

ANALYSIS OF THE FEATURES OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE KALININGRAD REGION AND THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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The paper presents the historic prerequisites and factors that impact the cooperation between the Kaliningrad Region and the Republic of Belarus. The ethnic aspects have been considered as well as the unique geographical location and the status of the Specific Economic Zone that determine the feature of the cooperation. Special attention has been paid to the evolution of the cooperation from the inter-governmental agreement (1999) until nowadays (the COVID-19 situation). The following aspects of the Belarusian-Russian cooperation have been considered: some matters in the field of agro-industrial and fishery complexes; industry, energy, woodworking and pulp and paper industries; culture, education, information exchange and youth policy; construction and housing and communal services; transit, customs issues and transport; economics, trade, mutual legal assistance, exhibition activities and interaction with the structures of the Union State; health care, sports and tourism.

Key words: Republic of Belarus; Kaliningrad Region; cooperation; turnover; exports; imports.

АНАЛИЗ ОСОБЕННОСТЕЙ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА КАЛИНИНГРАДСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ И РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ

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В статье представлены исторические предпосылки и факторы, влияющие на сотрудничество Калининградской области и Республики Беларусь. Были учтены этнические аспекты, а также уникальное географическое положение и статус особой экономической зоны, которые определяют особенности сотрудничества. Особое внимание было уделено эволюции сотрудничества от межправительственного соглашения (1999 г.) до наших дней (ситуация с COVID-19). Были рассмотрены следующие аспекты белорусско-российского сотрудничества: в области агропромышленного и рыбохозяйственного комплексов; промышленность, энергетика, деревообработка и целлюлозно-бумажная промышленность; культура, образование, обмен информацией и молодежная политика; по строительству и жилищно-коммунальному хозяйству; по вопросам транзита, таможни и транспорта; по экономике,

торговле, взаимной правовой помощи, выставочной деятельности и взаимодействию со структурами Союзного государства; по здравоохранению, спорту и туризму.

Ключевые слова: Республика Беларусь; Калининградская область; сотрудничество; товарооборот; экспорт; импорт.

The Republic of Belarus remains the main foreign partner of the Kaliningrad Region (KO) among the CIS and EAEU states.

The unique model of the cooperation is the result of a number of factors. It seems very productive to carry out a comprehensive analysis to present the current state of affairs.

According to the President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko: “The Kaliningrad region is not only an important and promising trade and economic partner. This is one of the geographically and historically closest regions of Russia, Belarusians and Kaliningraders strive for mutually beneficial and fruitful cooperation” [1].

The following factors influence the cooperation of the Kaliningrad region: Historically, Belarusians, along with Russians, formed the core of the population of the Kaliningrad region at the end of the Great Patriotic War and became the second largest ethnic group (immigrants from 8 regions of the BSSR). According to the official data of the 2010 census, the Belarusian diaspora numbered 32,497 people (3.6% of the region's inhabitants), Belarusians are the third largest after Russians and Ukrainians [2].

The areas of permanent residence of Belarusians in the districts of the Kaliningrad Region:

- Pravdinskiy urban district 8.2%
- Svetlovskiy urban district 5.9%
- Gvardeyskiy urban district 4.6%
- Pionerskiy urban district 4.5%
- Baltiyskiy city district 4.1%
- City district "City of Kaliningrad" 3.8%

The active part in the preservation of the national self-identity is taken by non-profit organizations such as the Public organization Regional national-cultural autonomy "Kaliningrad community of Belarusians" and Kaliningrad Regional Public Organization "Belarusian Cultural Society".

Their contribution to the following cultural events and projects should be emphasized:

- within the framework of the project of the Regional National-Cultural Autonomy “Kaliningrad Community of Belarusians”, supported by the Presidential Grants Fund, a set of events entitled “Belarusian Culture: Original. Mystical. Tolerant. ” took place;

- festival of Belarusian culture "White Dew" which has received international status;

- within the framework of the Belarusian holiday of the end of the harvest "Dazhynki", a festive fair "Holy good Bulba, savory Sala and vyaselag Agurka" (a holiday of good Potatoes, tasty Sala and cheerful Cucumber) was held;

- the most significant project that has been implemented over the years of the Belarusian Cultural Society is the erection of the monument to the Belarusian pioneer printer, writer and Renaissance humanist Francis Skaryna in Kaliningrad. This monument was erected in front of the Immanuel Kant University in 2004 but this was preceded by many years of preparatory work: the first initiative to erect the monument was launched in 1995, and the monument was cast in Minsk in the late 1990s.

