

Vladimir Putin: The Russian World is coming to Europe

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by **Boris Mezhuev**

President Putin's [Direct Line on April 17](#) offered a wonderful opportunity for reflecting on the present and the future of European civilization. The head of state sought to express his most fundamental ideas about the current geopolitical environment in Europe, and it was clear that his outlook on this issue is holistic and dynamic, yet inherently precise.

First of all, Putin made it plain that he still considers Europe to be a single integrated civilization stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok. He sees no need to “carve out separate civilizations,” by delineating the boundaries of which lands look to Russia, vs. those that identify more with Europe.

But Russia cannot possibly accept the idea of NATO inching toward its borders. The problem with this treaty on collective security is that it ignores Russia's interests - if NATO could only incorporate Russia, many of the problems would disappear.

Russia finds the external imposition of extremely liberal moral values to be inappropriate, and on this issue Russians have much in common with the more principled majority of the European public - but their opinions are not verbalized by the official policy makers because of the latter's over-dependence on Washington and Brussels. The Russian president pointed to his beloved Germany, where he claims fears of American surveillance force the politicians into the hallways to confer in whispers. But Putin noted that the political elite cannot entirely disregard the majority position, and the fact that they are unable to do so must be counted as a victory for [Viktor Orbán](#) and his colleagues in Hungary, as well as the result of [advances made by the European Right overall](#).



Putin hardly views Europe as an alien civilization, on the contrary, **the continent represents a battleground between a liberal individualism that is truly alien to Russia vs. a European traditionalism, which - although still held captive by its Atlantic partnerships - is closer to Russia's heart.** The Russian world the president spoke about at the end of his show is a community of Russian speakers of varying nationalities who are scattered across the globe - a single people with its own, distinct genetic code, **a people who do not fear death and who disdain mindless creature comforts - it is the world that is able to provide contemporary Europe with what it seems to lack - namely, the courage to defy culturally alien dictates imposed from the outside.**

In his responses to the media Putin made it clear that he was well acquainted with the political leaders of Europe and had great respect for them, emphasizing that they are very admirable and deeply professional individuals, but that they are all bound by a certain, utterly spurious, ideological solidarity – one that is both anti-conservative and anti-Russian. They cannot support Russia’s position in the conflict with Ukraine, even when the outwardly pro-European forces at the helm there [violate the law with anti-Semitic remarks in their pursuit of power](#).

But meanwhile, a keen ear can detect the howls of Europe’s true heartland – the people who simply cannot grasp why the EU, which is already bursting at its seams, should welcome in Ukraine, a country that is already depleted, poor, and unstable. That European public sees Putin as the most rational force on the continent anywhere from Lisbon to the Urals, a force that is free of American control and immune to pressure from any unsolicited allies in the East.

The Russian world is on its way to Europe in order to oblige the “official” Europe to listen to its own electorate, a group long forgotten by a European bureaucracy under the thumb of Washington. And for a long time we didn’t understand what was really going on in the silence of those European offices, until Edward Snowden broke the news to us and to the whole world.

And this was, in essence, the challenge that Putin put before the citizens of the West – **a admonition to listen to the voice of the majority - in this case the majority of their own countries - and to stop resisting its opinion, with the added warning that if the West persists in this resistance, it should not be surprised if there is pushback**. However, he pointedly refrained from any harsh rhetoric against the West. The Russian leader even found kind words for President Obama.

An interesting era of struggle for the identity of Europe has begun – an era to reclaim the entire continent, an era of a new abduction of Europe. Economic pragmatism still has its place, but it is no longer the highest priority – oil and gas are now the arguments in a much more substantial dispute. A dispute of minds. A dispute of ideas. If the Russian world wins this dispute, a place will be found at the table of European nations (perhaps seated at the head) for the new EuroRussia, with its vast, diverse population. But if victory crosses the Atlantic, then a civilization will ascend to the top that has been cribbed from a dystopia created by [Aldous Huxley](#) or [Anthony Burgess](#) – an spent world in thrall to a cult of hedonistic pleasure that has forgotten the words “Homeland,” “Family,” and “God.”

It turns out that in annexing the Crimea, Russia has not left Europe, but has finally returned to it after two decades of isolation and self-imposed exile from the continent’s fate. And while the Western public reviles the intellectuals and academics who for years went on about Russia’s “uniqueness,” blaming them for the current situation, Putin is celebrating the triumphant return of the Russian state to European civilization, not as an unwelcome guest, but as its imminent liberator.

[FULL VIDEO OF DIRECT LINE WITH VLADIMIR PUTIN](#)

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