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SPECIAL ISSUE ON
KALININGRAD

VLADIMIR KOLOSOV

Border location
and the
attractiveness
of Kaliningrad



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WIŚNIEWSKA

Kaliningrad on
the Silk Railroad

DOMINIK P.

JANKOWSKI

The Kaliningrad
Oblast: Baltic Sea
Fortress



VILJAR VEEBEL

Strategic role of
Kaliningrad after
outbreak of war
in Ukraine



**BALTIC RIM
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VLADIMIR KOLOSOV

Border location and the attractiveness of Kaliningrad

Expert article • 3237

How do the inhabitants of Kaliningrad perceive its specific geographical location and the increased difficulties in communication with the main territory of Russia? Did Kaliningraders consider the exclave position an advantage or a source of inconvenience? The most objective indicator is population dynamics. The positive balance of migrations offsets the natural decline, and even in 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic caused a significant increase in mortality worldwide, the Kaliningrad *oblast* remained one of six Russian regions out of 85 where the population continued to grow. According to a survey conducted in early 2020 (N=1,000), only 53% of the inhabitants were born in the *oblast*, 27% settled in it after the collapse of the USSR. Kaliningrad is one of the main destinations for the repatriation of the Russian-speaking population from the countries of the former Soviet Union: of those born outside the exclave, 41% came from Kazakhstan, the Central Asian republics, Ukraine and Belarus. According to focus group participants in Kaliningrad, Sovetsk and Mamonovo, recent migrants do not feel like outsiders.

72% of respondents in the regional center and 60% in other cities consider urban environment comfortable and rated it at 4 and 5 on a five-point system. In general, Kaliningraders are satisfied with the opportunities for recreation and cultural life of the region (73% and 48%, respectively). Focus group participants noted the "European" look of cities as an important distinctive feature of the region. Significant for them are its wide sea "facade", local resorts, favorable environmental situation and mild climate, especially in comparison with the regions of the eastern part of the former USSR, tolerance, friendliness and responsiveness of people. Many expressed the opinion that the standard of living in the region is higher than in most other regions.

At the same time, 62% of respondents believe that it is "rather difficult" or "absolutely difficult" to succeed in the Kaliningrad region, especially compared to Moscow and St. Petersburg and European countries and even Russia as a whole. Focus group participants in Sovetsk and Mamonovo complained about the problems typical of most such Russian towns: the lack of well-paid jobs, the departure of young people, the weakness of local budgets and their complete dependence on higher authorities. "Only the appearance turned out to be truly European," as one of the respondents, who recently moved to Kaliningrad, put it.

One of the main distinguishing features of the Kaliningrad region, noted in focus groups, is its border location. According to the survey, the majority of residents (33%) believed that the proximity of the border has a rather positive impact on people's lives, although about 27% hold the opposite view. Half of the respondents thought that the proximity to the NATO countries did not pose a danger (26% expressed the opposite opinion, 24% found it difficult to answer). The cross-border mobility of Kaliningraders is much higher than in other regions of Russia. However, 50% of respondents have never traveled

abroad. Interestingly, exactly the same share of Kaliningraders do not visit other regions of Russia. Not surprisingly, the most mobile are young and better educated citizens, residents of the regional center.

It is also natural that before the pandemic residents of the Kaliningrad region most often visited neighboring countries - Poland (42%) and Lithuania (29%). Shopping was the main purpose of trips to Poland for 62% of respondents looking for cheaper food, other goods and services. However, the proximity of the urban agglomeration of Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot attracted many Kaliningraders (22% of respondents) with the opportunity to relax on weekends and spend holidays. The region's residents went to Lithuania for shopping less often (34%), visiting it mostly for recreational purposes (58%). Many Kaliningraders used the airports of Gdansk and Vilnius, which have a much more extensive network of international flights than Kaliningrad, including low-cost airlines. For many people, including residents of border towns, regular trips to Poland or Lithuania have become an integral part of their lifestyle. 22% of the region's residents traveled to Poland and 12% to Lithuania several times a year. These trips not only helped them to improve their well-being, allowing to save on goods, services and foreign travels, but also stimulated cognitive activity and expanded their horizons. After the events of 2014, a half of the respondents travelled abroad and to other regions of Russia less frequently. Sanitary restrictions during the pandemic have disrupted the usual way of life for many families further: 42% of respondents said they felt discomfort due to the lack of freedom of movement. These restrictions may have served as an adaptation to the complete and, apparently, long-term break of relations between Russia with European countries in 2022. ■



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Kaliningrad on the Silk Railroad

Expert article • 3238

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shaken logistic chains and has also hit the container rail transport between China and Europe, passing through Russia, including the Kaliningrad region. The future of the rail link developed for more than a decade by the PRC has come into question.

Rail freight between Europe and China has been developed since 2011 as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, also popularly known as the Silk Railroad. The main transport route runs through Russian territory. Trains cover this distance between China and Europe in 12-18 days, while the ship takes more than 30 days.

Since mid-2020, we have seen a dynamic increase in the use of the rail link for transporting goods between China and Europe. Rail transport has proven to be much more resilient to pandemic constraints than sea or road transport, and as a result, its popularity has increased. Moreover, from the end of 2020, when demand in Europe began to rise, rail transport - which usually has been more expensive than shipping - could compete in price with ocean freight. As a result, rail deliveries from China to Europe increased by 85% to 1.1 million TEU (twenty-foot container equivalent) in 2021. Despite this growth, it still plays a marginal role in transport between the EU and China. Rail freight accounts for only 5% of trade value between the two partners (about 3% by weight). Maritime transport continues to be of crucial importance.

In 2020, at a significant traffic spike, the main Eurasian route passing through the Polish-Belarusian border (about 85% of the total container rail transit) began to exhaust its capacity, lengthening the transit time periodically. Operators began to develop new transport routes, primarily through the Kaliningrad region.

As a result, from mid-2020, a dynamic increase in the transit of goods through this region was recorded. In 2021, there were transported 130 thousand TEUs between China and Europe through Kaliningrad, compared to 47.5 million tonnes in 2020 (and only 10.5 thousand TEUs in 2019). Kaliningrad has strengthened its position on the Silk Railroad. While only 3% of all EU-China rail transit passed through the region in 2019, this share has risen to almost 12% in 2021.

The vast majority (about 85%) of transit through the Kaliningrad region was via multimodal shipments through the Kaliningrad Sea Port. The remaining part (15%) reaches EU recipients by land through Poland.

The United Transport and Logistics Company – Eurasian Rail Alliance (UTLC ERA) is the leading operator of rail transport services between China and Europe through the territory of the Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia). The company belongs to the public railway companies of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. In 2021, it accounted for more than 80% of all transit traffic through Russia in this direction. On the EU side, important partners were mainly German companies, including DB Cargo, DB Schenker, and DB Cargo Russia. Mann Lines Multimodal (a London-based company that provides container a container feeder service between northern European ports) and Denmark's Maersk were the leading companies organizing maritime transport in the Baltic.

In the last two years, several tens of connections between Chinese cities, including Chengdu or Xi'an, and many ports on the Baltic Sea, primarily with Rostock or Mukran, but also on the North Sea with Oslo or Felixstowe, were launched via Kaliningrad port. Strengthening the presence of the Kaliningrad region on the Silk Railroad was possible, among others, due to progressing modernization of railroad infrastructure in this part of Russia. First, the Russian government has built two transport and logistics centers near the railroad stations in Chernyakhovsk and Kaliningrad. Both stations are located at the junction of European (1435mm) and Russian (1520mm) gauges tracks and have a rail link to the Polish railroad infrastructure. Both centers can transfer containers from the wide-gauge to the narrower European one and vice versa.

At the same time, the container handling capacity of the Kaliningrad ports (in Baltiysk and Kaliningrad) was being modernized and expanded. The Kaliningrad ports handled more than five times more containers in 2021 than in the previous year, i.e., about 435 thousand TEUs, which ¼ was for transit from China. An essential factor in developing the region's transshipment potential was to become the construction of a marine cargo and passenger terminal in Pionersky. The new port on the open sea would significantly increase the transit potential of the Kaliningrad region. Originally supposed to be completed in 2019, the project has been delayed due to a corruption scandal. From the perspective of Kaliningrad's transport security, a momentous event was the commissioning in January 2022 of a new ferry (car-rail), which provides the region with a direct connection to the rest of Russia and operates on the Baltic-Ust-Luga route. Another ferry should arrive in Kaliningrad in the coming months. So far, the two ferries serving this route have limited loading capacity and have frequently broken down.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine was a severe blow to the development of container rail transport between China and Europe. Although not directly affected by EU sanctions, the abandonment by some European companies and importers of further cooperation with Russia has harmed transportation along this route. European customers last month prefer deliveries from China by sea instead of through Russian territory. In addition, in March, the largest European shipping companies, including Maersk, MSC, CMA CGM, and Hapag-Lloyd, stopped taking new shipping orders to and from Russia. Although still Kaliningrad ports are served by Mann Lines Multimodal company. It is still difficult to assess the scale of the impact of corporate boycotts on the transit of goods through the Kaliningrad region. However, China is already working hard to develop a southern rail corridor to Europe via Iran and Turkey. ■



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The Kaliningrad Oblast: Baltic Sea Fortress

Expert article • 3239

Over the last years, the Kaliningrad Oblast became a true fortress in the Baltic Sea region. To achieve this status Moscow set two major objectives of its policy towards the oblast. First, to further tighten its control over the region and its links to mainland Russia in the political, social, and economic dimension. Second, to step up efforts to modernise and expand the Russian military potential. Both goals were largely achieved which led to an increased economic and social isolation of the Kaliningrad Oblast in the wider Baltic Sea region.

The Russian Armed Forces stationing in the Kaliningrad Oblast have undergone a substantial expansion and reorganisation, contributing to a visible increase in the offensive capabilities deployed there. On the one hand, the goal was to ensure that the forces are capable of conducting and maintaining offensive ground operations in the theatre. On the other, in a potential conflict scenario with NATO, the forces in the Kaliningrad Oblast would maintain pressure on Allied assets deployed in the Baltic Sea region.

The modernisation and reorganisation efforts have led to four crucial changes in the military dimension of the Kaliningrad Oblast. First, the Russian Armed Forces expanded their military infrastructure, including the Chkalovsk air base and the nuclear weapons depots. The Chkalovsk air base is now one of the largest military airfields in Russia, capable of handling almost all categories of aircraft, including heavy transport planes. Second, the Russian Armed Forces increased the presence of the military personnel in the oblast. Russia started to expand its air and land components, focusing first of all on the formation of the offensive units. This included the re-activation of a tank regiment and a fighter aviation division. As assessed by Konrad Muzyka from Rochan Consulting, Russia now fields in the Kaliningrad Oblast a self-sufficient fighting force that can conduct medium intensity combat operations along two axes of advance. Third, the Russian Armed Forces concentrated on further technological upgrades. This included a permanent deployment of the Iskander missile systems, expansion of the coastal defence Bastion missile systems, deployment of additional fighter aircraft, helicopters, tanks and warships. Fourth, the Russian Armed Forces increased their training activities in the Kaliningrad Oblast, including drills with offensive scenarios such as Zapad-2017 and Zapad-2021. The most frequently repeated elements of the military exercises included: countering the enemy's means of air attack (aircraft and missiles); striking targets deep behind enemy lines; countering groupings of naval units; distorting the enemy's command and communications systems.

Moreover, the notion of an anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) "bubble" was often repeated in the context of the Russian military potential in the Kaliningrad Oblast. In fact, Russia's potential to create "keep-out zones" or A2/AD "bubbles" in its near abroad has more broadly become a growing source of concern. In practical terms, in a land-grab operation, it is feared, Russia could keep help from

reaching the victim in time by cordoning off the area of operations with a combination of long-range sensors and missiles. The Russian invasion on Ukraine in 2022 has demonstrated that Russia's "A2/AD bubble" is smaller than often thought, not impenetrable, and probably even burstable. In the context of the Kaliningrad Oblast, it means that the prospects for defending or resupplying the Baltic States in a crisis or war are, in fact, not as bleak as is often claimed.

At the same time, one should not forget that the Russian military capabilities in the Kaliningrad Oblast remain just a fraction of the full Russian military potential in the Western Military District. Out of all the military districts, Russia's Western Military District fields the most robust, most numerous, and most capable fighting forces. Strengthening the western operational direction has been the priority for Moscow. As underlined by Konrad Muzyka, units stationed in the Western Military District are capable of conducting military operations across the entire spectrum of warfare, from low-level peacekeeping missions to high-tempo manoeuvre operations supported by long-range air-launched and ground-based missile strikes. At any time, these can be supported by a threat to employ nuclear weapons in order to showcase Russian determination and resolve.

The long-term consequences of the Russian invasion on Ukraine will have a direct impact on both the Western Military District and the importance of the Kaliningrad Oblast in a wider Russian military strategy. Two strategic changes are already very probable. First, at the NATO Summit in Madrid in June 2022 Allies will decide about further enhancing NATO's military presence on its eastern flank. This will include the upgrade of the existing enhanced forward presence battlegroups and additional Allied deployments, including permanent ones. Second, Finland and Sweden will most probably join NATO in 2022. Both elements will constitute a game changer for the Baltic Sea region security. Russia will have to factor this into its new military strategy towards the region. ■

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Strategic role of Kaliningrad after outbreak of war in Ukraine

Expert article • 3240

Security threats posed by both geographic location and military potential of Russia's Western enclave, the Kaliningrad region that shares a border with Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic Sea, but has no common border with Russia, have troubled the West for many decades since 1991. So far, Russia has used the Kaliningrad-argument as a "trump card" to threaten the West with conflict escalation in Baltic region when preferred by Russia¹. However, the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022 has dramatically changed the situation, as Kaliningrad has no further strategic value for Russia as a place for conflict escalation with West, because it is hard to top all aggressive action done by Russia already did in Ukraine. In changed circumstances Kaliningrad might for Russia no be seen not as asset for threatening West, but as an enclave under economic and political risks of embargo from West.

Kaliningrad as a potential battlefield between Russia and the West

Particularly over the past years, Western military experts and policy analysts have debated on the possibility that the Kaliningrad region will be the next battlefield preferred by Russia in upcoming political and military confrontation with West. There were some obvious reasons to expect that Russia opts for conflict escalation with West. First, Russian leader desperately needs new conflict zones with NATO after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 to keep up the spirit of Russian people and to recover lost public support for Vladimir Putin and its political regime. Second, so far Russia has suffered only minor losses after fueling aggressive conflicts and is therefore, encouraged to further test West's patience and humility. Last but not least, since Russia has for many years called into question the unipolar nature of the current international security order as well as challenged the leading role of the US as main security provider worldwide, any sort of destabilization and escalation works in Kremlin's favor.

In this light, choosing the Kaliningrad region as a potential battlefield to demonstrate its superiority over West seemed to be a logical choice for Russia, mainly for military and strategic reasons. The Kaliningrad region is heavily militarized by Russia, referring among other things to the headquarter of Baltic Fleet navy in Kaliningrad and Russia's nuclear-capable ballistic rocket-system Iskander and other modern military systems like S-400 air-defence system and missiles anti-ship rockets Bastion and Kalibr cruise missiles stationed in the Kaliningrad region; Russia's regional military superiority over the West in Kaliningrad and in the Western Military District in general and Russia's control over Lukashenko's Belarus. Thus, the Kaliningrad region constitutes a good platform for Russia

¹ Veebel, V. (2019). *Why it would be strategically rational for Russia to escalate in Kaliningrad and the Suwalki corridor. Comparative Strategy*, 38 (3), 182–197.

to put pressure on the NATO Alliance with minimal reorganization of its military forces and maximum likelihood of humiliating the Alliance or ideally even playing the NATO member states against each other. Additionally, Russia has conducted systematic and extensive military exercises (like "Zapad 2017", "Zapad 2021") in nearby regions and run aggressive propaganda campaigns. In this way, Russia has used the geostrategic and military advantages of the Kaliningrad region as a "trump card" to threaten the West with conflict escalation. Moreover, in Russian propaganda Kaliningrad was even described as a crucial "pillar" of Russkiy Mir, referring to the initial "mythical" ideal of Russian culture and Russian language that gradually transformed to the political idea that Russia should protect and support everybody who identifies itself as Russian worldwide.

