Eastern European scholars emphasize: “It seems that CEE countries should abandon unconstructive forms of ‘Euro-scepticism’ and ‘political identity’ to declare a constructive alternative to the current model of Euro-integration that is in crisis” (Biryukov and Kovalenko, 2012).

It seems that the alter-European approach, which has been formed within the framework of Eastern European regional studies, can be projected onto Western Europe as well. An attempt can be made to outline the conceptual historical foundations of Western European alter-Europeanism. In the 9th century, the territories of France and Germany were part of Charlemagne’s Frankish empire, constituting the Carolingian core of European civilization. It seems that the Carolingian, Frankish historical identity, which unites both the French and the Germans, can become an important support for the Western European alternative, just as the historical memory of the eastern Habsburg empire contributes to the Eastern Europeans’ understanding of themselves as an alternative, as another Europe. A special role in building alternative models of European integration seems to belong to Germany, since it acts as a link between two alternatives to neoliberal Europe: the neo-Carolingian project with a Franco-German core and the neo-Habsburg project in which the states of the German world are an important component, in addition to the Visegrad Group countries.

Thus, among Europe’s “rightists” there is a trend towards the horizontal integration of parties, movements and representatives of relevant intellectual trends on the basis of shared values and aspirations aimed at protecting the European civilizational cultural code from the left-liberal threat. “Rightist” Europe is gradually awakening and making itself known, which in itself is a significant blow to left-liberal globalism and creates new geopolitical opportunities for Russia.

## **DREAMS OF EUROSIBERIA**

Moscow's current foreign policy course, aimed at Russia's sovereign positioning in the world, and the domestic political course, aimed at safeguarding conservative values—traditional ideas of the human being, the family and spiritual reference points, leaves no doubt that this country, at the official level, supported by a significant part of society and intellectual elites, is leaning more towards the right-wing spectrum of political worldview, which may make Europe's "new rightist" intellectuals, politicians and activists Russia's natural ideological allies.

The relevance of this vision is borne out by the events after February 24, 2022, and the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. The left-liberal West provides all-round support for Kiev, sometimes to the detriment of its own citizens, which is especially obvious in the sanctions on Russian gas and oil supplies to the EU. As we know, leading EU right-wing politicians have condemned the special operation, which, it might seem, should refute the main idea of this article. At the same time, the European rightists also oppose military assistance to Ukraine not from pro-Russian positions, but from the perspective of national interests (Gazeta.ru, 2022). However, adherence to common ideological values among political forces from different countries has certain limits beyond which solidarity is undermined. Historical experience shows that such a "red line" can manifest itself as violence—domestic terrorism or massive use of military force abroad. Vivid examples are the rejection of solidarity by Socialist parties after the outbreak of World War I; during the Cold War, the Eurocommunists in Italy and France condemned the entry of Warsaw Treaty Organization troops into Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Soviet Union sharply criticized Mao Zedong's course during the Cultural Revolution in China and de facto opposed Pol Pot's acts of terror in Kampuchea; the U.S. put pressure on Britain, France, and Israel in order to make them stop their intervention against Egypt during the 1956 Suez crisis. France opposed the U.S. operation to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq in 2003. In hindsight, the negative stance of Western rightist forces on Russia's special military operation in Ukraine fits in the proposed logic.

In contemporary right-wing philosophy there is one remarkable example of a vision of the future based on the notion of a natural cultural and political alliance between Russia and Europe—the archaeofuturist model of French philosopher Guillaume Faye. In his work entitled *Archeofuturism. European Visions of the Post-Catastrophic Age* (2010), Faye predicts a systemic civilizational crisis of Western left-liberal civilization and the need to replace it with pre-modernist and non-egalitarian principles of worldview. The term ‘archaeofuturism’ itself expresses the wish to imagine a future society that combines scientific and technological progress with a return to traditional, “archaic” answers to essentially significant questions.

In addition to purely philosophical forms, Faye’s concept is artistically expressed in the dream of Euro-Siberia, an integrative federalist geopolitical union centered in St. Petersburg as a leading global political center (Faye, 2010). This dream of a future in which Russia plays a key role in preserving the values of authentic Europe—the values of spirit, freedom and dignity—may serve as inspiration and guidance for future generations of thinkers and politicians.

Russia undoubtedly belongs to the European cultural space. At the same time, modern Europe, which has come to a civilizational crisis of values as a result of the imposition of the left-liberal model across the globe, cannot serve as a worthy guide. The preservation and restoration of values characteristic of genuine Europe is an important civilizational task.

These are the traditional values whose significance is outlined in Russia’s state strategic documents. When setting an example for Europe, Russia should not forget that the Western cultural and political space is not homogeneous and has enough potential allies. Working with them to achieve the common goal of creating a healthier world in the future is the most important task. And such work should not be done exclusively by state and quasi-state structures.

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