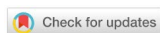


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«Программа будущего» О. Шольца



full article

Olaf Scholz, His Program of the Future, and the European Direction in Russia's Foreign Policy

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Abstract: The article features the current European direction in Russia's foreign policy in the context of the Western ideas and its response to them. The author focuses on the current ideological state of the modern European direction as part of Russia's foreign policy and the role of the historical community in its development. The research objective was to identify and classify the dominant *European ideas*, as well as to define their influence on the European direction of Russia's foreign policy and to outline the prospective cross-thematic historical research. The combined historical-subject and historiographical goal resulted from the incomplete nature of the processes under study and the opportunities for the Russian historical community to participate in the formation of the modern European direction of Russia's foreign policy. The author believes that the cooperation of historians and social scientists can bring about major practical benefits. The research relied on standard historical methods and the method of discursive analysis. The chronological scope of the article is limited to 2022 and the early 2023, which made it impossible to provide a brief overview of the related literature in the introduction. The article is debatable and refers to a mixed type of subject-theoretic articles on recent history. The main practical results are the four possible directions of cross-thematic research: 1) the history of splits in Europe, European states, and European societies, as well as their consequences; 2) worldviews, conflicting worldviews, struggle and dialogue of worldviews, uni-/multivariant and un/productive synthesis of ideas and their consequences; 3) the first stage of globalization in modern history and prospects for European integration; 4) options, types, and patterns of partnerships and collaborations within Europe and individual European countries, as well as societies outside Europe.

Keywords: foreign policy, Russia, Germany, Lavrov, Scholz, cross-thematic studies

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оригинальная статья

«Программа будущего» О. Шольца и европейское направление внешней политики России

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Аннотация: Рассматривается современное европейское направление внешней политики Российской Федерации в контексте вырабатываемых на Западе (в частности, в Федеративной Республике Германия) идей построения будущего и формирующегося ответа на них нашей страны. Предметом статьи являются текущее идейное состояние современного европейского направления внешней политики РФ и роли в его развитии исторического сообщества. Цель – выявить доминирующие европейские идеи, систематизировать их, представить гипотезы об их влиянии на европейское направление внешней политики РФ и наметить основные направления возможных межтематических исторических исследований. Постановка комбинированной (историко-предметной и историографической) цели обусловлена незавершенным характером изучаемых процессов, который обозна-

чается в статье как незавершенная процессуальность, и открывающимися для отечественного исторического сообщества возможностями участия в формировании современного европейского направления внешней политики РФ. Автор полагает, что участие историков вместе с коллегами из других общественных наук способно принести значимую практическую пользу. Цель статьи предопределила использование, наряду с традиционными историческими методами и подходами, дискурс-анализа. Хронологические рамки статьи ограничиваются 2022 г. и началом 2023 г. Предмет статьи и хронологические рамки не позволяют автору дать краткий обзор литературы во введении. Статья носит дискуссионный характер и относится к смешанному виду теоретико-предметных статей по новейшей истории. Основными практическими результатами являются сформулированные автором четыре возможные направления междисциплинарных исследований: 1) история расколов в европейском регионе, в европейских государствах и обществах, их последствия; 2) мировоззрения, конфликты мировоззрений, борьба мировоззрений, диалог мировоззрений, одновариантный и многовариантный, продуктивный и непродуктивный синтез идей и их последствия; 3) первый этап глобализации в новейшей истории, варианты европейской интеграции; 4) варианты, виды, модели партнерств и сотрудничества внутри Европы и отдельных европейских стран и обществ вне Европы.

Ключевые слова: внешняя политика, Россия, Германия, С. В. Лавров, О. Шольц, междисциплинарные исследования

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Introduction and theoretical foundations

Every epoch sets its own challenges. This maxim suggests that historians should reflect on the accumulated material while relying on new contexts, research directions, and contemporary events. For instance, French historian Marc Bloch used modernity to ask medieval texts important questions. In fact, Bloch made a revolutionary proposal, which still remains novel and relevant: he recommended to start university courses of history with the current events.