Reactions of the Western countries on Russia's growing aggressivity in 2021 - 2022

Already before the outbreak of Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022, Western countries have taken security threats posed by the Kaliningrad region extremely seriously. Many studies and reports have been published scenarios of how Russia could isolate the Baltic countries or to attack Poland from the Kaliningrad region; Western media, military leaders and politicians have warned for the risk that Russia wants to control the Suwalki corridor which involves an attack on NATO territory. In this way, the West basically played along with Russia and its colorfully imagined future scenarios that what could materialize after Russia "loses its mind" and attacks the NATO Alliance. Since the balance of military power in the Kaliningrad region is in favor of Russia, in practice it meant that for Western countries it was mostly about assurance and confidence-building by convincing themselves that "the Alliance gives an appropriate response to Russia, if Russia crosses the red line" even if in practice they had no idea where the red line is and what the appropriate response should be. However, Russia's current military fiasco in Ukraine has revealed huge shortcomings in military planning, readiness of military capabilities, logistics, communication systems as well as strategic narratives in Russia and this has changes the picture dramatically. However Western politicians are still somewhat cautious in doing something "decisive" enough related to Ukraine or Baltic States that might trigger Russia to "attack" the West, possibly also using the forces in Kaliningrad region.

Strategic role of Kaliningrad in Russian-Western growing confrontation?

Although the war in Ukraine seem, on the one hand, to distract Russia from "safeguarding" Kaliningrad against the West, it also draws the attention of Western countries away of the true potential of the Kaliningrad region. Kaliningrad is very important for Russia psychologically, militarily and strategically which means that Russia does not want to lose Kaliningrad under no circumstances. In this light,

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Russia also can't use Kaliningrad today for active bidding in conflict escalation with West, because otherwise it would directly open the way also to the revision of historic decisions made in 1945–1946 in association with Kaliningrad. This, however, leaves some room for maneuvers for the West who should not be afraid that Russia attacks them using the resources located in Kaliningrad. It is a pretty safe bet that despite Russia's aggressive rhetoric they have currently neither military potential nor strategic motivation to attack the Baltic countries or Poland from Kaliningrad's side. ■

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KALEV STOICESCU

Kaliningrad – Russia’s military outpost in the Baltic region

Expert article • 3241

The Kaliningrad Oblast is one of the smallest federal subjects of Russia, having a third of Estonia’s territory and a population of about one million people. The population includes most likely tens of thousands of permanently deployed professional military personnel and their families, as well as conscripts. It is difficult to assess adequately the number of personnel due to Russia’s obscurity in military matters.

The oblast is probably Europe’s most militarised region. Russia’s westernmost bastion is sandwiched between NATO and EU member states Poland and Lithuania, and lies 1300 kilometres from Moscow and almost 400 kilometres (as the crow flies) from the nearest point in Russia’s mainland. It is accessible from Russia (Saint Petersburg) through about 1050 kilometres long international air and maritime routes over/in the Baltic Sea. However, the oblast is less than 100 kilometres away from Belarus, the Kremlin’s ally that is now effectively occupied by Russian forces.

The so-called Suwalki gap (the Polish-Lithuanian border between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus) is of particular importance to the security and defence of the Baltic states and Poland.

Brief historic background

The Kaliningrad Oblast makes roughly the northern half of the historic region of East Prussia that existed -as a province of the Kingdom of Prussia and later of the German Empire/Reich- from 1773 to 1945, but was controlled by Germans since the 13th century.

East Prussia was split between the Soviet Union and Poland in 1945, at Joseph Stalin’s insistence. The territory under Soviet control was transferred to the Russian SFSR, and became after the dissolution of the USSR a constituent part of the Russian Federation.

The entire German population that inhabited the region for more than seven centuries was expelled or deported in 1945, and the capital city of Königsberg was renamed into Kaliningrad in 1946. The oblast hosted during the Cold War more than 200 thousand military personnel.

Neither Germany nor the oblast’s neighbours lay any territorial claims, but this background is nevertheless of interest due to Russia’s own policy. Russia occupied and annexed Crimea in 2014 namely appealing to “historic rights”, although the peninsula was part of Ukraine for 60 years. Moscow had no relation (and therefore no “historic rights”) whatsoever to East Prussia prior to 1945.

Kaliningrad’s militarisation

One may imagine Fortress Russia and its outward bastions, from the Kuril Islands through the Arctic archipelagos to the Kaliningrad Oblast, Transnistria, Crimea, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Kaliningrad has undoubtedly very high strategic importance for Russia due to its geography.

The oblast is an important leverage for exerting pressure on Europe/NATO, particularly in its vicinity. The military forces deployed to Kaliningrad -including the Baltic Fleet, aviation, missile and coastal

missile, ground, air defence, artillery, electronic warfare and other units- obviously exceed by far normal/adequate defence needs.

In fact, Russia’s aim is not just to protect its bastion, but to project power in the entire region by means of a A2/AD (anti-access and area denial) “bubble”. Medium range air defence systems (S-400 and S-300), coastal defence missile systems (Bal and Bastion), short range ballistic missile systems (Iskander) and corvette-based Kalibr missiles (range up to 200 kilometres) are Russia’s first line of defence in the Baltic region. It must be reminded that Iskander and Kalibr missiles are dual-capable (conventional or nuclear use), whereas the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to the Kaliningrad Oblast cannot be excluded.

The Suwalki gap in the present context

Russia’s brutal war of aggression and conquest against Ukraine raises certain concerns regarding the Kaliningrad Oblast. First, the oblast has become in recent years increasingly militarised, a process that would likely continue. Secondly, Russia rehearsed numerous times -e.g. in the strategic exercises Zapad 2017 and 2021, as well as in combat control “snap” exercises- offensive operations aimed at cutting the Baltic states from the rest of NATO’s territory (through the Suwalki gap) and blockading them in the Baltic Sea.

Thirdly, Russia has effectively invaded the territory of Belarus, and would probably maintain troops in the nominally independent country. Therefore, Russian troops have advanced hundreds of kilometres right to the Suwalki gap. Fourthly, Russia connected Crimea to the mainland by building a bridge after 2014, but in the course of the new invasion of Ukraine it also secured a land bridge.

Therefore, depending on Russia’s success or failure (or stalemate) in Ukraine, the Kremlin may be tempted to either extend its aggression towards the West, to secure a land bridge from Belarus to the Kaliningrad Oblast, or to set up provocations aimed at demanding certain concessions/guarantees (e.g. road/rail transit).

NATO is well prepared to defend the Suwalki gap (first response against Kaliningrad units from forces stationed in Orzysz, Poland, and in Rukla, Lithuania), and to act in the Baltic Sea (against Russia’s Baltic Fleet), but the Alliance needs to strengthen further its posture and readiness due to Russia’s massive military deployment to Belarus.

Finally, Finland and Sweden are over the sea from the Kaliningrad Oblast, but their membership in NATO would significantly improve the Alliance’s ability to counter any contingencies in the region, particularly at sea. ■

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MAREK ŻYŁA

The geostrategic context of the Kaliningrad region

Expert article • 3242

The geopolitical transformations following the collapse of the Soviet Union shifted the core territory of the Russian Federation deep into Asia and contributed to NATO's eastward expansion. The Kaliningrad region became the westernmost part of Russia, one which neighbours a completely different economic and political system right the way around its territory. In addition, the countries closest to it have joined the military-political bloc with which Russia is in competition. This seemingly small area, which accounts for about 0.09% of the country's total area, is, along with the addition of Belarus and Ukraine, one of the markers of Russia's Europeanness and power. By enabling it to have an active presence in the European environment, it is an essential part of the Russian security system. By reshaping relations around it, the Russian Federation continues to play a prominent political role in the Europe. It leverages it in its relations with the EU, NATO and neighbouring countries. Whenever decisions or actions unfavourable to it are sought, Moscow returns to the issue of further militarisation of the exclave. This was evident during successive Euro-Atlantic expansions. There are maritime ports in the Oblast, providing the potential to control the Baltic Sea, and the extensive military infrastructure is suitable for stationing significant military forces. The exclave has been, and continues to be, an instrument of pressure to halt, or at least delay, the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the states in the sub-region of Central and Eastern Europe. In the economic sphere, Kaliningrad's potential safeguards Russian shipping, the economic zone and guarantees access to Baltic resources. In the geopolitical context, the Kremlin's policy with respect to the Russian diaspora and the Russian-speaking diaspora active in the neighbouring states of the post-Soviet area is also important. In successive editions of its doctrinal documents, Russia attributes to itself the right to use armed force to ensure its rights and freedoms. In the Russian perception, the West seeks to strategically surround the Russian Federation and thus minimise its superpower status. In response, Moscow is strengthening the military component of its deterrence, which encourages a possible repetition of the Ukrainian scenario and the subsequent destabilisation of its immediate neighbourhood. After Vladimir Putin assumed power, together with the process of disintegration of the Yalta-Potsdam agreement, the importance of the exclave increased, and the propagandistic militarisation of the area became part of the canon of Russian security policy tools.

The Kaliningrad region occupies an integral place in the military system of the Russian Federation. Due to its location and geophysical prerequisites for the stationing of all types of armed forces, it is an important element of the Russian war concept. The equipment and coastal infrastructure of the existing ports enables the reception, combat support and refit of all classes of ships operating in the Baltic Sea. The extensive network of military airfields plus internal road and rail links are of significant importance. They enable the effective movement of troops and essential materiel. According to Russian

thinking, the Baltic Fleet guarantees the continuation of regional supremacy. Its main task is to block NATO reinforcement forces by preventing them from entering the Baltic. The military potential positioned in the exclave, which is part of the Western Military District, is in direct contact with the countries of the Alliance's eastern flank. The oblast acts as an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier' inside the NATO area. The Russian units stationed in the neighbourhood of militarily weak states are systematically subject to unannounced combat readiness inspections. A sense of permanent threat is fostered by drills involving airborne forces and strike aircraft. They are definitely aggressive in character and posture. The Russians have made no secret of the fact that they are used to prepare the military component for operating in the western area of operations. One of the aims of this type of demonstration of force is to show technological superiority and the ability to undertake immediate action. This raises legitimate concerns about a potential conventional strike, supported by elements of hybrid action. The oblast is considered an ideal deployment area for intelligence, electronic reconnaissance, special and diversionary forces and offensive missile units. It should be expected that this potential will be strengthened in the near future. These elements serve to build an A2/AD counter-access strategy to restrict access to the area of future operations by enemy reinforcement forces. Since the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis through the annexation of Crimea and the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war, the military importance of the exclave has steadily increased. The grouping stationed there is more than just a part of the Russian army. Thanks to its composition, it is able to conduct a combined operation on land and at sea. However, the potential of the District should not be judged only by what is there, but by what can be redeployed there in a short period of time. The forces stationed there are not in a position to independently conduct operations beyond the area of northern Poland and the Baltic republics. In military terms, the Kaliningrad region is primarily an advanced frontier. The passive version of the military scenario assigned to it in the event of an outbreak of armed conflict is to paralyse the enemy's actions in the Baltic Sea basin. Należy jednak brać także pod uwagę wersję aktywną. It boils down to actions aimed at cutting off the Baltic republics, through complete air and sea isolation and land interaction with forces operating from Belarus. Such scenarios, which are constantly being refined, have been regularly rehearsed as part of large, cyclical military exercises codenamed 'Zapad'. ■

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The spectre of (in)security in Kaliningrad

Expert article • 3243

President Vladimir Putin's instigation of a war with Ukraine on February 24th 2022 has marked a new era in European and international Security. In a speech to the European Parliament on March 23rd 2022, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen likened this invasion of Ukraine to a 'tectonic shift' to the European security order.

The purpose of this article is to concisely explain the complexity of this tectonic shift by examining the geopolitical security of Kaliningrad. In anticipation of the EU's eastward enlargement in May 2004, the Russian exclave Kaliningrad situated between Poland and Lithuania has become the concern over visa free travel between Russia and the European Union (EU). The need for Russian citizens to apply for visas from the European Commission to travel between Russia and Kaliningrad has been perceived as an infringement of the right of the free movement of persons by several Russian policy makers and diplomats. Hence, this issue became a sore point in EU-Russian diplomatic relations.

About a decade later, the focus of Kaliningrad has shifted from arguments over visa free travel to increasing security threats stemming from the exclave. Since 2016 the Russian government has been stationing nuclear missiles in the exclave. The stationing of Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad with a range of up to 500 km enables them to potentially target several capitals in the EU such as Warsaw and Stockholm, for instance. Lithuania, which directly shares a border with the Russian exclave has reinforced the placement of troops along the borders of Kaliningrad and Belarus.

On March 31st 2022, at the presentation of NATO's annual report from 2021, the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg addressed security threats stemming from Kaliningrad. He responded to a question by a journalist on whether Russia's potential plans to explore a corridor to Kaliningrad would imply a threat to Poland. Secretary General Stoltenberg stated that NATO protected its allies and the Suwalki corridor, a land border of about 115 km between Lithuania and Poland connecting Kaliningrad with Belarus. All travel on land between Russia and this exclave takes place via this corridor and are regulated with a visa waiver. In his response to the question, Stoltenberg acknowledged that NATO and its member states were facing a new reality. However, he assured that the alliance would ensure that Russia would not use Kaliningrad or another pretext to launch an attack against a NATO member.

Despite Stoltenberg's assurances, it has to be acknowledged that the security risks stemming from both the Suwalki gap and Kaliningrad are four-fold. First, the Suwalki corridor would in principle provide an opportunity for Russia to launch alleged defences by both land and air. Second, the stationing of Russia's Baltic fleet in Kaliningrad enhances Russia's ability to control both the Black Sea and the Gulf of Finland (Veebel and Sliwa, 2019). Third, the fact that the Suwalki corridor is bordering Belarus is another potential security threat stemming from this particular region in light of the country's

close alliance with Russia. The most recent example demonstrating Belarus' cooperation with Russia were its joint military exercises prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24th 2022. In September 2021, Belarus alliance with Russia manifested itself in Zapad, the largest Russian military exercise with approximately 200 000 troops carried out jointly with Belarus. Fourth, the stationing of the nuclear missiles of type Iskander in Kaliningrad have wide ranging security implications not only for Poland and Lithuania, but for Europe more broadly speaking due to the extensive range of these missiles.

President Putin's instigation of war against Ukraine in February 2022 implies an unprecedented threat to European Security. A month after the start of war in Ukraine, an extraordinary NATO summit took place in which Stoltenberg expressed NATO's response to Russian aggression. He stated that NATO established four new battlegroups in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia in addition to the already existing groups in the Baltic States and Poland. NATO and its member states enhanced spending on defence capabilities in response to Russia's war-mongering implies a new reality with yet unpredictable consequences presumably exceeding NATO's Eastern flank. ■



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University Center for mediation and conflict studies

Expert article • 3244

A modern university as an institution for the socialization of youth forms many vital competencies. Among them there is the competence to resolve disputes peacefully through mediation. A university graduate capable of contractual relations is guaranteed to seek and find ways to achieve mutually beneficial solutions in conflict situations. Any ambiguous situation for a skilled in conflict resolution citizen, employee, family member poses a chance to transform causes of a conflict rather than a threat. It is important that students have practical experience in resolving disputes on the implementation of the rights to education based on the regulations and standards of mediation. It is exactly for this purpose a center for mediation and conflict studies can be organized in the structure of a university, where students, teachers, and administration staff would have the opportunity to restore their legitimate rights and interests in the quality of education conditions.

The Center for Mediation and Conflict Studies of the Institute of Education of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in Kaliningrad, Russia was created as a humanitarian service for students and university staff. On a voluntary basis the Center gives opportunities for disputes regarding the implementation of the rights to quality education to be declared and settled. The social mission of the Center is to develop scientific and methodological support for the activities of mediation and reconciliation services in organizations of education, culture, physical culture and sports, healthcare and social sphere of the Kaliningrad region.

The organizational and methodological direction of the Center's activities is the organization and methodological support of school mediation services and reconciliation services in social service institutions for orphans and children left without parental care. In *Nash Dom* (Our House) the Center for Assistance to Children Left without Parental Care in Zelenogradsk, town in the Kaliningrad region, a Resource Center is being organized for methodological support of mediation (reconciliation) services. Educators and specialists in social rehabilitation work master restorative and conciliatory technologies in working with children who are in conflict with their family, their peers, law, and employees of the Center. Competence in mediation denotes commitment to the values of reconciliation and reconciliation of interests. Mastering the competence of mediation to a certain extent guarantees the collective responsibility of educators, social workers, and teachers for a comfortable environment for the life of orphans.

The employees of the Center carry out a practical direction, during which the practice of conciliation procedures is implemented, implement monitoring of conflict and effectiveness of mediation practices in educational organizations and social service institutions for orphans and children left without parental care. Parents of students of educational organizations received the opportunity to protect the rights of children to education. During the reconciliation meetings, teachers, parents and students, with the help of a mediator, were able to see in the conflict not only the violated right to a safe

and comfortable educational environment, to a fair assessment of children's educational achievements, but also organizational, qualification deficits of teachers. The interests of the parties to the conflict, tested for mediation ability, become the basis for new solutions that increase the level of children's well-being. That is the value and logic of resolving conflicts involving children, families, employees of educational institutions and social services.