The exclave position of the Kaliningrad region that necessitates transit through the territory of Belarus for ground access to the main territory of the Russian Federation.

The SEZ regime in the Kaliningrad region, as well as the functioning of a special administrative region on the territory of Oktyabrsky Island (the Kaliningrad region) contributing to the formation of an investment-attractive environment for Russian and foreign investors [3].

Geopolitical tension in the Southeast Baltic region caused by the expansion of the military presence and activity of the NATO countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic that has caused the serious economic downturn in the global and national economies, as well as the closure of the Russian border.

Cooperation of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region with the regions of the Republic of Belarus is based on an intergovernmental agreement of October 14, 1999, the Russian-Belarusian Council for Long-Term Cooperation of the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation with regions, ministries, and government bodies of the Republic of Belarus (RBS) was created. From the Russian side, the Council is headed by the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region, on the Belarusian side – by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, since 2000 its meetings have been held annually and alternately on the territory of each side. It includes the following working groups: on the agro-industrial and fishery complexes; on industry, energy, woodworking and pulp and paper industries; on culture, education, information exchange and youth policy; on construction and housing and communal services; on transit, customs issues and transport; on economics, trade, mutual legal assistance, exhibition activities and interaction with the structures of the Union State; on health care, sports and tourism [4].

The regional government has concluded long-term agreements on cooperation with the regional executive committees of Grodno, Minsk, Brest, Gomel regions. Preparing to sign a cooperation agreement with Vitebsk and Mogilev regions.

Within the inter-parliamentary cooperation, the Kaliningrad Regional Duma signed agreements with the Brest, Grodno, Mogilev Regional Councils of Deputies.

Kaliningrad maintains sister-city relations with Minsk, Brest, Grodno (here the role of the former mayor of the city, deputy of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Aleksander Yaroshuk who has serious interests in cooperation with Belarus) is great.

There is a branch of the Belarusian Embassy in Russia in Kaliningrad, close cooperation with the Representation of the Russian Foreign Ministry in Kaliningrad has been organized.

The public organization of the Regional National Cultural Autonomy “Kaliningrad Association of Belarusians” (represented in the Council for Interethnic and Interfaith Relations of the Regional Government) as well as the Kaliningrad regional public organization “Belarusian Cultural Society” function in the region.

Representatives of the Belarusian diaspora have great influence in the veteran organizations of the Kaliningrad region (former deputy commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vice-Admiral V. Apanovich, until recently – deputy chairman of the Belarusian community).

In the economic sphere:

The largest enterprises with the participation of Belarusian capital carrying out economic activities in the region: “Sodruzhestvo-SOYA” (production and processing of soybeans), Fish Factory “Za Rodinu” (production and processing of fish), K-Potash (production of potash fertilizers).

Belarusian business is widely represented in agricultural production, trade, construction, furniture production.

Dynamics of trade in the Kaliningrad region with the Republic of Belarus in 2015 – 2020

USD mln

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | first half of 2020 |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Turnover | 210,6 | 190,1 | 169,5 | 358,95 | 347,7 | 167,3 |
| Exports | 117,5 | 98,9 | 60,3 | 149,14 | 93,9 | 46,6 |

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | first half of 2020 |
|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Imports | 93,1 | 91,2 | 109,2 | 209,81 | 253,8 | 120,7 |

In 2019, the trade turnover between the Kaliningrad Region and the Republic of Belarus amounted to USD 347.7 million and decreased by 3.1% compared to 2018.

At the same time, Kaliningrad exports amounted to USD 93.9 million and decreased compared to 2018 by 37%, imports from the Republic of Belarus in 2019 increased by 21% and amounted to USD 253.8 million.

At the end of 2019, the share of Kaliningrad's exports to the Republic of Belarus in the total volume of exports to the countries of the independent states was 51.2%, the share of imports from the Republic of Belarus – 84.7% in the total volume of imports of the countries of the independent states.

The basis of Kaliningrad exports in 2019 was the supply of food products and agricultural raw materials – 34% (soybeans, rapeseeds, ready-made or canned fish), chemical products – 25.6% (plastics and products from them), machinery, equipment and vehicles – 24% (ground vehicles, except for railway or tram rolling stock, their parts and accessories).