As a scientific category, modernity remains a grey zone claimed both by historians and political scientists. However, this situation presupposes neither rivalry nor disputes since historians inscribe modernity in the procedural and / or phenomenological context(s), while political scientists make assumptions about the future of these processes, i.e., a productive future. As an idea, the future retains its rightful place among other objects of historical knowledge.

This article was intended to be both simple and controversial. Its simplicity is in the fact that it introduces a comparative analysis of the *Program of the Future* declared by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [Schieritz 2022: 11–40, 99–114, 157–170] and the ideas expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov. This material refers to the modern history. However, the obvious allusion to Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* [Filitov 2017] and the détente it brought about to the European continent means that the joint appeal to Russia and Germany hardly requires a justification of its relevance and novelty. In addition, historians are only beginning to study the transformation of relations between the two countries at the present stage [Pavlov 2023; Terekhov 2022; Vatlin 2010].

As the ongoing processes are *a priori* incomplete, this research was not so much about comparing ideas *per se* as about identifying the emerging trends and possible directions for further ideological search in relation to the policy of Russia towards Europe. The abovementioned controversy of the article resulted from the task of identifying directions, first, because this is where history and political science are to clash and, second, because this is where the subject gets somewhat fuzzy.

Modernity as a process questions the role of historians and the promising areas of historical research because its incompleteness substantiates the subject of historical research and removes external contradictions. As a result, the subject of the article is the current ideological state of the modern European direction in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation and the role of the historian in its development. The research objective was to identify the dominant *European ideas*, to systematize them, to define their influence on the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, and to outline the main prospects for cross-thematic historical research. In this context, we see the modern European direction of Russian foreign policy as a new and open to ideas and (co)participation, while O. Scholz's *European Program* is its ideological antipode and a challenge for the constructive formation of domestic developments (cf.: [Busse, Hofmann 2022: 5–6; Hildermeier 2022: 23–30, 1313–1347; Luks 2022: 269–314, 321–350]).

Thus, the research problem is to establish the *European ideas* created by the current modernity (see paragraphs 2 and 3) and explain how historians can help to develop them (see paragraphs 4 and 5).

Olaf Scholz and His European Program

On February 27, 2022, German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz of the Social Democratic Party of Germany announced the *change of eras* and declared *alliances* as the *greatest strength* of his country¹.

On August 29, 2022, Scholz acknowledged that in a *multipolar world* <...> *it is not enough* <...> *to support only existing partnerships*: it requires political and economic diversification and investing in *new partnerships*².

Scholz said that the world is now at the end of an *unusual phase of globalization* when the countries of the collective West were guaranteed economic growth, high employment, low inflation, and American protection³.

The new stage of globalization will involve increased competition. Under these conditions, the West should try to *stimulate new players to a greater participation in the design of the international order and to a greater integration into it*. The traditional Western values should be interpreted as universal because *freedom, equality, the rule of law, and human dignity* remain understandable ideas even outside of one particular civilizational circle⁴.

The expediency of maintaining contacts with various partners *a priori* implies different levels of *cooperation and dialogue* with *democratic and authoritarian states*. Scholz's unwillingness to provoke the emergence of such blocs suggests that he had not defined the strategic lines of interaction with *authoritarian states* by 2022 and early 2023.

Scholz included the development of a *new way of thinking and new tools* in the former official goal of the West, i.e., the *promotion of peace, prosperity and civil liberties*⁵.

However, he emphasized that *Germany and its partners in the EU, the United States, the G7 and NATO must protect our open communities, stand up for our democratic values, and strengthen our alliances and partnerships*⁶.

O. Scholz assessed the possible roles and responsibilities of Germany in the international arena in a differentiated and complex way. He saw Germany as a *guarantor of European security*⁷, a *mediator (Brückenbauer) within the European Union*, and a *defender of multilateral solutions to global problems*⁸. This attitude seems illogical as the proposed roles are not always linear and sometimes are not able to complement each other in a harmonious way [Schmidt 2022: 7–138, 189–244].

