Konrad Świder

The Izborsky Club’s Views on Ukraine

The aim of this paper is to present the views of a politically involved association of Russian intellectuals on Ukraine within the context of the events that have taken place in that country since the Euromaidan. The association in question is the pro-Kremlin Izborsky Club, which has a status of an informal think-tank. The club officially brings together 31 intellectuals who are known figures in Russian political, economic, social and cultural life. Its members took part in the creation of propaganda justifying the Russian policy towards Ukraine after the outbreak of the revolution in the country in November 2013. Western newspapers (articles in “Foreign Affairs”) recognized some members of the association as the major “prompters” and inspirers of the annexation of the Crimea. This article presents the Izborsky Club’s views on Ukraine in order to shed light on a significant phenomenon in the Russian public space as one of the explanations for why the political line of the Kremlin and President Vladimir Putin enjoys consistently high support despite the sanctions imposed by the West against Russia and its international isolation. This presentation is also an illustration of the proxemic tensions relating to the emotional relationships between people and space (in this case, the Russians and the area of influence of Russian culture), which are part of the ideology of geopoliticism – perceiving all spheres and fields of human life through the prism of geopolitics – characteristic of Russia.

Keywords: Izborsky Club, Russia, Ukraine, Novorossiya, Donbas, geopolitics