

Far-right international conferences in 2014

By Anton Shekhovtsov

EUROPEAN AND US far-right organisations have held an increasing number of international meetings and conferences in recent months. It is no coincidence that the majority of these events featured representatives from Russia: for several years the Kremlin has been cooperating with the European far right in order to undermine liberal democracy in the European Union and weaken transatlantic cooperation.

Although the party political far right seems far from taking power in most EU countries, the growing support for anti-EU parties, especially in France and Hungary, elates President Vladimir Putin's right-wing authoritarian kleptocratic regime,

which is interested in further growth of the anti-democratic forces in the West. A recent development in this area is a multi-million loan provided by one of the banks close to Putin's regime to the French National Front (FN). Marine Le Pen, leader of the FN, will most likely make it to the second round of the presidential election in 2017, so Moscow's support for the French far right seems like a long-term investment.

The first prominent meeting took place in Vienna at the end of May. Participants discussed ways to rid Europe of the "satanic gay lobby" and many of them hailed Putin as Europe's "redeemer" from Americanism, liberalism, secularism

and homosexuality. It was hosted by Russian millionaire Konstantin Malofeev, owner of the Moscow-based investment fund Marshall Capital Partners. Malofeev is known for having financed Russian right-wing extremists fighting against the Ukrainian authorities in Eastern Ukraine: Igor Girkin, the former colonel at Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate, and Aleksandr Borodai, a Muscovite businessman who was serving as "Prime Minister" of the virtual "Donetsk People's Republic". The EU sanctioned Malofeev in July, so his visit to Austria may well be the last time he has travelled to an EU member state.

Due to the clandestine nature of the meeting, the full guest list is unknown but the Austrian-Swiss journalist Bernhard Odehnal who exposed this conference believes the following were present: Russian "neo-Eurasianist" fascist Aleksandr Dugin and ultranationalist artist Ilya Glazunov; the FN's Marion Maréchal-Le Pen (granddaughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen) and Aymeric Chauprade; the Heinz-Christian Strache, John Gudenus and Johann Herzog of the Austrian Freedom Party; Bulgarian Ataka's leader Volen Siderov; the leader of the Spanish Catholic-monarchist Carlist movement Prince Sixtus Henry of Bourbon-Parma; and Serge de Pahlen, director of the Swiss financial company Edifin.

The second pan-European far-right conference took place in Stockholm on 22 June under the title "Identitarian Ideas VI". It was hosted by the Swedish far-right think-tank



FN leader Marine Le Pen and Dmitry Rogozin, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, in Moscow



Marion Maréchal-Le Pen and Heinz-Christian Strache in Lyon

Motpol (Antithesis) and the Swedish far-right periodical *Nationell Idag* (National Today).

At this conference, Austrian identitarian ideologue Markus Willinger presented his new book *Europa der Vaterländer* (Europe of Fatherlands); Manuel Ochsenreiter, editor of the far-right magazine *Zuerst!* (First), talked about the geopolitics of the crises in Ukraine, Syria and Kosovo; while Patrik Forsén of the Swedish right-wing extremist Nordisk Ungdom (Nordic Youth), John Morgan of Arktos, Patrik Ehn from *Nationell Idag*, Eva Charlotta Johansson from Motpol, and Manuel Ochsenreiter discussed Ukraine, Russia and the United States.

An international conference titled "Russia, Ukraine, New Russia: Global Problems and Challenges", took place on 29-31 August in Yalta, in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea annexed by Russia. The organisers had invited more than one hundred guests, including the following representatives of the European far right: Frank Creyelman (Vlaams Belang, Belgium), Luc Michel (Parti Communautaire National-Européen, Belgium), Pavel Chernev (far-right

Ataka, Bulgaria), Johan Bäckman (Finland), Márton Gyöngyösi (Jobbik, Hungary), Giovanni Maria Camillacci and Roberto Fiore (Forza Nuova, Italy), Mateusz Piskorski and Konrad Rękas (Samoobrona, Poland), Bartosz Bekier (Falanga, Poland), and Nick Griffin (BNP, UK). However,

according to the various sources, only Bäckman, Fiore, Michel, Gyöngyösi and Piskorski were present.

The fourth meeting, International Forum "Large Family and Future of Humanity", took place in Moscow on 10-11 September. The title of the event was misleading, because essentially it was a previously advertised World Congress of Families VIII "Every Child A Gift: Large Families – The Future of Humanity". The World Congress of Families (WCF) is an international coalition based in the USA which promotes Christian right values. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the US sanctioned a number of Russian politicians who were connected to the WCF, and the organisation officially cancelled the planned WCF VIII in Moscow, as it decided not to risk harming its reputation domestically by cooperating with the sanctioned individuals. Nevertheless, it proceeded with the event, but under a different name and removing any references to the WCF.

