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**THE IMAGE
OF MODERN RUSSIAN
INNOVATIONS
IN THE DANISH
MASS MEDIA**

A. V. Ryabichenko *



This article sets out to identify the attitude of the Danish mass media to modern Russian innovations. The research is timely because of the Russian interest in the experience of Denmark — one of the "innovation leaders" of the EU. The author analyses a number of publications on Russia in the Danish mass media. The positive image of Russian innovations in Danish periodicals is analysed against the background of historical stereotypes. The article also describes the Danish national innovation system. The image of Russian innovations in the Danish mass media is positive; however, the articles dedicated to Russian innovations constitute a small part of reports on developments in Russia. The article also contributes to social surveys carried out in Denmark through introducing new data. The research results can be used by politicians, scholars and social activists interested in the relations with Denmark.

Key words: history of Denmark, public opinion, stereotypes, innovations

An analysis of publications in Danish periodicals was conducted in order to understand what image of Russian innovations is formed by the Danish mass media.

Why is a Russian interested in Danish public opinion in this regard? Not unlike Sweden, Finland, and Germany, Denmark is one of the “innovation leaders” of the EU [17]. Danish innovations are successfully implemented in such spheres as information technologies, biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, and wind power engineering. The government takes every effort to make Denmark a country of predominantly innovative companies by the year 2020 [21]. The development of innovations is encouraged by government structures, including the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Sci-

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ence, Technology, and Innovation. Denmark participates in EU projects in the fields of astronautics and molecular biology, takes part in the Eurostars, EraSME, and EUREKA projects. Denmark is involved in 228 projects of the EU seventh framework programme. In the framework of Nordic cooperation, Denmark participates in the activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers in the field of education and research (NordForsk), Nordic Energy Research, Nordic Innovation Centre, etc. [19].

As well as in the neighbouring France, there is a Globalization Council in Denmark, which takes a very serious approach to the innovation issues. It is not a coincidence that the government globalization strategy is called Progress, Innovation, and Cohesion. As a result of the implementation of this document, Danish innovation centres were established in Silicon Valley, Shanghai, and Munich; special attention is paid to the cooperation in the field of innovations with Japan and the USA [20].

The cooperation between Russia and Denmark in the field of innovation is just starting. In the course of visits of President D. A. Medvedev and Prime Minister V. V. Putin to Denmark in 2010—2011, cooperation agreements, including those in the field of high technologies, were signed [8—10].

Before presenting the results of the study, one should analyse the general attitude of the Danish mass media to Russia. Local journalists do not strongly favour the Russian Federation. The “Russians are coming” stereotype is deeply rooted in the minds of the Danish. Another set expression — “By i Rusland!” (“a town in Russia”) — means something distant and not related to the conversation at all [2; 11]. One of the most popular stereotypes about Russia, which is widely used by the Danish mass media, is the so called “energy power”. This expression suggests the dependence of Europe on Russian energy supplies [18; 22]. The former Danish ambassador to Russia, P. Karlsson mentions two more negative ethnical stereotypes: corruption and mafia [3].

Against the background of the above-mentioned negative stereotypes, a twofold attitude to Russia has emerged in Denmark: on the one hand, the fear of the “Russian bear” still lives, on the other hand, relations with the Russian Federation, first of all, in the field of economy, are developing, and our country is a reliable and active partner.

The former foreign minister of Denmark, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, wrote in the *Berlingske* newspaper that, despite the tension in relations with Russia, Denmark will soon be able to use Russian oil and gas and has a special interest in close cooperation on the issue of future development of the Arctic [4]. The author of “Business. Dk”, U. Gardel stresses that Russia is the “R” in BRIC and the largest country at the EU border, which can become both a large consumer and a major competitor [6].

What are the historical prerequisites for the formation of negative ethnical stereotypes about Russia and Russians? Ally contacts between Russia and Denmark date back to 1493, when the two countries formed an alliance against Sweden and Lithuania. But peaceful relations did not ensure a positive attitude of the Danish towards Russia. The Danish journalist and researcher, S. Rasmussen emphasizes that Russia has been a “friend” to Euro-

pe for many centuries. Europe considers Russia as a “choice between democracy and non-democracy, between Europe and Russia, between Europe and Asia”. The historical contacts between Russia and Denmark often contributed to the formation of the image of “them” in the minds of the Danish.

