

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 23 March 2015 07:55  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Europe's far-right meets in St Petersburg, Russia  
**Importance:** High

Morning [Redacted].

The right wing 'conservative congress' took place at the Holiday Inn in St Petersburg yesterday. See articles below:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32009360>

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-far-right-forum-antifascists/26914178.html>

There was a small anti-fascist protest and a bomb threat caused some disruption. Nick Griffin was there. Griffin said at the event that "I see this forum as a way of pushing the fight back against liberalism and what we call modernism, the destruction of traditional values, including Christianity throughout the modern world."

He added: "Russia is about tradition and Christianity and it's very important that traditionalists from Russia, Europe, and America get together to present our ideas more effectively to the general public."

I am heading off to Volgograd this morning but [Redacted] will pull together some additional local reporting ahead of the morning meeting, which I believe is at 10.30 today.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 23 March 2015 10:19  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Europe's far-right meets in St Petersburg, Russia

[Redacted]

Further to [Redacted]'s note earlier this morning I have been monitoring local media over the weekend to assess the amount and tone of reporting on the International Russian Conservative Forum which was held in the Holiday Inn Hotel in St Petersburg.

[Redacted]'s note and two links sent earlier summarise the developments. Observers noted that the room was packed full, with significant presence by foreign guests. Greece's *Golden Dawn* were well represented, including by speakers. France's *National Front* were noticeably absent, reportedly because they felt their attendance could jeopardise results at the forthcoming French municipal elections. Both co-founders of *Rodina*, the hosting Russian party, Rogozin

and Glaziev distanced themselves from the event. Despite earlier rumours, there was no evidence of Igor Strelkov's presence, although people in army fatigues, allegedly Novorossia fighters, were present as well as Cossacks.

Reportedly approximately 40 people turned up to protest outside Holiday Inn, including a group of samba players with drums! Police detained eight protesters and one attendee of the forum. Most were released quickly. Some protesters engaged in a lively debate with forum attendees when the latter came out during the coffee break. The previous day a group of anti-fascist activists organised a small march at the back end of Nevsky Prospect which went peacefully without detentions. Quite ironically, the forum had to finish earlier than planned following a telephone bomb threat, after which the police evacuated the building.

One deputy of the Legislative Assembly, Irina Komolova (KPRF), picketed the hotel early in the morning. Komolova had previously appealed to Poltavchenko to prevent the forum taking place in St Petersburg as she felt it was particularly cynical to hold in 'hero-city Leningrad' a month before the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the celebrations of victory over Nazi Germany. Komolova, as many others, strongly objects to the fact that political movements that inherited much of the ultra-nationalist ideology of Hitler and Mussolini, denounced during the Nurnberg process, were invited to come to Russia. However, most chose not to draw any parallel between the rhetoric demonstrated at the forum and the anti-Ukrainian rhetoric.

Another deputy, Boris Vishnevsky (Yabloko), published a blog on Echo of Moscow in which he said the forum brings shame not just on St Petersburg but on the entire country and criticised local authorities, and specifically Governor Poltavchenko, for allowing this to proceed and refraining from any public commentary. Vishnevsky's assistant was attacked by an unidentified man whilst picketing the hotel. The attacker was detained by police.

The majority of national media did not report on the event, with the exception of Kommersant, Echo of Moscow and Business FM. Meduza also monitored from Riga. Novaya Gazeta in St Petersburg published two reports, and the congress was closely followed by local journalists (the usual suspects – Echo, Novaya, Baltinfo, Regnum). As expected, the focus of reporting was on extremist nationalist views of the attendees, with particular focus on representatives of the European far-right, including the UK, although Nick Griffin did not get as much notice as Germany's Udo Voigt, the US writer Jared Taylor and the Greeks. The other UK attendee was Jim Dowson of the League of Life.

Local TV channel *Sankt Peterburg*, which is funded by the city administration, did two reports. The first one was completely neutral and factual, but the second noted the fact that many of the foreign guests represented the extreme right nationalist trend in Europe including some followers and supporters of the Nazi ideology.

