

# **“Russian World” in Europe. Just Another Way of Supporting Diversity?**

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# Why it is important?

- Impressive spread of Russian-speakers in Europe
- Russia's aggressive foreign policy
- The borders of such concepts as “Russian World” or “Compatriot” are vague and fuzzy

*Putin (2001): the compatriot is not only a legal category. More importantly, it is not an issue of status or favoritism. It is primarily a matter of personal choice. Of self-identification. I would even say, of spiritual self-identification*



# The Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to analyse the ways and means how Russia interacts with Russian-speakers living in Europe



# Methodology

- Research questions:
  - 1) what are the ways and means how Russia interacts with Russian-speakers in Europe?
  - 2) what are the consequences of this kind of interaction ?
- Research design: mixed research design
- Methods for gathering new data: focus-group interviews; in-depth interviews
- Methods for analyzing data: semantic network analysis; qualitative content analysis



# Analytical Framework

- Public diplomacy NOT diaspora politics
- Security studies



# Russian- Speakers in Europe.

## How to look on them?

- very diverse- ethnically; religious; culturally; economically; in terms of the level of education...
- sectors of social life: economic activity; media space; civic and political participation; education



# Russian- Speakers in Europe

- No precise number of those, who feel affiliation with “Russian World”
- Russian-speaking communities are quite closed (mainly based on ethnicity)
- Lower class emigrants- more often marginalized
- Alienation from the state of residence (self-exclusion)
- Culture centers in big cities gather those with stronger identity
- Russian- speaking community is mostly apolitical
- Correlation between media consumption and political orientations



# How Russia interacts with Russian-speakers in Europe?

- Correlation between support to active Russian-speakers abroad and geopolitical interests exist
- Russian-language skills and the sense of belonging to “Soviet past” as a carrier of specific cultural and social, as well as political code
- 3 pillars of Public Diplomacy:
  - informational pillar (information campaigns)
  - education
  - Culture
- Other means:
  - legal assistance
  - financial assistance
  - ....





# What are the main messages?

- rights of Russian-speakers in Europe are violated systematically
- Europe is weak, burdened with the economic and political crisis
- the opposites us vs them; Russia vs dissolute West. Russia and Russians have no friends among the Western countries. The attitude towards Russia and its people from the Western countries' part is unfair, based on the interests of a hegemonic nature
- emphasis is on tradition and traditional values as one of the pillars of the “Russian World”; direct or indirect activation of family, gender and other similar stereotypes. The Russian World unites all Russian-speakers, regardless of the national borders. Each individual belonging thereto must strengthen this space from where he/she is located by fulfilling their obligations towards the Russian nation
- support and justification of agenda setting and activities carried out by the Russian government as the one which represents “real European civilization”, it has its specific model of democracy (“regulated democracy”)



# Conclusions

- There has been no real inclusion of Russian- speakers in Europe
- Interest of Russia about Russian-speakers is mainly based on geopolitical ambitions. Interest about Russian-speaking communities in different countries depends on those ambitions and public diplomacy tactics chosen towards them
- Tactics of communication Russia uses are increasingly modern
- Russia's activities are aimed against inclusion of Russian-speakers into societies of their residence countries. Special emphasis is placed on alienation from the European pathway



Thank you!