According to the professor of Copenhagen University, P. U. Møller, the Danish have always considered Russians as standing at the threshold of civilised Europe, which they seem to be unable to reach. Møller lists the characteristic stereotypes about Russians, which were widely used by Danish travellers in their books in the 18th-19th centuries. Thus, Russians are strong and cruel, ignorant and backward, obedient and submissive; they are also “rustic”. Russians “drink and smell”; they are superstitious and corrupt [23, p. 11—16].

In the 20th century — and due to a strong influence of the “Cold War” — the image of “them” persists in the Danish mass consciousness. A representative of the Danish Defence Academy, Flemming Hansen, stresses that Russians do not recognise themselves in the “Russian reports” of the Western mass media, because researchers unintentionally project modern Russia on the background of the Soviet Union of the “Cold War” period. Hansen emphasises that such materials usually address violation of rights, the war in Chechnya, as well as foreign policy (including the above mentioned “energy power”) [11].

One should mention that the journalists of the leading Danish mass media specialising in Russia and Eastern Europe also author books dedicated to the Russian contemporary history. Thus, their perception of our country penetrates research literature.

The materials of four Danish newspapers — the evening *Ekstra Bladet*, the business-focused *Børsen*, the morning *Jyllands-Posten* and *Berlingske*, and of the *Ingeniøren*, the *Newz. dk*, *Business. dk*, and *Erhverv På Nettet* news websites — were analysed. The selection criteria were the volume, number of copies, political orientation, and distribution in certain regions of the country.

With the help of a search engine, materials were taken from the website of the Tieto IT company and the Danish website of Electrolux. The websites of the *ErhvervsBladet*, *Boliga. dk*, *Videnskab. dk*, *CopenhagenPostOnline.dk*, *Avisen.dk*, *MetroXpressen.dk*, *NPInvestor.dk*, *Sn.dk*, and *Version2* were analysed for materials dedicated to modern Russian innovations. Over the period considered, the resources mentioned did not publish any articles on Russian innovations.

The analysis involved the materials of the Danish mass media published from September 1 to December 31, 2010. The selection of the period was not related to the events taking place in Russia and the world. 20 publications were selected for the analysis.

Web search was conducted with the help of the following queries (in the Danish language): Russia, Russian, innovation, Skolkovo, Medvedev, research, researcher. The central criterion for selection was references to Russian technologies and products characterised as innovative.

Danish press offers few materials on modern Russian innovations; the topic under consideration is mostly addressed in specialised, predominantly technical, press.

Depending on the content, the articles selected were divided into three categories: *positive*, *neutral*, and *negative*.

According to the source, 20 articles are classed as follows: 7 are from *Ingeniøren*, 3 from *Jyllands-Posten* (including one material from the *Fpn. dk* website), 2 from *Ekstra Bladet*, 2 from the *Business. dk* website. One article was selected from each of the following websites: those of the *Børsen* and *Berlingske* newspapers, Tieto and Electrolux companies, *Newz. dk* and *Erhverv På Nettet*. Press releases from the company websites were classed as "other". The materials from the *Business. dk* and *Erhverv På Nettet* website, and the *Østbloggen* section of the web version of the *Ingeniøren* magazine cannot be called newspaper articles, since they were published only online, however, it did not seem reasonable to single them out as a particular group.

Among the articles selected, 10 are positive, 8 are neutral, and 2 are negative. The predominance of positive materials is evident.

Positive materials are dedicated to the infrastructure development (the launch of high-speed connection between Saint Petersburg and Helsinki), the establishment of innovation centres (support for the Skolkovo research centre by Microsoft and Cisco, the meeting between President Medvedev and the Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger). Positive materials also mention the creation of innovative vehicles (Sukhoi Superjet-100, Yo-mobile, Marussia sports car). One positive material addresses the creation of a drug decelerating the ageing process by Russian scientists.

The article focusing on the visits of Schwarzenegger to Russia cites his words assessing the investment attractiveness of Russia: the Governor of California called Russia "a gold or diamond mine" [7].