Given this circumstance, the European Union and transatlantic relations are most likely to remain Germany's priorities. According to Scholz, the EU longs to *strengthen sovereignty*, e.g., in *competition for modern technologies, in the provision of raw materials, in the field of energy supply, or in space*⁹.

Scholz emphasized that *European sovereignty neither* <...> *cancel and replaces national sovereignty*¹⁰. Therefore, the *new way of thinking* and the *new tools* are yet to be correlated with national and supranational processes.

Scholz opposed the division of the European Union into *exclusive clubs*. He proposed majority decision-making, a greater number of commissioners (in the case of the *long-awaited enlargement* of the European Union), and the parallel responsibility of commissioners (two commissioners per one resource)¹¹. However, he did not explain how all these would help to *speed up political*

¹ Deutscher Bundestag – 20. Wahlperiode – 19. Sitzung. Berlin, den 27. Februar 2022 (Plenarprotokoll). S. 1354.

² Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz an der Karls-Universität am 29. August 2022 in Prag. *Bundesregierung*. 29 Aug 2022. URL: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/rede-von-bundeskanzler-scholz-an-der-karls-universitaet-am-29-august-2022-in-prag-2079534> (accessed 15 Jan 2023). In a revised version, he spoke about working on an equal footing with partners *outside the traditional West* [Die globale Zeitenwende. Namensbeitrag des Kanzlers in Foreign Affairs. *Bundesregierung*. 5 Dec 2022. URL: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/kanzler-namensartikel-foreign-affairs-2149014> (accessed 17 Jan 2023)].

³ Die globale Zeitenwende...

⁴ Ibid. It is no coincidence that Scholz referred to the UN.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. See also Scholz's Sorbonne speech: "Heute geht es nicht mehr darum, einen Krieg im Innern unserer Union zu verhindern und zu vermeiden, sondern darum, unsere europäische Friedensordnung und unsere Werte zu erhalten und zu verteidigen – gegen Fliehkräfte innerhalb unserer Union, vor allem aber gegen Bedrohungen von außen" [Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz anlässlich des 60. Jahrestages der Unterzeichnung des Élysée-Vertrages am 22. Januar 2023 in der Sorbonne. *Bundesregierung*. 22 Jan 2023. URL: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/rede-von-bundeskanzler-scholz-anlaesslich-des-60-jahrestages-der-unterzeichnung-des-elysee-vertrages-am-22-januar-2023-in-der-sorbonne-2159840> (accessed 5 Feb 2023)].

⁷ *The main guarantor* is an alternative designation: "Deutschland kommt jetzt die wesentliche Aufgabe zu, als einer der Hauptgaranten für die Sicherheit in Europa Verantwortung zu übernehmen, indem wir in unsere Streitkräfte investieren, die europäische Rüstungsindustrie stärken, unsere militärische Präsenz an der NATO-Ostflanke erhöhen und die ukrainischen Streitkräfte ausbilden und ausrüsten" [Die globale Zeitenwende...].

⁸ Die globale Zeitenwende...

⁹ Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz anlässlich des 60. Jahrestages der Unterzeichnung des Élysée-Vertrages...

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz an der Karls-Universität am 29. August 2022 in Prag...

decision-making processes and avoid long conflicts in conditions when the European Union should take on more responsibility for its own security, implement a coordinated and integrated approach to expanding defense competencies¹², develop and implement unified weapons systems, create an effective Council of Defense Ministers, simplify the export of jointly produced weapons, and build a common missile defense system¹³.

In the chronological period under study, O. Scholz's *Program of the Future* was at the stage of preliminary development. Apparently, the idea of strategic adversaries and the desire to strengthen the eastern border of NATO are uncontested, but much remains controversial [Böing 2018: 194–215, 290–294].

The growing global competition will inevitably affect not only the obvious and potential rivals, adversaries, and enemies, but also the partners in transatlantic cooperation. *The strategic renewal <...> of the Internal Market*, the *Made in Europe 2030 strategy*¹⁴, attracting private investment, creating a real capital market and banking union while maintaining national sovereignty, the struggle for EU manageability and various kinds of self-restrictions, e.g., of the three roles declared by Scholz (cf.: [Karras 2009: 217–228]), etc., all this makes Germany unattractive for the new strategic partnerships and a weak partner in relations with the United States¹⁵.