The university Center for Mediation and Conflict Studies, implementing the educational direction, conducts advanced training courses to improve the skills of managers and employees of organizations and enterprises. Such courses as "Conflict Management in Cultural Institutions" (18 academic hours), "Conflict Management in Health Care Institutions" (18 academic hours), "Transformation of the Educational Conflict Environment" (36 academic hours) have been developed and proved themselves to be useful for the practice of labor dispute mediation. Training of volunteers for school mediation is carried out according to the developed program "Social Mediator School". As a part of parental education, round tables and discussion platforms were organized in schools of the Kaliningrad region on the possibility of integrating family and school mediation. School become a platform for resolving disputes between parents of divorced families on the issues of education and upbringing of children. This possibility increases the likelihood of achieving a qualitative level of child well-being. The values of mediation and negotiation have a positive effect on the status of a child from a divorced family.

The university Center for Mediation and Conflict Studies, with the status of a scientific and educational center, implements the master's program "Mediation in Education and the Social Sphere". All graduates are encouraged to obtain the additional qualification of "Dispute Resolution Specialist". There is only one condition for undergraduates - these are the value orientations. Only a true peacemaker in his soul makes a good social mediator, if a peaceful existence is their unconditional value, seeing the opportunities when others leave. ■



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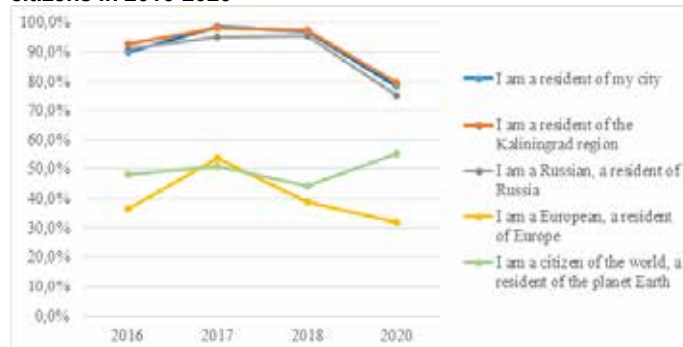
Identity and historical memory of Kaliningrad citizens

Expert article • 3245

The Kaliningrad region, due to the specifics of its geopolitical location, is in the zone of direct information and socio-cultural influence of the EU countries and the NATO military bloc. In this regard there may be ambiguous assessments of values and views the inhabitants share and how they identify themselves. This article presents the results of sociological studies carried out by the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in 2016-2021. Data collected through representative surveys. Each survey involved at least 1000 residents of the Kaliningrad region aged 18 years and older.

Figure 1 shows the dynamics of territorial identity in 2016-2020. Respondents were asked the question: "How strongly do you identify with the specified categories". Each item was rated on a scale from -2 (not at all) to +2 (completely identify). The figure shows the sum of the percentages of positive identification for each position.

Figure 1. Dynamics of the territorial identity of Kaliningrad citizens in 2016-2020



We can reveal three trends in the indicated period:

- Local, regional and national identities are the primary identification for the inhabitants of the Kaliningrad region.
- Identification with Russia, the Kaliningrad region and the city of their residence are equally important.
- European identity varies significantly among 30-50% of the region's inhabitants, being the least significant among the proposed options.

It was revealed that the categories of socio-territorial identification positively correlate with each other. Two types of identity can be distinguished: pro-Russian and Euro-cosmopolitan. The pro-Russian self-identification is characterized by higher strength of the connection of local, regional and national identification with each other ($r \geq 0.540$) and the low strength of the connection with the two remaining categories. For respondents with a Euro-cosmopolitan identity, on the contrary, the positions "I am a European" and "I am a citizen of the

world" are more strongly correlated with each other ($r \geq 0.265$) than with other options ($r \leq 0.086$). The influence of age has been also established: the older the resident of the region, the stronger he/she identifies (him)herself as a resident of Russia, the Kaliningrad region and the city where he lives, and the weaker he/she perceives (him)herself as a European or a citizen of the world.

Considering the historical past of the Kaliningrad region, 86.4% of the population are interested in regional history (according to survey conducted in October 2021). Among them approximately equally paid attention to the Prussian (28.9%), German (25.2%), Soviet (19.6%) and present (12.6%) periods of the region's history. Respondents more frequently associate their region with the philosopher I. Kant. M.I. Kalinin occupies the second place here (the regional center is named after him).

According to the survey, the most significant event in Russian history is the victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945). It is noteworthy that the events that took place during the Soviet period of history (Yuri Gagarin's flight into space, the collapse of the USSR and the October Revolution of 1917) are next in importance.

The collapse of the USSR causes ambiguous assessments of the inhabitants of the Kaliningrad region. 33% regret, 33% do not regret, and 34% found it difficult to answer.

Most of the reasons why Kaliningrad citizens regret the collapse of the USSR are socio-economic in nature. Respondents often singled out the moral aspects of Soviet society as a reason: "friendship of peoples", "people were better, kinder", "more friends", etc. The main reasons why respondents have no regrets about the collapse of the USSR are predominantly political: "it served as an impetus for development", "now there is more freedom", "democracy is better", etc.

Thus, pro-Russian territorial identity are significantly prevalent among Kaliningrad citizens. Additional factors that unite the views of local residents are the Victory in the Great Patriotic War and the memory of the philosopher I. Kant. ■



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Kaliningrad's regional identity and purpose as a window to Russia's relations with the West

Expert article • 3246

Kaliningrad and the Kaliningrad Oblast has meant a plethora of different things to different peoples across the passage of time. It has been historically and continues to this day and age to simultaneously be relevant: a place of natural beauty, tradition of learning and enlightenment, a historic port city and centre of regional trade, a centre of military tradition and strength. It is a meeting point for different traditions, cultures and ideas over time. Kaliningrad and its earlier iteration of Königsberg, possessed a strong and distinctive regional identity, serving a geopolitical role over time. The exact nature of the regional identity and purpose is influenced by the nature of international relations and the resulting foreign policy priorities. Whether these priorities result in the identity and purpose of creating a bastion of trade or a military bastion.

Historical identities and purposes

East Prussia and Königsberg had developed a distinct regional identity and function, both in terms of peaceful means (intellectual thought, trade and commerce) and waging war (militaristic heritage and as a bastion against potential enemies). The regions Germanic heritage and identity influence originated from the times of the Teutonic Knights, the Hanseatic League, developing into Prussia and eventually being incorporated into the newly emergent Germany of 1871. The region was known for its natural beauty, such as the Curonian Spit (a UNESCO World Heritage site since the year 2000) and the presence of amber (possessing an estimated 90% of the world supply). Famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant was born in Kaliningrad, it was a centre of learning and culture. The military tradition and heritage of East Prussia played a role in influencing German military tradition and identity. This included its role in the Great Patriotic War when the region was eventually overrun by the Red Army, and a very new era of identity began.

The Soviet Union's problem in annexing East Prussia and renaming the city Königsberg as Kaliningrad (after a famous Communist activist Mikhail Kalinin) and the region of East Prussia as Kaliningrad Oblast, it was much more complex than a simple re-branding exercise. The old identity was erased by various symbolic acts, such as removing those reminders of the past, which was associated with the excesses and trauma of the conflict with Nazi Germany. It was to be a new Soviet society build over the old Prussian one. Although, it can be said that even though the cultural and trade purposes were lost, a military purpose remained that was dictated by the geopolitics of the Cold War with the competition that could evolve into open conflict between the Soviet dominated Warsaw Pact and the United States dominated NATO blocks. The collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union in the end of 1991 created an opportunity for Kaliningrad to craft a new regional identity and purpose for a new era of international relations.

Relations between Russia and the West: Influences on Kaliningrad's identities and purposes

The end of the Cold War and what Francis Fukuyama triumphantly declared as the end of history with the geopolitical, political and economic ascendancy of the US-led West created a moment of optimism, but also arrogance. The Soviet Union was defeated and the newly emergent Russian Federation under President Boris Yeltsin seemed to be enthusiastic to become part of the Western world, although with the proviso as an equal partner and not a subordinate vassal or client state. Kaliningrad in the post-Soviet era remains an important and significant region as the most westerly exclave of the Russian Federation that is cut off from direct access to the mainland and juts into the European Union member states of Poland and Lithuania. The economic devastation, social and political upheaval that was created in the wake of the collapse affected the Kaliningrad Oblast significantly, and it was forced to find a viable new identity and purpose.

There were attempts to create economic and trade activity in the new post-Cold War era owing to the enormous decline in the political and economic influence of the Russian military in the age of massive military budget cuts. Different optimistic ideas flourished during this time of optimism and hope that were mixed with hardship. Such economic brand ideas and desires were expressed through such ideational creations as Kaliningrad as a Baltic Hong Kong or as a Fourth Baltic Republic emerged as the power and influence in Moscow was weakened by the force of the collapse. The collapse has also created the negative brand of Kaliningrad as the 'Black Hole of Europe' owing to the flourishing crime, corruption and disorder after the collapse of social and political order. However, the lack of order created opportunities and plans not possible in a strictly ordered society with small scale cross border trade with neighbouring countries and the rediscovery of aspects of the Prussian identity and history. For example, the rediscovery of Immanuel Kant and renaming the main university in Kaliningrad after him. The interactions and movements of people, ideas and good were facilitated in an open environment between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Europe, even if this was a rather late and slow process to begin.

These years of early optimism are fading as a new geopolitical and geo-economic era is gradually ushered in, one where transformations in the global order on a strategic level affect even the tactical aspects of relations, purpose and identity of regions and sub-regions. In the 21st century relations between the West and Russia declined, from a Russian perspective, Russia understood that the US-led West did not and would not treat Russia as an equal or a partner in international relations. Kaliningrad Oblast has recovered a lot from the devastation of the Soviet collapse and rebuilds its image with different historical and contemporary identities and purposes. When visiting the region, the scale of renovation was noticeable, especially in

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relation to other cities in other Russian regions. Kaliningrad was no longer a distant and 'forgotten' exclave at a time when Russia did not understand its own identity and purpose in international relations.

As Russia has recovered from the Soviet collapse economically and politically, so have the regions, including the Kaliningrad Oblast. In addition to the cultural and economic purpose, its historical identity that mixes Prussian and Russian influences, it has regained the military identity and purpose once more. The so-called New Cold War has ushered in once more an era of risky conflict and competition that has by default dragged the region into it, owing to a renewed relevance of geopolitical considerations and urgency. Different signs of this new geopolitical conflict are appearing across Eastern Europe, such as recent events in Belarus and Ukraine. This creates the context for a rather rational logic to take hold more firmly, the growing hazards, risks and uncertainty associated with this New Cold War shall only serve to deepen and entrench a primary regional identity and purpose of the Kaliningrad Oblast as a fortress of Russia on its western borders. For such a role, from the political centre's point of view and interests, the region needs to be distinctly Russian in its identity and purpose. ■

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Knowledge production capacity of exclaves: The case of the Kaliningrad region

Expert article • 3247

Exclave position, generally, predetermines the development strategy of a region focusing on overcoming its vulnerability due to 'exclavity'. Building a solid regional innovation system based on internal S&T potential and high-tech industries is preferred as it reduces the dependence on transport accessibility and the volume of cargo, although, remaining highly sensitive to macro-economic and geopolitical factors. It is said that science and innovation are becoming truly global and collaborative, we, therefore, expect for the exclaves worldwide to be especially open in establishing inter-organizational and international research collaboration as compared to the inner regions of their countries.

For testing this hypothesis, we have analyzed the research performance of the 11 largest exclaves of the world in the USA, France, Russia, Great Britain, Azerbaijan, Oman, Croatia, and Palestine. The study is based on scientometric data sourced from Scopus – the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, featuring scholarly output in 2015-2020. This approach enables us to objectively evaluate knowledge production systems of the exclaves by their productivity, institutional density, the demand for the output generated, and the level of cooperation ties established.

The Kaliningrad region stands in the middle by publication activity, ahead of the exclave regions of Palestine, Croatia, Azerbaijan, and Oman, but behind the leaders in the volume of publications and authors involved in their generation – Northern Ireland and Alaska. The share of the Kaliningrad region in the total output of the country is marginal – 0.4%. For example, for the Gaza Strip has 3.4%, Northern Ireland – 1.4%, and Dubrovnik-Neretva – 1.3%. However, this is explained by a significant number of research centers in Russia and is offset by the localization of highly competitive research groups in the region on certain topics, for example, X-Ray optics, Magnetic sensors, Border studies, etc.

Considering the level of demand for the knowledge produced, the exclave regions can be divided into two groups. The first includes Alaska, Northern Ireland, and French Guiana, representing the Anglo-Saxon and French scientific schools, with the level of field-weighted citation impact of publications exceeding both global and country average values. The second is the other 6 exclaves, including the Kaliningrad region, whose research is less cited on a national level and below global average threshold values (excluding the Gaza Strip). It shall be said that academic community often questions this asymmetrical distribution of citations skewed towards Anglo-Saxon publications true for all types of regions worldwide.

The Kaliningrad region, along with Musandam, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, and Northern Ireland, is characterized by monocentric scientific systems. The contribution of a nuclei institution (Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University for the Kaliningrad region) ranged from 80 to 100% of the total output. The figures are slightly lower for Dubrovnik-Neretva, the Gaza Strip and Alaska, ranging

from 50 to 70%. While some knowledge production systems, such as French Guiana, are represented by a strong organizational diversity.

Most active inter-organizational cooperation is found in Northern Ireland with the share of academic-corporate collaboration reaching 5.6% of the total output, exceeding the national average. For the Kaliningrad region, the share of such publications is less than 1%, which is explained by the small capacity of the domestic market for corporate research. A similar situation is typical for the Croatian Dubrovnik-Neretva.

International cooperation data confirms the openness of most exclave regions, e.g. 32.0% of research published with the Kaliningrad region is done with foreign counterparts versus 22.8% national average share. The knowledge production system of the Kaliningrad region, along with Alaska, Northern Ireland, and French Guiana, is the most open to global networking. This is reflected, for example, in annual scientific events (e.g. international conference "The Baltic Region – the Region of Cooperation", etc.), publishing a journal ("Baltic Region") and periodicals ("Region of Cooperation"), wide participation in cross-border cooperation programs with Poland and Lithuania.

For other exclaves, in Azerbaijan, Oman, Palestine, the limited involvement into international relations is, predominantly, due to instability of foreign policy relations. Thus, whether a territorial exclave will remain a scientific exclave largely depends on the geopolitical landscape that is taking shape. While the collapse of research ties might result in the impoverishment of the entire academic community.

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Regional smart specialisation strategies implementation: Lessons for the Kaliningrad Region

Expert article • 3248

Regional smart specialisation strategies are a European Union cohesion policy tool implemented starting from the EU long-term budget 2014–2020. Entrepreneurial discovery processes are the foundation of smart specialisations. These processes are based on a sequence of experiments and improvements in which the unique knowledge and experience of regional actors derived from long-term specialisation are combined with inventions and technological innovations. This combination makes it possible to significantly upgrade offered products and services or create a whole new range of products and services based on unique combinations of traditional and new production factors (economies of scope).

Regional development in the model of smart specialisation is a sequence of entrepreneurial discovery, succeeding growth and clustering within new activities leading to the transformation of the economy's structure. In a capitalist economy, this process occurs spontaneously. Nevertheless, such sequences often fail due to market failures and coordination barriers. Therefore, the public intervention aims to minimise bottlenecks, foster interaction within the cycle, define criteria and procedures for selecting promising fields of activity and minimise the risk of inefficient allocation of public and private resources.

The expiry of the long-term budget period triggered the first ex-post evaluations of the smart specialisation strategy. They concern regions around the Baltic Sea with partly similar conditions to those of the Kaliningrad region and, more importantly, with similar global challenges of sustainability transitions.

The smart specialisation strategy experiences are transferable to non-EU regions. However, there are preconditions for a successful transfer. The essence of entrepreneurial discovery processes requires conditions for creativity – talent, technology and tolerance (according to the creator of the creative class concept R. Florida). The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine will successively limit access to these key resources due to Russia's increased international isolation and internal changes suppressing civil liberties and, indirectly, creativity. Without it, institutions such as industrial parks, special economic zones, cluster initiatives or universities abundantly represented in the region will only be mock-ups of smart specialisations. That is the key lesson for the implementation of these strategies.

It is worth sharing other experiences of supporting smart specialisations, hoping for peacemaking and the true democratisation of the Russian society. Firstly, entrepreneurial discovery processes in numerous regions have led to the identification of specialisations with the potential to make socio-economic praxis more sustainable. For example, the Energy thematic platform gathered 28 regions from the EU Baltic Sea Region member states, among other territories. These

regions most often specialise in sustainable buildings, smart grids, marine renewable energy and bioenergy. The Kaliningrad Region has the material resources to build competitive advantages in developing most of these projects.