Among the most interesting Russian events of 2011, the author of the *Østbloggen* blog of the *Ingeniøren* magazine, A. S. Peterson lists the start of commercial service of Sukhoi Superjet-100, the launch of the Soyuz-TM spaceship from a space launch facility in French Guiana, the completion of the fourth reactor at the Kalinin NPP, and the launch of a space probe to Phobos [15]. The material dedicated to the opening of a high-speed rail link between Russia and Finland stresses that it will soon be possible to take a high-speed train from Moscow to Marseille [14].

Two of eight neutral materials are press releases (of Tieto and Electrolux companies); however, they can be more accurately called positive rather than neutral.

Tieto writes about the establishment of a venture enterprise in Russia [24], the Electrolux press release tells about the Russian designer Yu. Dmitriyev winning the company's award [12].

The neutral materials also mention the establishment of innovation centres (Nokia's participation in Skolkovo). Infrastructure development became the focal point of the material on the reconstruction of derelict airfields; three articles are dedicated to the GLONASS satellite launch failure. Another piece explores the equipment of the Lada Kalina motor car with a

GLONASS navigator. Space issues are discussed in the article dedicated to the modernisation of the Soyuz spaceship equipment.

The two negative materials are an article from *Ingeniøren* focusing on the failure of Proton rocket with a GLONASS satellite onboard and a material from the *Erhverv På Nettet* website entitled *Russia is a goldmine*, which is dedicated to the visit of the Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, to Russia.

“A typical miscalculation, which resulted in a defect leading to the Proton rocket fall in the Pacific Ocean, cost the chief developer of the rocket and the vice director of the Russian space organisation” — this is the opening of the article published in the *Ingeniøren* [16]. Its author, T. Andersen, describes in detail the consequences of the failed rocket launch.

When writing about the visit of the Governor of California to Moscow, S. Kott emphasizes “critics are quite skeptical about Skolkovo and maintain that it will be difficult to attract foreign investors, if nothing is done to corruption and more transparent rules are introduced” [13].

The then President Dmitry Medvedev is mentioned in three of twenty materials. The image of the President is positive, in particular, journalists stress that “Skolkovo is a part of President Medvedev’s plan for the modernisation of the oil and gas-dependent Russian economy” [5].

The Danish mass media compares Russian innovations to innovations introduced in other countries. The Skolkovo centre development programme is compared by journalists of *Buisness.dk* to a similar project implemented in the United Kingdom — East London Tech City. Another material from the online magazine calls Skolkovo “the Russian response to Silicon Valley”. The journalists of *Jullands-Posten* compare the design of Marussia sports car with that of Lamborghini Gallardo. An author of *Extra Bladet* stresses that, unlike Toyota Prius-type vehicles, the Russian Yo-mobile hybrid uses a generator rather than hybrid batteries. T. Anderson (*Ingeniøren*) reminds the readers of the GLONASS competitors — GPS and Galileo.

An analysis of publications of the Danish mass media dedicated to modern Russian innovations showed that negative stereotypes hardly affected these materials, with the only exception of the above mentioned articles from the *Erhverv På Nettet* website and the *Ingeniøren* magazine.

As well as the representatives of Swedish media, Danish journalists have adopted a firm position on Russian innovations: most publications are marked by amiability and neutrality. Unfortunately, the articles dedicated to Russian innovations account for a small share of materials on Russia.

Russian and Danish journalists should learn to find more positive developments in the lives of both countries. There is a need to overcome reciprocal clichés, therefore, cooperation between Russia and Denmark should develop and strengthen.

At the moment, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University intensifies research on the innovative sphere of the Baltic Sea region, including that of the Nordic countries — Sweden, Denmark, and Finland [1]. As the research shows, Russia is a good partner for Denmark. Our country has a significant

innovative potential, whose exploitation requires sharing experience with the EU “innovation leaders”. Cooperation in the sphere of innovation should reduce the current gap between Russia and the Nordic countries in terms of efficiency of exploiting the innovative potential and introduction of innovations into the economy.

In 2001—2009, the balance of direct Danish investment in Russia increased more than fivefold [9]; against this background, the relations between our countries must reach a new level characterised, inter alia, by an active exchange of innovative practices.

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