If the Americans accept the formula proposed by the Chancellor that any improvement, any unification

of European defense structures within the EU strengthens NATO¹⁶, then they will have to transfer to the Europeans the right to choose areas of cooperation and determine the interaction boundaries. Moreover, in an attempt to fulfil their obligations to defend Europe, the USA might find themselves in an extremely disadvantageous position.

O. Scholz's interpretation of the current *change of epochs* also remains unclear since, in his opinion, we are facing an even greater change of epochs¹⁷.

Russia's response

Russia's response to this *change of epochs* and the new stage of globalization can also be interpreted as preliminary. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergei Lavrov declared that *American-style globalization is over*¹⁸: new centers of economic growth¹⁹ are forming, as well as multipolarity (see [Sindeev 2020] about the political role of the minister). The multipolarity formation is complex and confrontational since there is a struggle to speed up these multipolar processes and a struggle to <...> prolong one's "privileged existence"²⁰. The result is a discord between the West, which claims hegemony and control over the implementation of "its own rules" <...>, and the world majority²¹.

According to Lavrov, the process of forming a new world order <...> will take a whole historical epoch²², at the beginning of which countries are to realize the significance of the new relationships necessary for <...> democracy and justice to reign and the principle of Charter of the United Nations

¹² Die globale Zeitenwende...

¹³ See how Scholz rationalized it: "Zugleich wird Deutschland diese zukünftige Luftverteidigung von Beginn an so ausgestalten, dass sich auch unsere europäischen Nachbarn daran beteiligen können, wenn es gewünscht wird, etwa Polen, Balten, Niederländer, Tschechen, Slowaken oder unsere skandinavischen Partner. Ein gemeinsam aufgebautes Luftverteidigungssystem in Europa wäre nicht nur kostengünstiger und effizienter, als wenn jeder von uns seine teuren eigenen und hochkomplexen Luftverteidigungen aufbaut" [Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz an der Karls-Universität am 29. August 2022 in Prag...].

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See the repeated references Scholz made in one of his interviews to the importance of the United States and the illogical character of the subjectivity of the European Union in this context: "Für mich gilt, dass wir keine nationalen Alleingänge machen, sondern uns eng abstimmen mit den internationalen Partnern, allen voran mit den USA. Es ist für die Sicherheit Europas von größter Bedeutung, dass wir uns eng mit den USA absprechen. Ohne die Vereinigten Staaten wäre Sicherheit in Europa nur schwer zu gewährleisten <...>. Wir brauchen ein geopolitisch souveränes und starkes Europa <...> – eine starke europäische Rüstungsindustrie zum Beispiel und Mehrheitsentscheidungen in der EU zu Fragen der Außenpolitik" [Kanzler im Interview mit dem Tagesspiegel "Wir handeln immer international eng abgestimmt und koordiniert". Bundesregierung. 29 Jan 2023. URL: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/kanzler-im-tagesspiegel-interview-2161058> (accessed 10 Feb 2023)].

¹⁶ Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz an der Karls-Universität am 29. August 2022 in Prag...

¹⁷ Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz anlässlich des 60. Jahrestages der Unterzeichnung des Élysée-Vertrages...

¹⁸ Speech and answers to the questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov at the international forum "Primakov Readings", Moscow, December 7, 2022. URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/1842506/ (accessed 30 Jan 2023).

¹⁹ Speech and answers to media questions by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov during a press conference on the results of the activities of Russian diplomacy in 2022, Moscow, January 18, 2023. URL: https://www.mid.ru/press_service/video/view/1848395/ (accessed 23 Jan 2023).

²⁰ Speech and answers to the questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov at the international forum "Primakov Readings"...

²¹ Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov to the Big Game program on Channel One, Moscow, December 28, 2022. URL: https://www.mid.ru/press_service/video/view/1845915/ (accessed 7 Feb 2023).

²² Ibid.