Secondly, the Pomorskie Region, neighbouring the Kaliningrad Region and having some similarities in economic structure, also uses smart specialisation strategies for green transformation. The most promising are two specialisations: offshore and port-logistics technologies (PSS1) and eco-efficient technologies in energetics and construction (PSS3). A recent ex-post evaluation showed a significantly higher percentage of entities in both specialisations declaring the implementation of green technologies (PSS1: 39.4%, PSS3: 41.5%, non-PSS: 31.9%). The development of cluster initiatives was observed at the intersection of both specialisations. A good example of this is the development of the Competence Centre for Marine Renewable Energy. Other joint initiatives include smart specialisation entities developing interactive technologies in an information environment (PSS2), as evidenced by establishing the Autonomous Vehicles/Vessels Working Group. This development path required a critical mass of talents and competencies resulting from integrating efficient regional IT businesses into international co-competition networks. For the Kaliningrad region, this is a doubly difficult barrier to overcome. Both are due to the limited local advantages of the agglomeration and the mentioned international and internal conditions.

To conclude, smart specialisation strategies become a tool to make the European Green Deal a reality. The bottom-up logic of entrepreneurial discovery rooted in the regions is meant to help achieve sustainable development goals. Given the history of Baltic cooperation to date, the Kaliningrad Region could be a pioneer of such a development model among Russian regions. ■



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The land use system of the Kaliningrad region

Expert article • 3249

Regional environmental management systems are formed and developed as a result of the synergistic action of a complex of factors: internal and external political and economic situation, natural conditions and resources of the territory, the technological level of the economy, the ecological situation, demographic and social processes in the region, etc. A change in one of these factors entails a more or less significant transformation of the nature management of the region.

In the early 1990s, there was a radical change in the situation in the land use in Russia in general and in the Kaliningrad region in particular:

- in a short period, there was a change in the structure of the economy from a command to a market one;
- destruction of existing and adjustment of new economic and technological ties between regions;
- unemployment, impoverishment of the population, etc.

These events had a particularly strong negative effect on the Kaliningrad region due to its exclave position.

The main directions of transformation of the functional structure of nature management in the Kaliningrad region since the early 1990s until 2018-19:

1. Agricultural land has been slowly declining since the early 1980s and by 1990 accounted for approximately 63% of the region's territory. In 1994, it dropped to 15%. Re-development of fallow lands began in 2010-11, as a result of the action of state and regional programs to support agriculture (up to 28% in 2019). The complexity of this process is associated with the need to reconstruct reclamation networks, including polders.

The Kaliningrad Region demonstrates the highest rates of agricultural land growth in the North-West Federal District of Russia.

At the same time, technologies in the agricultural sector of the region have grown and the yield of agricultural crops has doubled on average over 30 years. This makes it possible to limit the development of fallow lands. Their area is currently about 50% of the region's territory. Fallows, along with protected areas, forests and bogs, constitute the ecological framework of the region. The area of land with the status of nature conservation increased during this period from 16 to 24%.

2. The area of logging in the region has decreased by four times in 30 years, industrial logging stopped in the 1980s. The main process in forestry today is sanitary felling and reforestation. After 1992-94 the area of planted forests had been falling for several years, but by 2014 it had again recovered to the 1990 level.

3. In the early 1990s, a rapid increase in the area of land for private gardens and orchards began. In the early 2000s, most of the tracts of these lands have passed into the category of cottage settlements. They are localized near Kaliningrad, cities and villages on the sea coast.

4. The expansion of the area of multistorey and low-rise buildings in cities and towns is observed mainly in the western part of the region - Kaliningrad, satellite towns, resort villages and cities: in 1990 the area of settlements were 2.3%, in 2017 - 3.4%.

5. The density of roads and railways in the region is one of the highest in Russia. Over the past 30 years, the length of roads and the area of transport infrastructure in the region has grown, although not significantly (from 1.5 to 1.7%). At the same time, the role of inland river transport has significantly decreased.

6. Lands for the extraction of building materials and other minerals occupy in the region no more than 0.5% of the territory. Peat mining was almost completely stopped back in the 1980s. Amber mining before the 1990s was focused on a quarry near the village of Yantarny. In the early 2000s, illegal mining of amber has become widespread, but it has now been discontinued.

7. The area of land for defense purposes has decreased over the past 30 years.

Thus, the main trends in the change in the structure of nature management in the region are due to the following processes:

- expansion of residential and transport lands (artificial);
- greening nature management, reducing the share of intensively used agricultural land, increasing the area of nature conservation areas;
- expansion of the areas of ecological restoration at the expense of fallow lands, restoration of bog ecosystems;
- an increase in the load on coastal natural landscapes due to an increase in the recreational load.

Thus, a polarization of the region's landscapes occurs: on the one hand, the proportion of anthropogenic landscapes decreases with an increase in the intensity of their economic use (from about 70 in 1990 to 30% in 2017-19), on the other hand, the proportion of landscapes of ecological restoration is growing (from 15 to 50%, respectively). ■



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Experimental laboratory of modern Russia

Expert article • 3250

Post-Soviet Russia, like its predecessor, the Soviet Union, had no experience in supporting its geographically separated regions. Therefore, some actions of the federal Government aimed to sustain and to develop the Kaliningrad exclave were based not on the practice accumulated over years, but were prepared expeditiously as a response to changing conditions and/or emerging problems.

As an eyewitness to the events, I believe that for the Federal Government, the westernmost territory of Russia has in some cases become an experimental laboratory, where individual elements of the state regulatory mechanism were implemented in practice. In a number of cases, regulatory measures were enforced in the Kaliningrad region, and were canceled or significantly detailed later on, which confirmed the experimental (pilot) nature of some introduced measures.

It must be admitted that objectively the Kaliningrad region is a convenient testing ground for conducting full-scale economic experiments: (1) it is geographically separated from the main territory of the country by international borders, (2) relevant indicators of the movement of human, commodity and financial flows are quite correctly and promptly recorded, (3) the population of the region has accustomed to high intensity changes that have been taking place in the western exclave for more than 30 years.

Experimental activities undertaken in the Kaliningrad region can be grouped in three main categories:

1. Special legal regimes that differ significantly from the federal mainstream (norms)

This category includes:

- introduction of the legal regime of the free economic zone/ special economic zone in the Kaliningrad Region. This block of legislation has undergone significant changes four times over 30 years;
- introduction of the legal regime for the special administrative region on the Oktyabrsky Island of Kaliningrad from 2018;
- inclusion of the Kaliningrad Region in the list of 6 subjects of the Federation in which gambling establishments are allowed to operate;
- temporary application of the regime for local cross-border migration with adjacent regions of Poland (June 2012 – July 2016);
- pilot introduction of a simplified visa regime on the territory of the region;
- introduction of the seventh degree “freedom of air” regime to the Khrabrovo airport (Kaliningrad) by the Ministry of Transport of Russia of (November 2021). Previously, similar regime with some exceptions was introduced only at the Pulkovo airport (St. Petersburg).

2. Development of infrastructure of the territory that goes beyond the standard requirements of the subjects (provinces) of modern Russia

In this part, it should be noted:

- establishing a unique cultural and educational cluster on the Oktyabrsky Island in Kaliningrad. It the leading cultural institutions of Russia: branches of the world-famous Bolshoi Theater and the Tretyakov Gallery, a branch of the Moscow State Academy of Choreography, a branch of the Central Music School at the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, a branch of the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts. A number of cluster components have already been commissioned and are in operation. The completion of the entire complex of cultural and educational institutions is expected in 2024;
- construction and opening of an international cruise ship terminal in Pionersky;
- construction (unfinished) of the Baltic nuclear power station (NPP).

3. Support to initiatives to exploit local/endogenous advantages and potential

- support to cross-border and international cooperation. This activity had developed most intensively in 2000 – 2006. The region took part in a number of cross-border cooperation programs between Russia and the EU, as well as in the activities of 5 Euroregions: Baltika (since 1998), Saule (1999), Neman (2002), Lyna-Lava (2003). and “Sheshupe” (2005);
- rapid (and successful!) development of the I. Kant Baltic Federal University and the World Ocean Museum in Kaliningrad;
- organization of the international youth tent camp “Baltic Artek” (since 2010);
- inclusion of the region into the pilot rebate mechanism (since 2016). Filmmakers can return 20% of expenses if they choose the territory of the region for filming purposes.

Due to the ongoing changes proposed to the special legal regime of the SEZ, the frequency/ intensity of the evolution of the legislation regulating economic activity in the Kaliningrad region is significantly higher than in other subjects of the all-Russian legal space. ■

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The exclave region in the regional policy of Russia

Expert article • 3251

The Kaliningrad Region is a relatively densely populated and economically developed “island” of Russia (the population density in the region exceeds the Russian average by 7.8 times; the volume of GRP per km² by 6.2 times). Having turned out to be a Russian exclave three decades ago, but close to Central Europe, the Kaliningrad Region actively joined the integration processes in the Baltic region, established cross-border ties with Poland and Lithuania, and became an important part of trade, industrial and humanitarian contacts between Russia and the EU. Steady demographic attractiveness of the Kaliningrad Region (the positive migration balance doubled over the past decade, reaching the level of 12-13 thousand people per year), an increased tourist flow (primarily from other Russian regions) were combined with a complex of socio-economic problems and challenges, determined both by the exclave factor and by the changing geopolitical situation. The limited structural, logistical, and marketing potential for positive dynamics of the local economy was compounded by the need for increasing “autonomy” of the region’s life support systems (primarily in the energy and transport infrastructure). This increased the gap between the region’s own financial and investment capabilities and its needs for resources to ensure socio-political stability and economic growth. Under the influence of the global (2008) and Russian economic crises (early 1990s, 1998, 2014), the situation in the region remained constantly unstable, dependent on changing geo-economic and geopolitical conditions, as well as federal support. As NATO moved eastward (1999 and 2004) and the EU expanded (2004), the “barrier” nature of the borders of the Russian exclave intensified, its mission of a “communication corridor” acquired since the mid-1990s was supplemented by the function of a western military-strategic outpost for Russia.

The specific nature and problems of the Kaliningrad Region determine its special place in Russian regional policy. Since the very beginning of the 1990s, federal measures to support the region’s socio-economic development have been implemented. In the Spatial Development Strategy of Russia approved in 2019, the Kaliningrad Region was named among the priority geostrategic territories of the country.

Federal support of the region is aimed at achieving various goals – improving the quality of life of the population (to a level comparable with neighboring countries), creating conditions for accelerated economic growth of the region, ensuring its economic security. Measures to support the Kaliningrad Region are partly standard for Russian regional policy (federal investment, mainly in infrastructure), but to a large extent are determined by the region’s unique exclave location (the special economic zone regime).

The SEZ was established in the Kaliningrad Region in the early 1990s and provided for the import of goods without paying customs duties. This decision was aimed to restrain the growth of prices for imported goods (which were of increased importance in the exclave region) for the population. However, the fall in import prices exacerbated the problems of transition to a market economy for local producers. The situation changed after the crisis of 1998, when assembly plants began to develop actively in Russia and the

Kaliningrad Region turned out to be attractive for them. However, in the mid-2000s it became obvious that many enterprises appeared that couldn’t exist without customs benefits. After discussions, it was decided to retain such benefits only for existing enterprises for a 10-year transition period (until April 1, 2016) and provide tax benefits to new investors (full exemption from corporate income and property taxes for 6 years and their payment in half for another 6 years). Such unprecedented tax benefits for Russia in the mid-2000s gave certain results, but did not provide a radical breakthrough in the economic development of the Kaliningrad Region. Therefore, after the complete abolition of customs benefits, the federal authorities are forced to support enterprises that have used them. Even more extensive tax benefits were introduced – starting from 2018, the rates of enterprises’ payments from the payroll were reduced to the minimum level.

The exclave position of the Kaliningrad Region, compounded by the deterioration of relations with neighboring countries, greatly narrows the range of possible activities in the region and forces increased attention to the search for competitive advantages of the region. Among the promising sectors of the economy, experts call agriculture, tourism, the amber cluster, and fisheries. A desirable option is to ensure the innovative development of the region – in 2022, the federal government decided to create an innovative scientific and technological center based on the Baltic Federal University. Thus, the search for ways to develop the region and its federal support continues. ■



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SALAVAT ABYLKALIKOV

Kaliningrad region is among the Russian regions with highest population growth: What is the secret/reason?

Expert article • 3252

Kaliningrad region stands out as one of the few Russian regions where the population size grew instead of decreasing, after the USSR break-up. This paper applies the demographic balancing equation to find out the contribution of fertility, mortality and migration to the total population growth in the Kaliningrad region.

The year of 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of the breakup of the USSR. Within those thirty years, Russia in general, and Russian regions in particular, have gone through various types of transformations, including demographic. By 2022, the total population of Russia decreased by 1.4% or by 2.1 million people¹, compared to the beginning of 1991.

At the same time, in a quarter of the regions of the country, there was still an increase in the population, or at least there was no reduction between 1991 and 2022. The reasons of this phenomenon may not be always obvious. Top-10 regions with highest population growth include, for example, three Caucasian republics. According to the official statistics, in Ingushetia, the population grew by 168%, in Dagestan – by 67%, in Chechnya – by 28%. In these Caucasian republics, the population growth results from relatively high fertility and low mortality, as well as from internal displacement of people within the regions observed during the two Chechen Wars, while the accuracy of statistics is also to be questioned.

The remaining seven regions in the top-10 leading by population growth include mostly traditional popular destinations both for internal and international migrants: Moscow and Moscow region (where the share of the population over 30 years grew by 40% and by 15%, correspondingly), Tyumen region and its autonomous okrugs² (19% population growth), St. Petersburg and Leningrad region (with population growth by 7.5% and 13% correspondingly). However, Kaliningrad region with population growth of 14%, ranks even higher than St. Petersburg. What is the reason?

In the period 1991-2021, the total number of births in the Kaliningrad region, was 285.7 thousand people, and the total number of deaths – 402.8 thousand people. Therefore, the total population growth turns to be natural population decline, just as in most Russian regions, and equals 117.1 thousand people. Using the demographic balancing equation, we can calculate migration surplus for the period

¹ These figures include the population of the Crimea. Otherwise, the population decline amounts to 3% or 4.5 million people.

² Autonomous okrugs include Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug–Yugra and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

1991-2021, as a difference between total population growth (128 thousand people) and natural population growth (-117.1 thousand people). Hence, migration surplus in the Kaliningrad region for the past 30 years amounts to 245 thousand people, indicating that the number of arrivals surpassed the number of departures for the period under study.

Total fertility rate in the Kaliningrad region in 1991-2022 was equal or below 1.8, in other years it was 1.1-1.6 births per woman, while the simple population reproduction requires at least 2.1 births per woman. A more accurate indicator, net reproduction rate, takes into account mortality, in addition to fertility. The highest net reproduction rate observed in 2016 was only 0.844, while in pre-pandemic year of 2019, it lowered to 0.655.

Net reproduction rate shows if the number of daughters is enough to replace the generation of mothers, considering the mortality rate, and is often used to describe the generation replacement trends in the population as a whole (i.e. both for males and females). Therefore, in the longer term, each new generation in the Kaliningrad region will be less in number than the generation of parents due to low fertility and relatively high mortality.

Thus, we can conclude that migration makes a significant contribution to the population dynamics. Most Russian regions, except for a few republics of the North Caucasus and Southern Siberia, have low fertility (just as in European countries) and high mortality (even before the COVID-19 pandemic). In the longer term, just as in the previous decades, the population growth divergence of the Russian regions will be driven by their attractiveness for internal and international migrants, and for current residents. Kaliningrad region makes a perfect example to follow. ■



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Basis for economic growth in Kaliningrad

Expert article • 3253

During times of rapid technological development and rapid market changes economic growth requires both the absorptive capacity to internalise new knowledge and the ability to convert this new knowledge into products and services that can successfully compete on the market. To understand the growth potential of a given economy under these circumstances an understanding must be gained of the economy's underlying capabilities in the form of structures that have emerged to capture, hold and combine knowledge enabling an economy to produce output in the form of products and services that are internationally competitive. This can be done by measuring the economic complexity of the economy.

The core concept of economic complexity is that products are produced when knowledge, natural resources and monetary capital come together in a certain way, with each economy having its own combination of the three factors. Economic complexity theory proposes that since natural resources and monetary capital are scarce, it is by increasing the amount of knowledge in an economy that more products can be made available for production, specifically for export. Thus, it is the differentiation of knowledge between economies that shapes each economy's unique state of economic complexity.

Economic complexity uses the ubiquity and diversity of the economy's portfolio of traded products and services to understand the capabilities that exist in the economy. The lower the ubiquity the fewer other economies can produce what is produced in the observed economy and the higher the diversity the broader the range of product and service exported from the economy. High economic complexity hence means low ubiquity and high diversity. Examples of economies with high economic complexity are Japan, Chinese Taipei, Switzerland, and Germany. It is also worth noting that economic complexity predicts future economic growth better than other economic indicators.