Holiday Inn came under a lot of criticism for agreeing to host the event. Perhaps fortunately, no one recalled that the PM and his party stayed there during G20!

Best,

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 23 March 2015 13:13

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RUSSIA: NATIONALIST EVENT IN ST PETERSBURG  
OFFICIAL\_SENSITIVE

[Redacted]

**SUMMARY: Nationalist conference takes place in St Petersburg over the weekend with participation of far-right parties from several EU members states, including UK. Forum agrees “resolution” on closer cooperation. Mainstream Russian politicians do not take part.**

DETAIL:

1. St Petersburg hosted the “International Conservative Forum” over the weekend of 21-22 March, a gathering of European far-right political parties organised by Rodina (Russian right wing party). The aim of the event according to the organisers was to unite Russian and EU conservative forces “in the context of European sanctions against Russia and the US pressure on European countries and Russia”. There were representatives of far-right political parties or organisations from the following countries:
  - Sweden
  - Spain
  - Denmark
  - Germany
  - Italy
  - Bulgaria
  - Belgium
  - Greece
  - UK
2. Nick Griffin and Jim Dowson (a Scottish anti-abortion campaigner) formed the UK delegation. The French National Front was absent, reportedly because they felt attendance could jeopardise results at the forthcoming French municipal elections.
3. There were no Russian senior officials among the speakers, although the head of Rodina (Alexei Zhuravlyov – a State Duma Deputy) attended. Both co-founders of Rodina, well known and outspoken political figures Rogozin and Glaziev, distanced themselves from the event. Despite earlier rumours, there was no evidence of Igor Strelkov’s presence, although people in army fatigues, allegedly Novorossia fighters, were present as well as Cossacks.

4. According to media reporting, discussion topics included anti-EU, anti-US and anti-LGBT sentiment. At the end of the event, Rodina representatives proposed a resolution to create a permanent committee to facilitate coordination between Russian and European parties. Participants rushed to sign it before the event was disrupted by a bomb threat.

## PROTEST

5. Reportedly approximately 40 people protested outside the venue, the Holiday Inn, including a group of samba players. Police detained eight protesters and one attendee of the forum. Most were released quickly. Some protesters engaged in a lively debate with forum attendees when the latter came out during the coffee break. The previous day a group of anti-fascist activists organised a small march which went ahead peacefully.
6. One Communist Party deputy from the St Petersburg Legislative Assembly picketed the hotel early in the morning. The Deputy had previously appealed to St Petersburg Governor Poltavchenko to prevent the forum taking place as she felt it was particularly cynical to hold it in 'hero-city Leningrad' a month before the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the celebrations of victory over Nazi Germany. Another deputy from Yabloko (liberal opposition) said the forum brought shame on St Petersburg and criticised Governor Poltavchenko for allowing it to go ahead. The Deputy's assistant was attacked by an unidentified man whilst picketing the hotel. The attacker was detained by police.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

7. National media coverage of the event was limited. Liberal newspaper Novaya Gazeta in St Petersburg published two reports, and the congress was closely followed by local journalists. The focus of reporting was on extremist nationalist views of the attendees, with particular focus on representatives of the European far-right, including the UK, although Nick Griffin did not get as much notice as Germany's former MEP Udo Voigt, the US writer Jared Taylor and the Greek representatives. Local TV channel *Sankt Peterburg*, funded by the city administration, carried two reports. The first was neutral and factual, but the second noted that many of the foreign guests represented the extreme right nationalist trend in Europe including some followers and supporters of the Nazi ideology.

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 24 March 2016 11:21

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RUSSIA'S REGIONS: POLITICAL UPDATE: NORTH-WEST FEDERAL DISTRICT

[Redacted]

### St Petersburg: Russian Conservative Forum

The event was first held in St Petersburg in March 2015 and was widely criticised for attracting prominent representatives of radical right-wing nationalist and neo-Nazi movements from Europe in the year of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWII.

[Redacted]