(*respect for the sovereign equality of all States*)²³. Apparently, the transition to new relations is part of the evolution of the existing system as *the global majority gradually come to realize that they share the same problems and goals, which they should handle and achieve together*.

The ongoing changes are real, as evidenced by the *new financial and logistical system, which does not depend on the whims and feeling of self-superiority of the collective West and tests the mechanisms that will not be subject to any dictate and abuse*²⁴, as well as by the growth of self-awareness of new centers and individual countries (cf.: [Hufen 2017: 8–15]).

These centers and countries *have a sense of their own dignity, strive to defend their legitimate interests, respect the traditions of their centuries-old, even millennia-old civilizations, and do not want to be "tarred with the same brush" of liberal values*²⁵. These countries *want to secure their own development and will seek to organize democracy in the international arena through equality and respect*.

Russia needs to implement previously agreed priorities in the new conditions: *to ensure the national security <...>, to create the most favorable conditions for socio-economic development, to improve the welfare of citizens*²⁶, *to strengthen sovereignty, and to build new forms of interaction so as not to depend on the West and its <...> neo-colonial methods, i.e., to prevent the destruction of traditional ties between old partners in different regions, their fragmentation, destabilization*²⁷, *and confrontational agenda*.

Probably, the initial changes will be slow until individual centers and countries are able to materialize their goals and interests of into specific agreements. This proposition explains Lavrov's words that *at this stage we are not going to come up with any initiatives. This <...> refers to the discussion of a possible new agreement or agreements in the field of strategic offensive weapons, as well as on mutual security guarantees*²⁸.

However, Sergei Lavrov also mentioned President Putin's initiative for cooperation on the Eurasian continent

and his words that *Asia and the Pacific Ocean are becoming the locomotives of world growth*²⁹.

European Direction of Russia's Foreign Policy

2022 – early 2023 was a preparatory stage that prepared new worldviews for the next stage of multipolar competitive globalization. According to the soft version of O. Scholz *Program of the Future*, Germany is likely to ideologize this process, forcing various states to choose between *us and them* (see [Sindeev 2021] for the justification for the need to change the criteria for assessing partnerships).

Russia relies on a compromise scenario which involves a gradual alignment of the national interests of countries. This scenario consists of several *stages* of updating the principles of equal cooperation: discussing the prospects and projects of cooperation with partners behind closed doors and in open areas; modernizing traditional partnerships and publicizing initiatives; developing and presenting a conceptual understanding of multipolar globalization. The early stages of this long journey will have no major breakthroughs, but its success is inevitable, provided comprehensive work and effective monitoring take place.

The objective nature of the new globalization goals and objectives significantly reduces the *geopolitical sovereignty* of the EU member states. Even before the current stage of the Ukrainian crisis, any dialogue with these countries lost its sense for Russia as the European direction lost its independent significance.

The attempts of Western countries to isolate Russia reveal their intention to prevent other globalization options and alternatives but their own³⁰. It is no coincidence that many Western politicians are exploiting the rhetoric that is not unlike that of Winston Churchill in his Fulton speech and some other statements which marked the early stages of the Cold War.

²³ Speech and answers to media questions by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov during a press conference on the results of the activities of Russian diplomacy in 2022...

²⁴ Speech and answers to questions by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov to students and faculty of MGIMO on the occasion of the start of the academic year, Moscow, September 1, 2022. URL: https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/video/view/1828196/ (accessed 4 Feb 2023).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Speech and answers to media questions by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov during a press conference on the results of the activities of Russian diplomacy in 2022...

²⁸ Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov to the TASS news agency following the results of 2022, December 27, 2022. URL: https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1845618/ (accessed 7 Feb 2023).

²⁹ Speech and answers to the questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at the international forum "Primakov Readings"...

³⁰ German historiography does not like alternatives. Actually, the list of alternatives includes only two topics [Gros 1994; Münter 2001]; see also [Schubarth 1987; Steinmetz 2022].

These circumstances provide five hypotheses.

1. The European region is slowly slipping into a state of long-term division and its inherent multifaceted complex conflicts.