Capturing the economic complexity of a region is usually very difficult since access to data for trade with both other countries outside the economy and trade with other regions inside the country where the observed economy is located is needed. In the case of Kaliningrad this is enabled by that Kaliningrad being an exclave and statistics are available for export and import as well as transit traffic by origin and destination.

The author led the project that analysed the economic complexity of the Kaliningrad region for the period 2015-2017. We found that 80% of Kaliningrad's total export originates from seven product categories and one product category (Motor cars and other motor vehicles) made up 60%. Looking at the products for which Kaliningrad holds a revealed comparative advantage and seeing what the minimum level of implied capability density is for each of these in the Kaliningrad economy we find this number to be very low. These findings are an indication that the capability base in the Kaliningrad region is too narrow and too shallow. This means (which is empirically confirmed) that regional companies operating in more complex product categories

are dependent on transferred, imported or licensed capabilities from a parent company or from third parties external to the economy. Another conclusion is that local sub-suppliers to these firms provide non-critical products and services and are hence substitutable.

The higher the product complexity and the lower the associated implied capability density, the larger the risk that the economy will lose this product category, unless it is built around an endowment resource, like a raw material with high transportation costs that is difficult to source on the open market or unless there are inducements provided e. g. tax relief.

The detailed analysis showed that there were four medium-high complexity 4-digit HS code product categories exported with a revealed comparative advantage that are critical for the region's capability base. There were a further eight average-medium complexity products that also underpin the region's capability base. Based on the analysis we can conclude that for the region's competitiveness to be increased, the implied capability density in the economy needs to be roughly doubled.

It is unlikely that this will happen by itself in the Kaliningrad region for two reasons: Firstly, a large economy can generate a large range of diverse options and is therefore better able to manage change than a small economy that can only generate a limited number of options. This means that the need for government intervention in the form of industry policy is larger the smaller the economy—or to express it in neo-classical economic terminology: the smaller the economy the more pervasive market failure is as an attribute of the economy as a whole. Secondly, if both access to new knowledge (both direct and embodied in the form of capabilities held by the supply system) and access to lead customers are substantially higher in a different location than the one the firm is presently located in, and even if the cost of doing business in this new location is higher than that of competitors, it is likely that the firm will relocate to this new location. This means that government intervention to secure local presence of firms critical to the economy is justified.

The conclusion is that Kaliningrad needs to implement an active industry policy with the aim of increasing its implied capability density and subsequently increasing the complexity of its products and services exported to other regions of the Russian Federation or exported internationally. If this is not done the economic complexity of Kaliningrad will likely decline since the rest of the world continuously develop new complex products and services for export and this may be further exacerbated if some of the higher product complexity industries exit the economy. This reduces the probability for economic growth in the region. Reduced economic growth will carry with it a large set of negative consequences for the region. ■

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Kaliningrad SEZ: Classification of legal regimes

Expert article • 3254

In relation to the Kaliningrad exclave, the federal authorities have consistently applied special legal economic regimes based on the provision of exclusive customs and/or tax benefits. At first, it was regulated by the regulations on the SEZ “Yantar”, then – in the federal laws “On SEZ in the Kaliningrad region”. The legislation on the Kaliningrad SEZ has changed four times in 30 years. In the interests of conducting research and studying the latest economic history of the Kaliningrad region, it is advisable to introduce a classification of economic regimes.

Free Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region - FEZ “Yantar” (1991 – 1996)

The motives for the transformation of the regional economy at this stage were: saturation of the regional market, accelerated launch of market economy mechanisms in the region, support for the development of small businesses by providing local businesses with customs privileges.

The relatively high exchange rate of the ruble contributed to the saturation of the consumer market, the development of the “shuttle” business. However, it was not the technologies and equipment necessary for the development of production in the region that were imported, but cheap consumer goods. By December 1996, 80% of the goods on the regional market were imported. The FEZ regime has led to a significant excess of import over export. This effect was taken into account when preparing the Federal Law.

Special Economic Zone in the Kaliningrad Region (1996 – 2006) as amended by Federal Law No. 13-FZ of 22.01.96 - legal regime of management SEZ 1.0

The Federal Law raised the status of the norms regulating economic activity in the region and determined the legal and economic basis for the creation and functioning of the SEZ in the Kaliningrad Region, based on its specific location. The SEZ included the territory of the entire region, except for defense facilities, the functions of the administrator of the SEZ were performed by the administration of the region.

The legal regime of SEZ 1.0 regulated export and import operations in the region by providing economic entities with a free customs zone regime with the minimum possible restrictions. Within the framework of the regime, customs payments are not collected when processing goods:

- from goods produced in the SEZ regime with a sufficient degree of processing (at least 30% of the added value) and exported to other countries and to the rest of the customs territory of the Russian Federation;
- from goods imported from other countries for consumption in the region, or then exported to foreign countries (both with and without processing of goods).

The legal regime of SEZ 1.0 made it possible to adapt the industry of the region in terms of territorial separation.

During the operation of the SEZ 1.0 regime, the conditions of economic activity in Russia have changed, which determined the need to develop a new version of the Federal Law on the SEZ in the

Kaliningrad Region. This work was carried out in 2003-2005. A new concept of the SEZ mechanism was proposed, forming a balance of interests of the state, business and the population of the region.

SEZ in the Kaliningrad Region (2006 – 2016) as amended by Federal Law No. 16-FZ of 10.01.2006 - legal regime of management SEZ 2.0

The legal regime of SEZ 2.0 provided for a 25-year extension of the SEZ in the exclave and tax benefits on income and property taxes for large investors.

The tax benefits provided by the legal regime of SEZ 2.0 have created incentives for the creation of new capital-intensive industries in a number of sectors of the regional economy that were not previously stimulated by customs privileges.

During this period, important institutional reforms were carried out in the country: Russia’s accession to the WTO (2012), the integration processes of the Customs Union (active phase - 2009-2011) and the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (2014). This determined the need for further improvement of the legal regime of the Kaliningrad SEZ.

SEZ in the Kaliningrad Region (2017 – present) as amended by Federal Law No. 393-FZ dated 05.12.2017 - legal regime of management SEZ 3.0

The main innovations of the SEZ 3.0 legal regime: extension of the SEZ validity period until 2045; the SEZ includes the internal sea waters adjacent to the territory of the region and the territorial sea of the Russian Federation; the minimum amount of investments in the form of capital investments for SEZ residents in priority sectors for the region has been reduced; the procedure for entry into and exit from the territory of the region has been simplified; features of the stay of foreigners and stateless persons in the region; reduced social contributions when creating new jobs by SEZ residents to 7.6%; exemption for 180 days from customs VAT when exporting products from the region to the EAEU market.

As of 03/29/2022, 280 active investment projects were registered in the unified register of residents of the Kaliningrad SEZ with a total amount of declared investments in the first three years of implementation – 157.3 billion rubles and a staff number of 51,115 people.

There is no doubt that these innovations - the legal regimes of the Kaliningrad SEZ 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 have changed the economic conditions on the territory of the Kaliningrad region and led to a significant change in the structure of the regional economy. ■



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Towards Green Economy: Carbon polygon in Kaliningrad region

Expert article • 3255

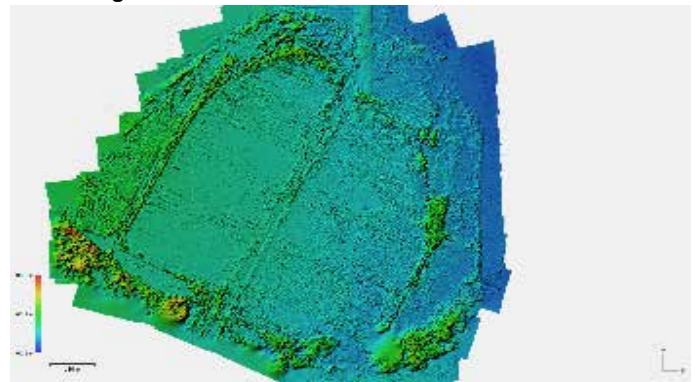
Kaliningrad region one of the regions of Russia where the Carbon emission started to be measured for provision the steps towards the green economy. Carbon polygons are not just sites for research - they have a special international role and economic potential. In 2015, 72 countries of the world, including Russia, signed the Paris Climate Agreement. Under this agreement, by 2023, the EU plans to introduce a "carbon tax" for exporting companies that sell their goods in Europe.

Carbon polygons are specialized sites for conducting experiments to measure the emission and absorption of greenhouse gases. To do this, the scientific staff of the test site conducts ground and remote measurements to assess the change in the flow of climatically active gases (methane, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide) in space and time. This is a section of the earth's surface with a relief, structure of vegetation and soil cover that is representative for the given territory, where a set of measures is being implemented aimed at developing scientific, human and infrastructural potentials in the field of developing and testing technologies for monitoring the balance of climatically active gases of natural ecosystems. One of the main goals of such studies is the assessment of the integral values of the carbon balance.

In the Kaliningrad region, a carbon polygon was created by the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University on the drained Wittgiren peat bog in the Slavsk district. The polygon was given the name "Rosyanka" in honor of a rare plant that grows in a swamp, the hallmark of which is the unique ability to absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide. The first studies at the "Rosyanka" carbon test site in the Kaliningrad region were carried out by scientists and students of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in autumn 2021. At the Wittgirren peat bog, it is planned to study not only climate-active greenhouse gases, but also test technologies for rewetting the drained area. Wetlands are known to be natural "repositories" of carbon. The test site houses a mobile laboratory powered by solar panels. Express analyzes of freshly selected samples of peat, water, and air will be done here. And it is planned to work at the polygon on a rotational basis.

Research at the carbon test site in the Kaliningrad region is carried out using innovative equipment, including an unmanned aerial vehicle with a scanner and a red edge multispectral camera. With the use of airborne laser scanning, it is planned to create a high-precision model of the polygon relief, on which in the future modeling of carbon absorption by peat deposits will be carried out. The use of a multispectral camera will make it possible to carry out work to determine the diversity of vegetation in the experimental areas of the carboniferous polygon. Using various types of vegetation indices, it is planned to consider the relationship between carbon absorption and not only species diversity, but also the physical state of various types of vegetation (Figure 1).

Figure 1. An example of an aerial survey of the carbon test site in Kaliningrad



Already the first test flights using a multispectral camera showed interesting results and helped to clarify the exact boundaries of various plant communities on the carboniferous range. At the same time, it should be noted that the multispectral survey itself without ground studies is very probabilistic in nature and can be used to calculate carbon consumption over very large areas with a large margin of error. One potential challenge is to be able to scale research from a carbon polygon to urban green spaces, in a manner similar to that of our Asian colleagues. In addition, the site trains highly qualified personnel in the field of the latest methods of environmental control, promising technologies for the low-carbon industry, agriculture and municipal economy.

The "carbon tax" will be calculated based on the amount of carbon pollution accumulated in the production of goods. A special quota for the volume of sales of their products on the European market will be introduced for each enterprise. Having exhausted the limit, manufacturing companies will be forced to turn to the exchange of quotas to buy them from enterprises that have not used up theirs. The creation of carbon polygon will expand the absorbing potential for the processing of carbon dioxide, as well as control the limits of manufacturing enterprises. ■

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Tourism as a spatial construct in cross-border cooperation between Kaliningrad Oblast, Lithuania and Poland

Expert article • 3256

The developments on territorial cooperation between the border regions of Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad oblast of Russia was an intensively ongoing process for the last twenty years. The most intensive processes on territorial cooperation with the support of the EU programmes started since Lithuania and Poland accessed to the EU, and Kaliningrad region became an exclave of Russia framed by the EU countries. Simultaneously, such changed geoeconomic and geopolitical situation facilitated Kaliningrad oblast to be involved as target area of territorial cooperation in order to develop joint projects and to keep a social, economic and cultural interaction for creation of common value added in cross-border areas of neighboring countries. The legal bodies and public enterprises started to pay an attention to develop the common values and identities based on heritage protection. An organization of joint social events devoted for revitalization of social dialogue between different organizations in borderlands. A significant role has been played by municipal authorities, who were interested to develop joint project based on sharing of experiences and the best practices in solution of common problems in cross-border areas. In addition, the researchers of Klaipeda University (KU) and Baltic Federal University named after Immanuel Kant (BFU), and from University of Gdansk (UG) were very active in promotion of social, academic, cultural events and researches in order to create the Tripolar space of science and research between Klaipeda – Kaliningrad and Gdansk, and this model of cooperation has been developed and achieved in many different extents, e.g. organized summer schools of young researchers, workshops and seminars on the problems of cross-border cooperation, development of tourism projects, initiatives on nature monitoring, facilitation of infrastructure for firefighting, and technical assistance etc.

During the period of 2007-2013 there was acting Lithuania-Poland-Russia cross border cooperation programme, which gave an opportunity to implement projects based on cross-border cooperation in three countries at the same time. There were implemented numerous large-scale projects for cultural tourism development and improvement of social environment in border areas. The territorial scope was rather wide and the effect was extended beyond the border areas. Later on, this programme was divided into two different programmes as Lithuania-Russia, and Poland-Russia for the period of 2014-2020. Both newly created programmes were devoted for facilitation of cultural tourism development, environmental protection and development of socially oriented projects. An aspect of tourism

has been determined as a key spatial construct for cross-border cooperation in order to support a cultural tourism and nature tourism development, and its interaction on the both sides of the border areas. In Lithuania-Russia programme the areas along Curonian lagoon, Klaipeda and Kaliningrad, Taurage and Sovetsk, Marijampole and Tcherniakhovsk became the most intensively involved areas in tourism development through the actions of cross-border cooperation. Relatively, in Poland-Russia cross-border cooperation programme the areas along Vistula lagoon, Kaliningrad – Elblag and Olsztyn became the target areas for implementation of jointly planned tourism related projects. In Lithuania-Russia cross-border cooperation programme from the 1st call have been approved and implemented 6 projects, from the 2nd call 6 project as well, from the 3rd call 4 projects and 1 assigned into reserved list. The content of these projects reflect on the cultural, historical, natural and maritime values of the heritage objects and their adaptation for cultural tourism and nature recreation development. In total, half of the approved projects in this programme have got a strong spatial construct on tourism development in cross-border areas in order to increase a cultural and tourism interaction in the borderlands of neighboring countries. In the issue, tourism related actions for both countries have been considered as the unifying factors for better cohesions, communication and dialogue between Lithuania and Kaliningrad region of Russia. A protection of heritage, a creation of land and water cross-border tourism routes, a co-designing of almanacs and other digital tourism products facilitated an agreement on common values and identities adopted into local and international tourism markets for better mutual understanding between the neighboring countries. This is being recognized as the most efficient effect of cross-border cooperation with a high political support from the both countries. In addition, in Poland-Russia cross-border cooperation programme implemented 12 large-scale project on historical, cultural and environmental heritage preservation and its adaptation for cross-border tourism development. Tourism related actions have been considered as a junction for better cultural and spatial cohesion between Russian and Polish regions in order to create common values and identities for national and international tourism activities. Cultural tourism and development of recreational infrastructure, restoration of heritage and its adaptation into tourism models, for a long decade it was rather successful model of territorial cooperation. Due to numerous successfully implemented projects Kaliningrad region became more well known for potential tourists from Lithuania and Poland. In particular, a strong facilitation gave the

issuance of electronic visas under simplified rules to enter Kaliningrad region for tourism purposes since 1st July 2019. Due to this in 2019 it has been mentioned a significant increase of inbound tourists from Lithuania, Poland and from overseas. Tourism ecosystems in Kaliningrad region started to be integrated with tourism ecosystems of Lithuania and Poland through promotion of cultural, historical tourism development. A cross-border cooperation models between national parks, and border municipalities have been developed. Created common tourism products as tourism almanacs, thematic land tourism routes on common heritage, cycling routes, water routes, ecotourism routes. This activated an involvement of museums, universities, cultural organizations, municipal authorities, tourism information centers in creation of joint tourism physical and digital products based on cross-border cooperation issues and preservation of heritage. The models of cultural tourism elected as the basis for continuous tourism development and facilitation a spatial interaction between the border territories with political support from local and national authorities.

Recently, due to increased geopolitical tensions affected by the war between Russian Federation and Ukraine, and due to implemented sanctions on Russia, all this affected the acting of models of territorial cooperation between Lithuania and Kaliningrad region, and Poland in particular. Currently, the joint implementation of cross-border project stopped for an unlimited time. A models of cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism development stopped to function. An experience of territorial cooperation based on cultural and social interaction stopped to exist after the twenty years of prosperous and promising communication between Lithuanian, Polish and Russian researches, municipal authorities, NGOs, museums, cultural organizations, tourism information centers. A period of uncertainties in tourism system of border regions is obvious in the future. ■

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Kaliningrad's amber

Expert article • 3257

Amber is fossilized tree resin and it is found in many parts of the world. The Baltic Sea region has deep connections with this organic gemstone going back many centuries ago. This is evidenced, for instance, by the existence of numerous old folk legends related to the origin of amber and its mythical properties as well as by a number of museums devoted to amber in several Baltic countries.