The bulk of imports from Belarus at the end of 2019 were the supply of food products and agricultural raw materials – 75.2% (soybean oil and its fractions, rapeseed oil, dairy products, bird eggs, natural honey, vegetables and some edible root crops), mineral products – 7.4% (salt, sulfur, earths and stones, plastering materials, lime and cement), wood and wood products – 6.6% (chipboards, wood mass, recycled paper or cardboard), ferrous metals and ferrous products metals – 3.8%, chemical industry – 2.7%.

In the first half of 2020, the trade turnover between the Kaliningrad Region and the Republic of Belarus amounted to USD 167.3 million and decreased by 19% compared to the same period in 2019.

Including Kaliningrad exports amounted to USD 46.6 million and decreased compared to the first half of 2019 by 23%, imports from the Republic of Belarus in January – June 2020 decreased by 17.3% and amounted to USD 120.7 million USA.

At the end of the first half of 2020, the share of Kaliningrad exports to the Republic of Belarus in the total volume of exports to the countries of the independent states was 60%, the share of imports from the Republic of Belarus – 86.5% in the total volume of imports of the countries of the independent states.

The basis of Kaliningrad exports in the first half of 2020 was the supply of food products and agricultural raw materials – 49.1% (soybeans, rape seeds, grain, canned meat products), chemical products – 20.0% (plastics and products from them), machinery, equipment and vehicles – 18.4% (ground transport vehicles, except for railway or tram rolling stock, their parts and accessories, electrical machinery and equipment, their parts).

The bulk of imports from Belarus in the first half of 2020 was the supply of food products and agricultural raw materials – 78.2% (soybean oil and its fractions, rapeseed oil, dairy products, bird eggs, natural honey, vegetables and some edible root crops), timber and products of it – 6.3% (chipboards, wood mass, recyclable paper or cardboard), mineral products – 5.9% (mineral fuel, oil and their distillation products; salt, sulfur, earth and stone, plastering materials), chemical industry – 3.2% (plastics and products from them; other chemical products), ferrous metals and ferrous metal products – 2.6% [5].

Perspectives:

Taking into account the current political situation in Belarus, by the end of 2020 the EU will follow the path of imposing sanctions on it, complicating the situation in the weakened Belarusian economy, creating additional difficulties for the population of the republic. This will push the Republic of Belarus towards further integration with Russia, since the merger of the two economies within the framework of the Union State will allow Minsk to solve many economic problems in the regime of an equal and full partner while maintaining its statehood. Under this scenario, cooperation between the Kaliningrad region and the Republic of Belarus will receive an additional impetus.

In connection with the negative reaction of A. Lukashenko to the support of representatives of the Belarusian IT-industry to Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, as well as protest actions, as well as the likely retaliatory measures of administrative pressure, it is possible that they withdraw the production of software products and assets to the territory of the Kaliningrad region, where there is a sufficiently developed the corresponding cluster, as well as a platform in the form of IKBFU. And Kant. In a similar way, the situation is developing in the areas of low material-intensive production (electronics, assembly of household appliances).

The tourist and recreational sphere of the Kaliningrad region with the construction of hotels on the Baltic Sea coast, with the subsequent expansion of the tourist flow of citizens of the Republic of Belarus to the region, is potentially attractive for the Belarusian business.

In addition, the Belarusian side is exploring the possibility of investing in the construction of the Kaliningrad port complex, organizing container traffic

through the Kaliningrad port (export to third world countries), as well as using the Kaliningrad airport for organizing transit flights to European countries.

Kaliningrad State Technical University carries out long-term cooperation with Grodno State Agricultural University, the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy, State Scientific Institution "The Joint Institute for Power and Nuclear Research – «Sosny», Sukhoi State Technical University of Gomel, Belarusian State Technological University, Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, National Institute for Higher Education, Polessky State University.

We forecast further expansion of cooperation in the field of academic and scientific interuniversity cooperation, youth policy and within the Baltic University Programme.

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BELARUSIAN-NORWEGIAN COOPERATION ON THE ISSUE OF UN REFORM: CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

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The article deals with one of the most relevant topics of today's world politics, which is the United Nations reform. The authors examine the problem through one of the key measures to be taken during the reforming process – the improvement of regional