2. A new conflict of worldviews turns into a struggle of worldviews. The threat of an ideological split has not become less inevitable even though the artificial classification of modern states and societies into *democratic* and *authoritarian*, observed in the discourse of 2022 – early 2023, has not yet been established.

3. Europe has no a single future globalization model, which fuels the splitting process.

4. The current European direction should be understood as a derivative of success in diversifying the number of partnerships and actual models of cooperation in other regions.

5. The contemporary European centers of gravity are limited in their possibilities to integrate new participants. The current search for partnerships outside of Europe can be considered an objective trend of the time but is unlikely to resolve the whole range of purely European and national problems.

Thus, Russia's foreign policy has two scenarios for its European direction. According to the first scenario, Russia should temporarily abandon the European direction to increase the cooperation with the rest of the world. The optimal result will eventually lead to more favorable conditions of Russian-European partnership and cooperation, when the parties demonstrate their readiness and agreement to engage in a pragmatic dialogue with each other, based on mutual interests and values.

The second scenario provides for the simultaneous development of the European direction as an independent one and its incorporation into other regional directions, depending on the problem complex.

The first scenario seems more probable in the light of the current events: at least, this is the scenario Sergey Lavrov spoke about. However, modernity, unlike other historical eras and transformations, has a unique feature: a huge, highly professional intellectual resource, the knowledge and abilities of which can be useful for the effective management of ongoing processes.

The Role of Historians

Historians can make a significant contribution to the study and expert evaluation of both scenarios because historical community is known for its solidarity, high historiographic culture, and time-tested classical education.

To illustrate this thesis, we should define a possible perspective of the thematic interaction of historians of different specialties. According to the above hypotheses, the following cross-thematic areas of historical research will be true and relevant:

- the history of splits in Europe, European states, and European societies, as well as their consequences;
- worldviews, conflicting worldviews, struggle and dialogue of worldviews, uni-/multivariant and un/productive synthesis of ideas and their consequences [Filitov 2022; Platzeck 2020: 45–54, 83–207; The end of the Cold War... 2021];
- the first stage of globalization in modern history and prospects for European integration (see a German publication [Sindeev 2022]);
- options, types, and patterns of partnerships and collaborations within Europe and individual European countries, as well as societies outside Europe.

For each direction, it is fundamentally important to achieve a common result, either as conclusions or hypotheses, and then correlate this result with both scenarios or propose an authentic scenario³¹.

This will result in a comprehensive historical vision of current processes and recommendations. Such work of large inter-university teams will facilitate the substantiation of the relevance and practical significance of historical R&D (cf. examples of thematic synthesis: [Die Zukunft... 2022; Dynamiken... 2022: 161–166, 173–178; Khreshkevich 2020]). It will also increase R&D indicators and lead to successful grant applications.

The most important result, however, will be that the new European direction of Russia's foreign policy will receive a well-founded basis.

In the current unique situation, the fundamental difference between Russia and European countries may be a more fruitful cooperation between Russian diplomats and representatives of social sciences. Historians play a significant role in this cooperation since the change of paradigms in the context of the historical vision of current processes will make it possible to plan and, if necessary, correct the new European policy of the Russian Federation.

Conclusion

This research results can be divided into two groups. The historical and substantive results include the substantive aspects and ideas from Olaf Scholz's *Program of the Future* and the ideas expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. The theoretical

³¹ The method of historical comparison can incorporate O. Scholz's Program of The Future and other similar Western programs in a particular historical context. In addition, historians will be able to test them for outdated (borrowed) and new (original) ideas. As a result, Scholz's Program of The Future will lose its air of novelty.

results include the four inter-topical areas of prospective research. The obtained historical and substantive results led to the following conclusion: the European direction of Russia's foreign policy depends on Russia's partnerships outside Europe. This conclusion makes it possible to update future approaches to the European historical studies and the corresponding university discipline. A further development of the four cross-thematic areas of historical research may unite specialists in different historical periods within a department or one university, or as part of inter-university cooperation of historians, to achieve a uniform competitive result.

The main idea of the article is that the *incompleteness* of the European direction of Russia's foreign policy provides historians with a unique chance to increase the significance of the ongoing research.

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