Trade in Baltic amber has taken place at least since the 16th century BCE. For example, the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen who lived in 14th century BCE contains large Baltic amber beads. In Roman times amber was an important commodity that was traded along the Amber Road – an overland trade route connecting the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea with the Mediterranean Sea.

The richest deposits of amber are concentrated on the Sambia Peninsula in what is now Kaliningrad Oblast of Russia. Collecting amber pieces brought to the shore after storms was a traditional way to get amber. The Teutonic Order even monopolized amber collection and trade, and established an administration to manage these activities. Industrial mining of amber began in 1860s by German firm Stantien & Becker. Its mining operation were located near the town of Palmnicken (currently called Yantarny) and its output reached around 400 tonnes of amber per year in 1890s.

Today the Sambia Peninsula still remains the only place in the world where large-scale industrial mining of amber takes place. It is carried out by company called Kaliningrad Amber Combine. The company has had a tumultuous history. It was set up in 1947 after end of the World War 2 as part of the Gulag system using forced labor. Only after the death of Stalin in 1953 it was reorganized as a civil enterprise. Gradually, the company started to increase its production by improving its mining technology and developing a new open-pit mine. In 1950s its production of amber averaged 230 tonnes annually but in 1970s it was more than 600 tonnes. By 1989-1990 annual amber production reached more than 800 tonnes.

After the start of the market reforms in Russia the company fell on hard times. In 1993 the company was privatized as joint-stock company Russian Amber. However, in 1996 the regional court found that its privatization was carried out illegally and company was returned to the state (federal) ownership. This did not help to stabilize its finances and it remained on the brink of bankruptcy for several years. Amber production in some years declined to less than 200 tonnes. In 2003 the company was put into administration and emerged from it only in 2008. Management incompetence (or worse) and pilfering of amber from the company by its workers were some of the major reasons for its troubles. However, probably even more important was widespread illegal mining of amber by small groups of miners on land and at sea. Much of the illegally obtained amber was smuggled to neighboring Poland and Lithuania.

In 2013, Amber Combine was transferred to the state corporation Rostec, whose primary mission was to develop high-tech industries in Russia. Although amber mining is obviously a non-core business for Rostec, its management was able to improve company's operations. One reason was more effective suppression of illegal amber mining by law enforcement. Sales of amber were transferred to the St.Petersburg

exchange thereby providing transparency and broadening the access to raw amber. In 2021 Amber Combine produced 576 tonnes of rough amber compared with 244 tonnes in 2014. Its sales margin was above 40% for the last five years.

The mining operations take place in an open cast mine at the depth of 40-60 meters where the seam of so-called blue soil is located. The amber content in the blue soil seam is on average 0.5-0.6 kg per m³. Proved reserves of amber for the existing mine is over 100 thousand tonnes. However, prognosticated resources on the Sambia Peninsula are estimated to be over 300 thousand tonnes.

The direct economic contribution of the company to Kaliningrad's economy is rather limited. The revenue of the Amber Combine in 2021 was equivalent to 43 million EUR and it employed 1,016 workers. Its share in the gross regional product was roughly 0.4% in recent years. However, the company production supports a sizeable jewelry and retail sector in Kaliningrad. Even more importantly, amber is an essential part of the regional brand. The oblast is often unofficially referred to as an amber region. A lot of organizations in Kaliningrad use the word amber and its derivative in their names. Amber is one of the reasons why tourists to come to Kaliningrad. These factors led the Russian government to issue a strategy for the development of the amber industry in 2017.

Significant part the extracted amber is exported: in 2020-2021 amber exports were even higher than the production output (due to decrease in amber stocks). The largest buyer of Kaliningrad's amber was Lithuania; China, Poland and Latvia were also large importers.

The largest alternative supplier of amber to the market is Ukraine. While state-licensed production there is small – a few tonnes, output of illegal mining is estimated as 150-200 tonnes per year. Small volumes of amber are also produced in Poland, Lithuania, Dominican Republic and Myanmar.

Overall, Kaliningrad Amber Combine's market share is substantially higher than 50%. Its market dominance bears a resemblance to that of De Beers in the rough diamond market, which lasted for more than a century until the 2010s. However, today it is a subsidiary of Anglo American plc, a multinational mining company, and its share of the market declined to 20+% (in carats). It reminds us that the market conditions never remain fixed forever and changes can occur quite rapidly. ■

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The Kaliningrad region and neighbors: Objective indicators and subjective assessments of well-being

Expert article • 3258

The Kaliningrad region is characterized by a noticeable asymmetry of relations with neighboring states and the strengthening of the role of the border as a dividing marker against the background of intense cross-border interactions in the recent past. A series of sociological surveys conducted in 2020 as part of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research project (no. 20-05-00697 “Kaliningrad Identity in Cross-Border and Cross-Cultural Contexts”) showed that people evaluate life across the board differently. Comparing the Kaliningrad region and neighboring countries, almost half (49%) of the respondents believe that the level of economic development in Poland is higher, and only 6% believe that it is lower. The economic situation in Lithuania is assessed a little more skeptical: 29% believe that the economy in Lithuania is better developed, and 10% think that it is worse than in the Russian exclave. At the same time, a significant part of respondents (32% in Poland and 42% in Lithuania) cannot compare the level of development of neighboring countries, which correlates with low population mobility.

Questions arise whether such comparisons have objective grounds, whether the factors of unfavorable cross-border comparisons influence the formation of Kaliningrad identity, to what extent the frustration experienced is a consequence of objectively existing differences in the achieved standard of living, and to what extent it is a product of social imagination, ideas, and stereotypes of the public opinions.

Border spaces have a certain similarity in socio-economic patterns. Regional centers are distinguished by their migration attractiveness, dynamism, level of education and incomes of the population, resort areas - by an increased proportion of older people and the development of small businesses, and peripheral and rural areas - by depopulation, poverty, and a low level of entrepreneurial activity. However, despite the similarities, a detailed examination of the processes taking place in the Kaliningrad region and neighboring EU countries reveals many differences.

If the Kaliningrad region, against the background of Russia, is characterized by migration attractiveness - most of its cities and regions, except for the agro-industrial periphery, demonstrate a stable population and even positive dynamics, then the Polish and especially Lithuanian borderlands suffer from an outflow of population, the rate of which increased after entering the EU. In the case of income assessment, the picture is different, the comparison is not in favor of the Kaliningrad region. The level of wages in Kaliningrad is about one and a half times lower than in Klaipeda and two times lower than in the Polish Tricity. If we compare the cost of living, then, according to the Numbeo portal, the purchase of food, clothing, shoes, and some durable goods is cheaper in the border municipalities of Poland, and cigarettes and gasoline in the Kaliningrad region. Kaliningraders also spend significantly less on utility, mobile communications, the Internet, and public transport.

The events of recent years have had a negative impact on the border economy of Poland and Lithuania, primarily on the sector of trade and consumer services, which were focused on demand from the inhabitants of the Kaliningrad region. Even though nominally wages and municipal budget revenues are growing both in Poland and Lithuania, the contraction of local labor markets has increased the outflow of young people to stronger economic centers - capital cities and other European states. On the contrary, in the Kaliningrad region, despite the disruption of the usual order, European sanctions have spurred the development of the agro-industrial and tourism sectors, contributing to import substitution, and displacing the habit of households to travel for everyday goods to neighboring countries. The result of a combination of multidirectional trends was the alignment of cross-country gradients of socio-economic development. So, in 2019, the difference in per capita GRP indicators between the Kaliningrad region, the Pomorskie voivodship and the Klaipeda district did not exceed 40–45%.

Thus, there are differences, but they are not cardinal. In turn, the emotions experienced by people, the arrangement of value priorities and their perception led to cognitive distortions of the picture of the surrounding world. Neighbors act as a reference point in assessing their own standard of living. Cross-border practices encourage Kaliningraders to compare life on different sides of the borders, but not always lead to a critical or realistic perception of the situation, but rather contribute to an even greater spread of myths. The starting points for assessment are not only ideological clichés, but also assessments of their daily lives, food prices, the level of social benefits, and infrastructure development. Explanatory schemes come to the rescue, helping to interpret why life is better on the other side of the border. The area of comparison includes stories that would not be the subject of discussion or comparison without cross-border practices and acquaintance with life on the other side of the border. The high level of infrastructure development and the abundance of cheap goods give Kaliningraders confidence in a higher standard of living in Poland. Thus, comparison with neighbors falls into the basis of subjective ideas, and not objective truths.

Mobility is becoming a key parameter for the differentiation of the Kaliningrad society in terms of assessing one's own well-being, life satisfaction and comparison with neighbors. The isolation of the region in the new circumstances may lead to the fact that negative comparisons will intensify. Cross-border practices have ended and are unlikely to resume soon. The object of comparison will become remote, knowledge about the life across the border will be less specific, which will lead to the strengthening of myths and stereotypes and their influence on the feelings and perceptions of residents. ■

Expert article • 3258



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JUKKA MALLINEN

Kaliningrad – Far away and alone

Expert article • 3259

The Iron Curtain of war has landed around Kaliningrad: “We dreamed that our region would be a bridge between Europe and Europeanizing Russia. Since 2014, this idea has flickered weaker and weaker - now it has been blown out,” says Mikhail, a poet from Kaliningrad. The Baltic Sea connects the enclave of Kaliningrad between Poland and Lithuania to St. Petersburg. Depending on the point of view, it is an island besieged by the Baltic States or threatening Europe. It has the potential to both trigger and tighten tension.

This historically rich area was conquered by the German Order in the 13th century. The capital of East Prussia, Königsberg, was known for philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Hannah Arendt, and writers such as E. T. A. Hofmann and Anna Seghers. After World War II, the Germans were deported and the Russians replaced them, renaming the area Kaliningrad.

Today, Kaliningrad city center is a puzzle of a few German bourgeois villas, Soviet-era gray barracks and neo-Russian glass palaces. The confusion of architecture reflects the contradictions and unresolved tensions of its identity. At the same time, it reminds us that Kaliningrad could be a new European-Russian synthesis. Russia's central government has long been drumming propaganda about a hostile, threatening and decadent West. In the Kaliningrad region, however, it do not go through among the educated active population. The lies do not work because residents have a lot of positive experiences from Poland and Lithuania.

Few have been visited as they say here in “Russia” or “the mainland”. Poland and Lithuania are visited for buying fashion products and banned food several times a year. Assertions on russophobia in the EU do not work. Poland and Lithuania are examples worth following here.

A strong local identity is reflected even in the fact that car traffic is more civilized and disciplined than in the East. This is to make the difference to the barbarians of the East.

The symptomatic controversy over the name of the city reflects different views on the direction of development in Kaliningrad. In 2002, a group demanded the renaming of city to Königsberg because the fate of the region is inseparable from the achievements of European and world history. The argument was “the will to restore the historical name and get rid of the name of Stalin's accomplice”. At the same time, reference was made to the corresponding restorations of the names of St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg in “Greater Russia”. However, the Regional Duma proposed criminalizing the change of name Kaliningrad.

In 2009, the Mayor of Kaliningrad, Feliks Lapin, also proposed restoring the Königsberg name as it would strengthen cooperation. Chairman of the Council of Veterans of War, Labor and Law Enforcement Boris Kosenkov called the proposal “a defamatory to those who shed blood here during the war and then rebuilt it”.

The author Günter Grass offered the disputing parties European reconciliation: “For a united Europe, this has long and forever been part of Russia, which is gradually, though difficulties rehabilitating and developing this wonderful region without forgetting its history.”

The East Prussian past is reflected in the large number of German visitors. They are offered East Prussian souvenirs and excursions in the name of nostalgia tourism.

The old generation in the area is largely veterans of the army, navy, militia and KGB, and opinions are in line with that. For them, the Kaliningrad region is a Russian aircraft carrier and a protruding base.

The Kremlin thinks so too. It is concerned about the connections of Kaliningrad to the west and focuses on fortification, preparation, defense connections to St. Petersburg.

In Kaliningrad is in Baltijsk the main base of the Baltic Fleet with Iskander missiles. The armament has radiated to the entire Baltic Sea region, including Finland.

The area can be used to escalate tensions: Lithuania sees transports to Kaliningrad as a possible source of provocation. Troops and equipment travel along the Baltic Sea, but other maintenance by train. Here is an opportunity to create unrest. During the shooting exercises at sea, the Russian navy has already twice crossed the border of Lithuanian territorial waters.

There was a lot of citizen activity before. There were huge protests against Governor Booze, commanded here by the Kremlin. Civic activism and the independent media have now been destroyed.

All in all, the geographical extreme points of Russia, the Kaliningrad and Vladivostok oblasts, have been considered the weakest held regions in the Russian Federation.

Until 2016, Kaliningrad was a special economic zone that stimulated the economy and joint ventures, which developed production and e.g. assembly of foreign cars. The Kremlin stopped it discredibly and shifted focus to the tax benefits for large state-owned companies. The area was left in the custom block and economic growth stopped. Our area is irrelevant to the Kremlin, the people say, or needed only military.

Now the Iron Curtain has landed over Kaliningrad with all its economic implications. There is a flight connection along the Baltic Sea to St. Petersburg, a train connection to Moscow is left, but the Russians are not allowed to get on or off the train in Vilnius. Area is in a situation that makes it difficult to supply food and spare parts. The region is being severely penalized more severely than the rest of Russia by the economic collapse, inflation, rising prices, unemployment and impoverishment. Some people say, that Russia is predicted to be almost like Iran or North Korea.

But if the democratic experiment of the 1990s failed in Russia, the authoritarian experiment of Putin's period has also failed.

When will the darkness give up? From the bottom of the deep pit, a new beginning can start, an experiment by democrats that could succeed. Königsberg-Kaliningrad will rise if Russia opens up to Europe. The Western influence will then be here faster and deeper than anywhere in Russia. ■

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Kaliningrad region in ‘core-periphery’ spatial hierarchy

Expert article • 3260

For the purposes of improving the regional policy in the Baltic region, it is important to understand the position of the Kaliningrad region in the spatial hierarchy. One way to describe it is to use the core-periphery concept. It is argued that the core is an indispensable element of any self-organizing system, which acts as a source of innovation for the surrounding periphery. In this logic, the Scandinavian regions and North Germany can be attributed to the core structure of the entire Baltic macroregion because the industrial production per capita is the highest. The sub-core in this context includes Lithuania, the Leningrad region of Russia and Estonia. The Kaliningrad region, along with Latvia and St. Petersburg, forms an industrial sub-periphery. If we consider the indicators of innovative activity¹, then only the regions of Sweden (Sydsverige, Östra Mellansverige), Finland (Helsinki-Uusimaa) and Denmark (Midtjylland) belong to the innovative leaders in terms of the number of PCT patents to GDP. St. Petersburg (1.6 PCT-application per billion dollars GDP) can also be attributed to leading regions. The Kaliningrad region (0.42) is more of a moderate or emerging innovator. To overcome the lagging, a separate program of socio-economic development was implemented in Kaliningrad region, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University was established. Also, in recent years, a significant amount of foreign investment has come to the Kaliningrad region from Germany and other industrialized countries.

If we consider Kaliningrad region among other Russian territories, it has semi-enclave position in the north-west with no direct land border with the main territory. Such a geographical location, although peripheral in relation to the main centers (Moscow, St. Petersburg), is potentially beneficial, since the region is located near the largest market of the European Union², has access to the sea, as well as relatively favorable natural and climatic conditions. The region could be more integrated into the EU economy, becoming a testing ground for working out cross-border ties. But in the current conditions, such a situation brings high risks, and therefore the intensity of interaction will most likely decrease; some foreign companies have already announced the suspension of their activities. In other words, the macroregional peripherality of the Kaliningrad oblast may increase in the future.

The Kaliningrad region ranks 50th out of 85 regions of Russia in terms of population (about 1.02 million people). Over the past 10 years, the population has grown by 8.2%, ranking 10th in terms of growth rates (only 30 regions grew during this period). Obviously, the region was highly attractive for Russian and foreign highly qualified

specialists³ due to natural amenities and the presence of large high-tech companies (Lukoil, Avtotor, Rolsen, Polar, GS Nanotech, etc.). Therefore, the region ranks 45th in terms of GDP, while it has grown by 25% since 2010 (25th) and 26th in terms of foreign direct investment. The region ranks 36th in terms of GDP per capita. The Kaliningrad region, like the countries of the Baltic macroregion, is characterized by a high level of digitalization, in addition, the region ranked 24th in terms of the number of international PCT patents for inventions⁴. The region ranks 7th in terms of the density of high-tech start-ups⁵. In other words, it is a fast-growing medium-developed region of Russia with extensive international ties. The region should rather be called semi-peripheral with active movement towards the “core”.