From the US side, the event was co-organised by the WCF's General Director Lawrence Jacobs and Communications Director Don Feder. From the Russian side, the meeting was co-organised by the Russian



(l-r) Patrik Forsén, John Morgan, Patrik Ehn, Eva Charlotta Johansson and Manuel Ochsenreiter, Stockholm

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The major Far Right meeting



★ Stockholm, Sweden

★ Vienna, Austria

★ London, UK

★ Tennessee, USA

points October 2013-2014



★ Crimea, Ukraine

★ Budapest, Hungary

★ Tehran, Iran

★ Damascus, Syria



Luc Michel delivering a speech through an interpreter, Yalta

present was Johann Gudenus of the Freedom Party of Austria. He condemned Western sanctions against Russia which is waging war on Ukraine and talked about “the strong gay lobby in Europe” which “controls the mass media”. According to Gudenus, the US is behind the alleged attempts at destroying traditional values in Europe.

Major Austrian political parties have criticised the message of Gudenus. The federal spokesperson of the Austrian Green Party, Eva Glawischnig, urged Heinz-Christian Strache, leader of the Freedom Party, to distance himself from Gudenus’s speech at the congress, saying: “The FPÖ chairman must decide whether he and his friends want to be in the pay of Moscow or on the European side”.

The fifth meeting, the annual “New Horizon” conference, took place in

Orthodox Church, the Centre of National Glory and the St Andrew the First-Called Foundation headed by Vladimir Yakunin, and the aforementioned Malofeev, who is also the

founder of the St Basil the Great Charitable Foundation.

The congress hosted the FN’s Aymeric Chauprade, who even sat in the presidium of the congress. Also



Presidium of the WCF VIII in Moscow (l-r): Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar, Supreme Mufti of Russia Talgat Tajuddin, Aymeric Chauprade, Russian right-wing politician Yelena Mizulina, Konstantin Malofeev, Nataliya Yakunina and Vladimir Yakunin

Tehran from 27 September to 1 October and was organised by Iranian authorities. It hosted more than thirty participants to discuss “the Zionist 9/11 conspiracy” and “Israel lobbying” in various countries. The conference was attended by Ochsenreiter, Piskorski, French conspiracy theorist Thierry Meyssan, Italian neo-Nazi Maoist Claudio Mutti, and Dugin’s associate Leonid Savin, who all gave speeches at this antisemitic rally.

The sixth meeting, the European Congress entitled “A Forum on the Future of Europe, Its Culture, People, and Civilisation”, took place in Budapest on 3-5 October. It was organised by the US-based National Policy Institute (NPI), a far-right think-tank headed by Richard Spencer, and co-sponsored by the NPI, Arktos Media, Motpol and *Radix Journal*.

The original line-up of speakers

featured Spencer, Morgan, Dugin, Ochsenreiter, Willinger, Gyöngyösi, New Right author Tomislav Sunic, the head of the *American Renaissance* webzine Jared Taylor, and French identitarian activist Philippe Vardon. However, the congress came under serious pressure from the Hungarian political establishment, and the event turned out to be a disaster for the participants. In the end, only Sunic and Taylor were able to attend the congress. Spencer was arrested by Hungarian police the evening before the start of the congress and then expelled from the country for violating a ban on entering Hungary.

The most recent meeting, “Frieden mit Russland – Für ein souveränes Europa” (Freedom with Russia – for a sovereign Europe), took place in Berlin on 22 November. It was organised by the far-right *Compact* magazine edited by Jürgen Elsässer.

The event hosted, among others, Yakunin, Natalya Narochitskaya and John Laughland of the Paris-based Russian soft-power think-tank Institute of Democracy and Cooperation, Vice President of the Eurosceptic Alternative for Germany party Alexander Gauland, German conspiracy theorist Andreas von Bülow, and the newly elected leader of the neo-Nazi National-Democratic Party of Germany Frank Franz, as well as his *Parteigenosse* (party comrade) Sebastian Schmidtke.

The conference was a closed event too, and a journalist from one of the leading German newspapers, *Bild*, was violently prevented from reporting it. The content of the conference, however, was hardly secret: the participants showed their solidarity with the aggressive behaviour of Russia and blamed the US for every evil on the earth.



(l-r) Leonid Savin and Manuel Ochsenreiter holding a flag of Dugin’s Eurasian Youth Union, Tehran