Within the region, there is an overconcentration of socio-economic potential in the regional core – Kaliningrad agglomeration with 77% of the population, 92% of industrial production and 87% of investments. The most dynamically developing Svetly and Guryevsk are among the leaders in terms of the industrial production per capita.

The Kaliningrad region is one of the sub-core in Baltic microregion and a moderate emerging innovator. It was a fast-growing medium-developed Russian region with extensive international ties. In new environment, the macroregional position of the Kaliningrad oblast may become less favorable in the future. ■

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Kaliningrad – increasing isolation

Expert article • 3261

The effects of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing breach in relations between Russia and the West have been felt particularly hard in the Kaliningrad region. Being sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland and detached from the mainland Russia, the region has had close connections with its neighbours and high dependence on imports. Although the socioeconomic development of the Kaliningrad region is dependent on the motherland, the special characteristics of the region make it particularly vulnerable to disruptions in the EU-Russia relations and strengthen the effects of isolation.

The increasing tensions between Russia and the West already since Russia's annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbass in 2014 have affected Kaliningrad's external relations, resulting in decrease in foreign trade and border crossings. Due to Russia's military aggression towards Ukraine in 2022, the cross-border connections between the Kaliningrad region and the EU are limited further, which affects local businesses and residents alike. Companies in the region are lacking raw materials, equipment and components due to the Western sanctions restricting exports to Russia. The agricultural sector and food processing industry in the region, also dependent on imports, have already been facing shortages due to Russia's earlier import restrictions on EU foodstuff and agricultural products. In addition, the collapse of the value of the rouble has made imported products more expensive in the region. The withdrawal of foreign companies from Russia is also affecting businesses in Kaliningrad. Car manufacturing company Avtotor, that has been assembling foreign car models directed for the Russian market, is suffering because companies such as BMW have ceased their partnership with it. Being one of the largest car manufacturers in Russia, an important contributor to the Kaliningrad's regional economy and a major employer in the region, Avtotor's difficulties could impact the whole region.

Travelling to nearby EU countries to make purchases has been important for people living in the Kaliningrad region. However, COVID-19, the strained EU-Russia relations and the falling rouble have limited leisure trips from Kaliningrad to neighbouring countries. As a response to Russia's military invasion, some EU member states have already suspended the issuance of visas for Russian citizens, as well as called for a Schengen-wide suspension of issuing visas for Russians. The financial sanctions imposed on Russian banks, including shutting them out of the SWIFT system, have severely complicated the transfer of money. Difficulties in getting visas and receiving salaries from foreign employers to Russian bank accounts hinder the work-related mobility of the residents of Kaliningrad.

Even without the current extremely tense situation, Kaliningrad's special geographic location creates challenges for its development. Hence, functioning and cost-efficient transport connections are very important for the region's viability. The security of supply of the Kaliningrad region has been the Kremlin's long-term concern and efforts to strengthen it – both in terms of transport connections and energy supply – are likely to intensify in the current strained situation. The sanctions have impacted the region's transport connections but the EU-Russia agreement ensuring the movement of people and goods to and from the Kaliningrad region prevents a full blockade

of the region. The main land transport connection between the motherland and the Kaliningrad region is the rail transit connection through Lithuania, which is still running. Goods in transit between the mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad region are also excluded from the EU-wide ban on Russian road transport, imposed in April 2022. Maritime and air transports from Russia to Kaliningrad are not dependent on transit countries. However, as regards flight connections, the closure of the EU airspace for Russian aircraft has increased the flying time between Kaliningrad and the motherland because the flights have been rerouted to fly over international waters of the Baltic Sea, adding to the flight costs.

Maintaining relatively easy movement of people and goods has been very important both for Kaliningrad's economic viability and its residents' quality of life. The economic decline and uncertainty in Russia, as well as increasing isolation of the Kaliningrad region, will decrease the wellbeing of its residents, leading to growing discontent with the economic situation and living conditions in the region. However, it is very unlikely that the public dissatisfaction will have any concrete consequences, such as trigger protests against the current regime. The Kremlin is keeping a tight grip on the strategically important region: Anti-war demonstrations have been suppressed by force and opposition activists have been detained or forced to leave the country. As elsewhere in Russia, the lack of independent media prevents the public from receiving accurate information about the war in Ukraine. On the contrary to the goal of attracting investments and tourists to Kaliningrad, boosted for instance by the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the long-term trend of militarisation is continuing in the Kaliningrad region and it seems to be turning back to isolated fortress again. ■



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Transport accessibility of Kaliningrad region and geopolitical unsustainability

Expert article • 3262

The Kaliningrad region, which has no common land borders with the main territory of Russia, is threatened with a transport blockade. The region may find itself in such a situation if the intentions of Poland and the Baltic states to ban cargo transit through the territory of the EU countries to Russia and Belarus are realized. The situation will create problems for everyone, and not only in economic terms: the forced isolation of Kaliningrad is a direct path to a geopolitical conflict.

A significant volume of cargo from Russia to the Kaliningrad region transits through the territory of Lithuania and Poland by rail and by road. In addition, there is a ferry service bypassing foreign countries and an air service through Kaliningrad Khrabrovo airport. If necessary, alternative capacities can be increased, for example, by ferry line on "Princess Anastasia" from St-Petersburg to Kaliningrad via the Baltic Sea.

But the right to land transit was guaranteed by international agreements, and their rupture is fraught with serious consequences for the EU. Transport accessibility of the Kaliningrad region was guaranteed by agreements between Moscow and Brussels, on the basis of which Lithuania was admitted to the European Union. Nevertheless, now official authorities of Vilnius are pushing the EU to ban the transit of goods to the Kaliningrad region — in fact, we are talking about a commodity blockade.

Tensions between Russia and the Baltic states are growing. In particular, Lithuania deliberately weakens diplomatic ties, and also declares approval of the idea of a complete closure of borders with Russia and Belarus. Earlier, the Ministers of Transport of the Baltic States and Poland announced the initiative with the reservation that not only land routes should become inaccessible for Russian transit, but ports should also be closed to all ships under the flag of the Russian Federation.

Official authorities of Vilnius cannot unilaterally terminate international obligations to ensure transit to the Kaliningrad Region. The transit agreement is trilateral, its participants are Lithuania, the EU and Russia. The withdrawal of the European Union from these agreements and the attempt to isolate Kaliningrad region could undermine Russia's national security, and could have negative consequences in geopolitical relations.

It is very difficult to analyze modern international relations from the point of view of classical theories of international relations, because the escalation around the Kaliningrad region is absolutely not in the interests of any country of the Baltic region.

If we are talking about the consequences of the closure of overland transit for the Kaliningrad region, then Russia was preparing for such an option due to the unreliable geopolitical relations with its neighbors during the last decade in this region. The necessary energy capacities were created, LNG terminals were built, ferry communication with Ust-Luga was established. At the end of March 2022, the regional

government informed that in case of a negative scenario, the port, the ferry line, the number of vessels on which should increase in the near future, and the cargo part of Khrabrovo Airport would take over the transport load.

The governor of the Kaliningrad region Anton Alikhanov mentioned that the closure of transit for the Baltic States will be extremely painful, logistics forms 20-30% (depending on the country) of the size of GDP. The transport complex of these countries is focused on the Russian market or transit cargo that goes through the territory of our country. He considers that international obligations to ensure transit to/from the Kaliningrad Region and economic factors for our own economies will be taken into account when making decisions.

In the meantime, the transit movement of goods to the Kaliningrad region through Lithuania continues. The transit of gas to the Kaliningrad Region is also carried out without hindrance, despite the fact that Lithuania has refused Russian gas for itself. It is also known that all Baltic countries have no consolidated position on banning transit for Russian goods.

It is very important to keep in mind a geographical factor. "The New Silk Road" - a multimodal route from Asia to Europe, where Kaliningrad plays the role of an important transit hub, is existed and will not disappear anywhere. And, although there is a certain deceleration in this direction now, the further development will still return to it. Because existed logistics capacities are well developed and they won't appear anywhere, at least not quickly. The alternative southern corridor, through Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, with transshipment on the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, cannot become an alternative, because it is much longer and more expensive.

By information of the governor of the Kaliningrad region Anton Alikhanov Federal authorities' attention to Kaliningrad region has become more in the recent years. There are continuing large-scale investment projects like new roads construction projects. A bridge over the Pregolya River is being built in the regional center, the construction of the Primorsky Ring highway connecting the coastal cities continues, and other major infrastructure projects with federal participation, such as the cargo and passenger port in Pionerskoye.

In conclusion, I would like to mention basic principles of sustainable development in the Baltic sea region, which we have thought our students within the educational network "The Baltic University Programme" since 1991 – international cooperation between countries and all stakeholders' negotiations in terms to achieve a mutual understanding and peaceful problem solving in all spheres of human activities from ecology to economics and politics. Hope that we could overcome all economic hardships and geopolitical problems via a process of the governance and involvement of all interested parties in the discussion, then we try to hear each other, first of all, and try to reach a mutual understanding and a geopolitical sustainability. ■

Expert article • 3262



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KATARZYNA MARIA BARTNIK & ŁUKASZ BIELEWSKI

The Poland-Russia CBC: Great legacy, uncertain future

Expert article • 3263

The 24th of February 2022 was the day when Russia attacked Ukraine and started a war that had seemed unimaginable in Europe of the 21st century. As a consequence, the 24th of February 2022 has also become the end of a number of forms of interregional cooperation between institutions from the European Union member states and from the Russian Federation.

Such situation i.e. sudden termination of formal relations was noticed in the Baltic Sea Region as well. The members of the Euroregion Baltic have decided to suspend the Kaliningrad Region's membership. A similar approach has been taken by the Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation which suspended cooperation with Russian regions for an indefinite period. The Forum of the Parliaments of the South Baltic and its discussion to exclude from further joint works the Kaliningrad Regional Duma is another example of political consequences of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

What one could observe in case of multilateral formats took place in bilateral contacts as well. As for the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (region) of Poland, its authorities informed the Russian counterparts from the Kaliningrad Region the agreement between the two regions signed in 2001 was terminated with immediate effect. An interregional partnership which for years offered space for joint initiatives, high-level meetings and numerous contacts engaging Polish and Russian institutions and organizations has hereby come to an end. One of the perspectives this bilateral relation should be seen from is cross-border cooperation within the programme established by the European Union.

The Poland-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme for the programming period 2014-2020 has been a mechanism that undoubtedly encouraged Polish and Russian actors to work together on tackling concrete problems and obtaining tangible results. It became the successor to the Lithuania-Poland-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. Before the outbreak of the war, Polish-Russian cross-border cooperation was very successful and raised many expectations for the future.

The Programme set out three priorities for cooperation in the Programme territory (Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Pomorskie, Podlaskie regions in Poland and Kaliningrad region in Russia). The first priority ('Heritage') focused on preservation and development of historical, natural and cultural heritage. The second one ('Environment') supported cooperation for clean natural environment in the cross-border area. Within the third priority ('Accessibility'), Polish-Russian projects were expected to work on developing sustainable transport and making the Programme area more accessible.

The largest number of joint Polish-Russian initiatives was implemented under the priority 'Heritage'. With several hundred years of common history of 'East Prussia', the areas close to the border between Poland and Russia have similar cultural heritage. On both sides, there are numerous examples of cultural heritage sites, such as gothic castles and historic monuments. Cultural heritage is the driving force for tourism, which is a very significant economic sector of the north-eastern part of Poland and the Kaliningrad region. For this reason, a range of activities carried out by the projects within the

priority 'Heritage' included infrastructure works in museums, castles and historic buildings, creation of exhibitions, construction of bicycle paths and revitalization of parks.

Many important projects were also implemented under the priority 'Environment'. Environmental problems are specifically cross-border in nature. In particular, joint protection of lakes, rivers and groundwater is of immense importance as its impact reaches far beyond them and can seriously influence, for example, the condition of the Baltic Sea ecosystem. The environmental projects implemented within the Programme mostly concerned water and sewage management. As a result, a number of sewage treatment plants and water pumping stations were built or renovated, and several water and sewage networks were modernized.

The projects that were carried out under the priority 'Accessibility' focused on the improvement of the road system in the Programme territory. As part of the implemented activities, new roads were constructed and a number of road sections that had not met safety standards were upgraded.

Apart from the above-mentioned thematic areas, one of the most important dimensions of the Programme was people-to-people cooperation. Plenty of soft activities and joint events were conducted to integrate the Polish and Russian communities living in the cross-border area. Common implementation of the projects and everyday contacts between the project partners contributed to building trust and friendly neighbourhood.

However, the situation has changed dramatically after the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. For political reasons, many Polish project partners had to cut off cross-border contacts and complete the projects unilaterally. The relationships built over the years of cooperation have been tarnished. In line with the decision of the European Commission, cooperation between Poland and Russia for the new programming period 2021-2027 was suspended, and it seems that even if the war ends and the situation stabilises, it will be very difficult to return to good mutual contacts within cross-border cooperation on the Polish-Russian borderland. ■

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Experience in introduction of cross-border cooperation programmes at Polish-Russian border in years 2014-2020

Expert article • 3264

Cooperation between the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation and Poland's northwestern voivodeships have always depended on foreign policy as well as endogenous factors. The development of cross-border cooperation was observed after collapse of Soviet Union and opening the Kaliningrad region for foreign partners. Important influential factor was also the international cooperation environment and the intergovernmental relations mechanisms that developed in the post-Soviet period in the Russian Federation and in Poland after collapse of Eastern Block. This led to opening new opportunities of introduction and development of the regional and local-level mechanisms of international cooperation. Considerable experience was accumulated in collaboration between the Kaliningrad region of Russian Federation (since 1991) and the northwestern voivodeships of Poland.

This experience can be divided into two distinctive periods. The first one covers the years 1991-2014 when the Kaliningrad region was opened to external contacts and created a new opportunities and tools of development of cross-border cooperation. Important factor was also enlargements of the European Union in 2004, which – apart from negative factors related to the emergence of procedural barriers at the external borders of the EU – brought new financing opportunities for implementation of joint cross-border initiatives with foreign partners. Naturally, entities from Poland's border voivodeships became its principal partners. A crucial event was Poland's accession to the EU, which created new institutional and program conditions for transboundary cooperation with Russia's Kaliningrad region. After 2014, the program format of Polish-Russian border cooperation evolved into a major tool for analysing and assessing the region's relations with Poland's northeastern voivodeships despite the fact, that the political relations of the Russian Federation with the EU, including Poland, have deteriorated.

In budgetary perspective of the EU for years 2014-2020, financial resources were provided to support cross-border cooperation at the external borders of the EU. With regard to the Polish-Russian border, the Poland-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2014-2020 was the main program instrument for supporting cross-border cooperation. It was declared that, in a long-term perspective, the successful implementation of the Poland-Russia program for 2014-2020 will contribute to closer integration of the program territory on both sides of the Polish-Russian border. The program included Poland's Pomeranian, Warmian-Masurian, and Podlaskie voivodeships and

Russia's Kaliningrad region. Its budget totals 62,3 million euro – 41,7 million provided from the EU funds and 20,6 million by the Russian Federation. Grants were allocated for projects aimed at promoting local culture and historical heritage, environmental protection as well as improving transport and communication infrastructure.

The main objective of the Poland-Russia CBC Program 2014-2020 was to support cross-border cooperation in the social, environmental, economic and institutional sphere. The main objective of the Program was development of cooperation in three selected areas (priorities): 1) promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage, 2) environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation and improvement of accessibility to the regions, 3) development of sustainable and climate proof transport and communications networks and systems.

The individual priorities included various types of activities. Priority 1 "Cooperating on historical, natural and cultural heritage for their preservation and cross-border development" regarded to joint initiatives and events on promotion and preservation of local culture, history and natural heritage as well as joint projects concerning preparation and realization of investments in tourist infrastructure and services increasing the sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage in the tourism. Priority 2 "Cooperation for the clean natural environment in the cross-border area" included projects aimed at preservation and sustainable use of natural assets such as parks, water supplies, etc., development of CBC to protect valuable ecosystems and endangered species as well as water resources management in connection with climate changes (floods, droughts, water shortages). In turn, within the priority 3 "Accessible regions and sustainable cross-border transport and communication" projects related to joint investments in the quality and accessibility of the social and economic infrastructure, common development of multi-modal transport systems as well as projects aimed at developing and improving the quality and safety of existing communication links would be carried out.

The program supported the implementation of regular projects that were selected in an open competition procedure. Due to the significant delay in the implementation of the program, only one call for proposals within the framework of three priorities was announced: Heritage, Environment and Accessibility (priority „Border Security" is not implemented). Within the framework of the first priority twelve projects were carried out. The projects were connected, among others, with the development of cross-border tourism, joint actions to share the amber heritage, cooperation for the development of preservation

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of the historical, cultural and natural heritage of the cross-border area as well as the revival of the cultural and historical landscape of the small towns in Russian and Polish areas of the Program.

After 2014, the determinants of Russia's political relations with the West changed significantly, including relations with the Kaliningrad region neighbours: Poland and Lithuania. The indicator of deterioration of relations was not only the suspension of meetings between the EU and Russian leaders, but also the suspension of local border traffic mechanism on the Polish-Russian border and the sanctions war between Russia and the West. In these difficult conditions, Poland-Russia CBC Program 2014-2020 was implemented. Amid a cooling of intergovernmental ties between Russia and the EU, the very fact of launching a new round of CBS programs was a great success. As a rule, joint projects do not have a political dimension but they directly influence the socioeconomic development of border regions. ■

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ARKADIUSZ ŻUKOWSKI & WOJCIECH TOMASZ MODZELEWSKI

The Polish-Russian border region – cooperation?

Expert article • 3265

Taking the political-administrative criterion, the Polish-Russian border region is considered to be two adjacent regions with a common land border, i.e. the Warmia and Mazury Region (Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeship) and the Kaliningrad Region (Oblast) of Russia. The specificity of this border region results, *inter alia*, from the special geopolitical role of the Kaliningrad Region as a Russian enclave and the fact that the Polish-Russian border is at the same time the border of the Russia and NATO (since 1999) and the European Union (since 2004). This essentially raises the importance of the analysis of the political processes occurring there and of cross-border cooperation. The specificity of the Warmia and Mazury Region is its peripherality, as it is located far from the main areas of socio-economic activity of the country.

In 1992, a number of treaty provisions were concluded between Poland and Russia, including a treaty on friendly and good neighbourly cooperation and two agreements on cross-border cooperation, which gave an impulse to the development of contacts in the borderland. In 2001 and 2002 relevant regional agreements were concluded by the Marshal of the Warmia and Mazury Region and the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region as well as the chairman of the Assembly of the Warmia and Mazury Region and the chairman of the Kaliningrad Duma. At the local level, the most intensive cooperation took place between the counties and municipalities closest to the border, which implement specific cross-border projects. Each of the border Polish counties established partnership agreements with the Russian side, for instance: Braniewo with Zielenogradsk and Bagrationovsk, Kętrzyn with Pravdinsk and Kaliningrad. In total, in the Warmia and Mazury Region, a dozen counties and over 30 municipalities have partnership agreements with the Kaliningrad Region partners, and the same number belong to common Euroregions or undertook *ad hoc* informal cooperation.

The cooperation became more dynamic due to the implementation of the Local Border Traffic (LBT) regime in July 2012. The traffic on the common border has increased; e.g., in 2012, 4.7 m people crossed the border (the year before, only 2.3 m), and in 2014, more than 6.5 m people. The research conducted in the Polish border area shows that the greater opening of the border has, among other things: improved the situation on the labour market; resulted in a high level of investment in trade and tourism infrastructure; enabled an increase in revenue from catering and tourism activities and improved the financial situation of households. The importance of LBT for the regional economy cannot be overestimated. In 2015 alone Russians spent about PLN 286 million (about EUR 139 million) in the area covered by the LBT agreement. Polish owners of stores and service outlets (including in the healthcare sector), as well as restaurateurs and hoteliers benefited. In addition, the intensification of contacts in the common borderland has significantly contributed to overcoming negative stereotypes, which is particularly important in the case of such close neighbours.

However, the perception of Russia by the Polish government through the prism of threats caused a reduction in contacts with Russia, including the Kaliningrad Region, and above all was reflected in the suspension of the Polish-Russian local border traffic agreement in 2016. Since then, border traffic has declined; with 3.5 million border crossings in 2018, to 3.4 million in 2019 and only 0.74 million in 2020 (due to also the pandemic Covid-19).

The turning point in Polish-Russian relations, as well as in the discussed border region, was Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The Polish government unequivocally fully supported Ukraine and was a co-initiator of isolation and sanctions against Russia. The same actions applied to the Polish-Russian border region, e.g. the Assembly of the Warmia and Mazury Region terminated the cooperation agreement with the Kaliningrad Duma, the city of Elbląg broke off cooperation with partner cities in Russia and Belarus.

In conclusion, the Polish-Russian border is a special border. On the one hand, it has global significance, performing an important protective function with respect to the EU member states and Russia, and thus its functions depend on geopolitical relations. From the perspective of the European Union, the Kaliningrad Region is not an independent entity of cooperation, but only an element of Brussels' relations with the entire Russia. However, the enclave location of this region makes it stand out in the EU policy, especially in the area of transit, visas and aid programmes. On the other hand, the border was crossed mainly by local communities living in the borderland. Thus, its role in the local dimension was equally important, for example as a factor eliminating the problem of peripherality. The Polish-Russian border region, *inter alia*, due to the common historical heritage (East Prussia) and an important political role, created a potential, although not fully exploited, area of cooperation. But now this is under great question. ■

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Disconnecting the Kaliningrad oblast and new threats from Polish perspective

Expert article • 3266

Since the fall of USSR Polish - Kaliningrad region (Oblast) neighbourhood has been very complicated and only very small fractions of border populations actively collaborated in economics, tourism, cultural or scientific aspects. Till the February 2022 (war in Ukraine) majority of inhabitants of Pomerania as well Warmia & Mazur voivodeships associated Kaliningrad region with contrabanda and trade of fuel, alcohol and cigarettes; Russian consumers in shopping malls; and militarised zones i.e. at Vistula Split. Perception of Kaliningrad in the last 30 years for Polish neighbours focus on military rather than other aspects, because trade or socio-cultural connections were relatively weak (with a peak during a short period of local border traffic zone 2012-2016). On the other hand, Kaliningrad-Königsberg-Królewiec has been important for Russian-German-Polish history of science and culture. I am personally using the Euler (famous mathematician) concept of bridges of Königsberg to demonstrate transmission paths in the course of infectious disease. Many researchers from the University of Kaliningrad named after Immanuel Kant (famous philosopher) have moved to Gdańsk or Olsztyn to increase the scientific and teaching potential of northern Poland. However, official scientific collaboration between the Polish research institutions and Kant University was never established in contradiction to Germany where multiple bilateral agreements were signed. Moreover, cooperation between Pomerania as well Warmia & Mazur voivodeships and Kaliningrad region in public services was also very poor. For instance, there was no coordination in control of ASF (African Swine Fever) and infected wild boars influx into Polish territory from Kaliningrad region in multiple waves.

However, since February 2022 attitude towards the Kaliningrad region among Poles living nearby has changed dramatically. The existing cross-border socio-economic mobility of Russians and Poles was even minimised due to formal and political conditions. Multiple civil (i.e. ports of Gdańsk and Gdynia, oil refinery and Naftoport in Gdańsk, Vistula Split Canal) and military objects (i.e. 22nd Tactical Air Base in Malbork, units in Braniewo or Giżycko of 16th Pomeranian Mechanised Division, 3rd Ship Flotilla In Gdynia) are within range of drones of artillery/short distance missiles from the Russian territory. Kaliningrad region is also an enclave of Kremlin intelligence and could be an operational bases for acts of terrorism on the territory of Poland. Electromagnetic weapons may be used there to disturb communication channels in nearby Baltic regions too. Suwałki corridor is a hypothetical military war theatre as this short strip of land is linking Kaliningrad region (disconnected to a high extent with mainland due to EU sanctions) and territory of Belarus (Russia's ally). However, the conventional invasion from the Kaliningrad region on Poland is extremely unlikely due to the drastic advantage of NATO (and alliances) in the air, Baltic Sea and cybernetic domains. Thus, short distance missiles or drones with biological and chemical agents (forbidden by international conventions) as well as explosive materials

is now the priority of civil and military defence in Northern Poland. Currently food security seems to very important due to perturbation on world's agricultural markets, thus agroterrorism as possible epizootic or epiphytotic (i.e. Vistula delta area is a fertile land) events need to emphasise in the regional preparedness plans. Due to no export of grains from Ukraine and Russia many countries could be in danger of famine. If the war in Ukraine continues till Summer/Autumn 2022, the risk of intentional introduction of plant or animal pathogens (with an important logistical role of the Kaliningrad region) will be even higher. During the first two months of war in Ukraine the security of the Pomeranian and Warmia & Mazur regions has been improved in the area of preventing and combating CBRNE threats. Thus regional Sanitary/Veterinary inspections, Internal Security Agency, hospital emergency departments, fire brigades, Military Centres of Preventive Medicine have been trained for instance with portable diagnostic equipment that could detect biological or chemical agents of concern if they were used by Russians. Acts of agroterrorism being part of hybrid war could be difficult to be proved (especially if performed by agents of useful idiots) and they could be below the threshold of invoking NATO's article 5. For instance Kremlin sponsored ecological or animal right defending organisations can be used to disturb food production or supply chains. Non-conventional act of bioterrorism initiated from Kaliningrad region could implement also so-called "escalate-to-deescalate" strategy too, if Kremlin realises that political aims of war in Ukraine could not be achieved. Considerable concentrated military potential, including short range modern dual-capable missiles launchers and drones (potentially armed with pathogens) that are very likely to omit anti-missile system in Poland or agents of influence already displaced in Poland, the security of the north-eastern Poland depends to a high extent on Kremlin decisions and the Kaliningrad region could be used to achieve political goals. ■



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Kaliningrad and Kant

Expert article • 3267

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is one of the most famous scientists in the world. His issues contributed to the development of physics, astronomy, law, but historically Kant remained a brilliant philosopher who founded a new scientific direction named after him and determined the development of scientific thought for many years.

Philosophical understanding of the current processes is not complete without considering the situation through the prism of Immanuel Kant's theory, and even among modern philosophical trends, Kantianism and the scientific schools based on it occupy a prominent place.

Immanuel Kant was born and lived all his life in Königsberg, the city of the Prussian royal residence, which according to the World War II results, became the part of the Soviet Union named Kaliningrad. In different centuries, other prominent scientists, writers, even astronauts lived here, but in terms of the totality of his influence on the course of world history, perhaps it is Kant who is the most famous inhabitant of our city. It is known that he practically did not leave Königsberg, based his research on the theoretical constructions of facts and their relationships. Probably, the originality of this man, combined with the natural and social features of the area of his residence, created the conditions for the appearance of grandiose works for their time. At the same time, during the period of Kant's life, there were also several significant military campaigns of Prussia, which also affected ordinary residents of the city. Not the last place in this list is occupied by the Seven Years' War, during which the territory of East Prussia was part of the Russian Empire for six years from 1756 to 1762, and Immanuel Kant himself, together with the population of many thousands of Prussia, became a Russian citizen, having sworn allegiance to Empress Elizabeth Petrovna.

Königsberg in the middle of the 18th century was a modern northern European city of 30,000 with developed military and social systems of urban economy. According to the surviving cartographic works, the boundaries of the city passed along the defensive ramparts, and the area of the city was a twentieth of the modern one. In the narrow streets of Altstadt, Lebenicht and Kneiphof, where the famous walk of the scientist took place - "the philosophical path", there were two- or three-story houses in which Immanuel Kant also lived - his father's house, rented apartments during his student studying and teaching at the university, his own house already recognized scientist. Today, these medieval towns fall within the territory of the Centralny, Leningradsky and Moskovsky districts of Kaliningrad, respectively, and are represented by single buildings that have survived from the 18th–19th centuries.

However, many buildings from the time of Kant were rebuilt over the past two centuries, and the surviving pre-war quarters were mainly built after the time of Kant. The city was constantly expanding, rebuilding, and even the modern design of the grave of Immanuel Kant was made only in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the philosopher, in 1924.

The Soviet period of the city's development is characterized by the clearing of rubble formed after the American-British bombardment in 1944 and the storming of Königsberg by the Red Army in 1945, as well as the extensive construction of panel apartment buildings in their

place. According to cartographic estimates, today the central part of Kaliningrad consists of 59% of Soviet-built houses, and the number of pre-war buildings is comparable to buildings after 1991.

Russian construction in the city, especially over the past 15-20 years, differs significantly from Soviet construction in the abundance of architectural elements and a high percentage of retail space, the importance of forms and volumes, the use of modern materials and the imitation of historical styles.

Today Kaliningrad is getting ready to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Immanuel Kant's birth. In 2024, international conferences, exhibitions and festivals dedicated to the great philosopher will be held. Of course, these events, which will be held in the scientist's hometown, will arouse great interest and attention to Kaliningrad. They will allow you to feel the original atmosphere of the city at the junction of times, cultures and traditions, touch the events of the past, when in the 18th century our fellow countryman, a wonderful scientist and a brilliant notionalist, walked around the city. ■

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The Iron Sarcophagus lands over the Kaliningrad region

Expert article • 3268

The Kaliningrad region, located between Lithuania and Poland, was not annexed to the Soviet Union until after World War II. After the collapse of the USSR three decades ago, the Kaliningrad region became a Russian exclave that no longer had a land connection to the Russian mainland.

About 15 years ago, I acted as an expert for the European Parliament on the development of the Kaliningrad Special Economic Zone (a link). It was then hoped that Kaliningrad would become a kind of pilot zone in which EU-Russia integration could be deepened (a link). My view of the development of Kaliningrad was optimistic at the time.

However, the Kremlin's attitude towards Kaliningrad's European integration began to change. President Putin's speech in Munich in February 2007 may have served as a historic watershed. The Kaliningrad region was no longer developed to serve as a pilot zone for Russia's European integration, but the Putin administration sought to integrate Kaliningrad more closely with the Russian mainland. President Putin's background in the KGB and the deep mistrust towards the West that stems from the KGB gradually began to show in Kaliningrad's development.

Despite growing distrust, Kaliningrad is still one of Russia's most foreign trade-oriented regions, as evidenced by the fact that the Kaliningrad region accounts for over three percent of the Russian Federation's total imports, even if the region accounts for only 0.6-0.7 percent of the Russian GDP and population (a link). In addition to the foreign trade orientation of Kaliningrad's economy, the residents of Kaliningrad have traditionally traveled more actively to the European Union than to mainland Russia.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine launched by President Putin in February 2022 will fundamentally change the position of Kaliningrad and its inhabitants. It is likely that the Kremlin-instigated separatism paranoia in Kaliningrad intensifies, increasing control and censorship. Foreign business is also subject to special monitoring. It remains to be seen when Russia will start restricting the travel of its citizens abroad. If this were to happen, it would mean that the Kaliningrad region would become a kind of open-air prison for almost one million Russian citizens living in the Kaliningrad region. In this context, it is worth remembering that in 2016, Poland ended its regional visa-free agreement with the Kaliningrad region following Russia's annexation of Crimea two years earlier.

It seems inevitable that the Kaliningrad region will become a fortress of the Russian army, to which foreigners are less welcome than earlier. Here, it should not be forgotten that the Kaliningrad region was closed to foreigners until the turn of the 1990s. In this respect, Kaliningrad is unfortunately returning to the past.

The closure of Kaliningrad will mean a decline in the living standards of Kaliningrad residents. The living standards of Kaliningraders will deteriorate faster than the Russians living elsewhere in Russia, as Kaliningrad tends to flourish in free cooperation, while in the face of

confrontation, Kaliningrad will become a military stronghold whose economic well-being is of little interest to the Kremlin. The Kremlin is only interested in the standard of living in Kaliningrad to the extent that there is no social turbulence in the region. Although at the moment social turbulence does not seem likely, I believe that Kaliningrad, the Caucasus and Crimea are the most socially explosive regions within Russia's control.

If Putin's invasion of Ukraine caused the Iron Curtain to land over Russia, the invasion would cause an Iron Sarcophagus to land over Kaliningrad. In other words, in the next few years, we will regrettably see Kaliningrad becoming a dead spot in the Baltic Sea region.

We, the citizens of the European Union, did not want this. On the contrary, we tried to warn President Putin several times before his decision to attack Ukraine on 24 February. We warned that the consequence of the full-scale war in Ukraine would manifest on a scale previously unheard of. Russia's success in the Ukraine War has been catastrophic, and the Russian army or troops under it have undoubtedly committed war crimes in Ukraine (a link).

In practice, this means that the West will not find a new constructive dialogue with Russia as long as President Putin is in power. Waiting for a new beginning may take a long time. Sure, the West does not determine who the Russians will elect as their next president in 2024, but on the other hand, the West has no plans to build relationships with those responsible for war crimes in Ukraine.

We failed to integrate Russia and the EU. However, there is still hope after the Putin regime. As I still have some 10 years before my retirement, I hope to have a chance to see a new window of opportunity for cooperation between Russia and the EU. ■



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