

**THE ROLE  
OF THE KALININGRAD  
REGION  
IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF RUSSIAN-GERMAN  
RELATIONS**

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*Germany is one of the principal partners of the Russian Federation. The Kaliningrad region plays a significant role in the development of partnership between the two countries, but the existing opportunities for development are not fully exploited. This article analyses the development, current state and prospects of an increasing role of the region in Russian-German cooperation. The authors emphasize the role of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University as one of the leaders in the development of research and cultural links with German universities and research foundations. This publication is based on the authors' presentation at the round table discussion on the cooperation between Russian and German partner regions held on September 23, 2011 in the framework of the 8th International Conference on Transborder Cooperation: the Russian Federation, the European Union, and Norway (September 22—23, 2011, Kaliningrad). The article considers topical issues of Russian-German economic and cultural relations in the Kaliningrad region, which facilitate the development of Russian strategy for the integration of north-western constituent entities into the economic and cultural space of the Baltic region.*

**Key words:** Russian-German cooperation, Baltic region, Germany, Kaliningrad region, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University

Germany is one of the principal partners of Russia in terms of economic, cultural, and research and academic ties. The Kaliningrad region, owing to its geographical position and historical background plays a special role in the Russian-German relations, being outstripped among the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in terms of the volume of mutual connections only by Moscow and Saint Petersburg. But if we take into account a smaller population of the region, in terms of intensity of a number of ties (for instance, per capita foreign trade turnover), the Kaliningrad region ranks first.

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The development of connections between the Kaliningrad region and the German party started only two decades ago, at the very beginning of the 1990s. Earlier, the connections of the region, which was closed for foreign citizens, with German partners were very insignificant. Of regular nature were only academic and cultural contacts within the study of the philosophical heritage of Immanuel Kant.

The prerequisites for extending the cooperation between the Kaliningrad region and German (as well as other international) partners arose in the last years of the existence of the USSR, in 1990—1991.

In June 1990, the city Council of Kaliningrad proclaimed the city open for international citizens; at the end of the year, the new regime was supported by a decree of the Government of the RSFSR; on July 14, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR declared the region an area of free entrepreneurship, which formed the basis for the future “Yantar” free economic zone, and later, the Special economic zone in the Kaliningrad region. In May 1991, the port of Kaliningrad was opened for international vessels. By 1992, the region had been visited by 40,000 German (mainly "nostalgic") tourists; by 1993, 100,000 Germans had visited the Kaliningrad region (it was the peak value, later the number of German tourists decreased dramatically) [4]. Some significant events related to the development of Russian-German cooperation in the Kaliningrad region are shown in table 1.

*Table 1*

**The development of Russian-German cooperation in the Kaliningrad region (1992—2004)**

Year	Event
1992	The Rossbahn construction company is established
1993	The German-Russian house opens in Kaliningrad
1993	The Kaliningrad-Berlin railway connection is opened
1994	Joint celebration of the 450 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Albertina university
1994	The agreement on cooperation between the Kaliningrad region and the Brandenburg Land is signed
1999	The agreement on cooperation between the Kaliningrad region and the Schleswig-Holstein Land is signed
1999	The assembly of BMW cars is launched at the Avtotor plant
2004	German consulate general opens in Kaliningrad

Today, Kaliningrad and the region's towns enjoy cooperation agreements with the German Lands of Brandenburg and Schleswig-Holstein, as well as a number of cities and districts of Germany (table 2). Cooperation embraces official visits and discussions of collaboration within the following principal fields: agriculture, healthcare, education, culture, utilities, interaction of law enforcement agencies and youth organisations, and joint solutions to environmental problems.

Table 2

**Partnership between the city, towns and districts of the Kaliningrad region  
and German cities, towns and districts**

The city, towns and districts of the Kaliningrad region	German cities, towns, and regions
Kaliningrad	Kiel, Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Rostock, Papenburg, Zeitz
Sovetsk	Kiel
Chernyakhovsk	Berlin-Lichtenberg, Kiel, Rostock, Bremerhaven, Hamburg
Gusev	Bielefeld
Bagrationovsk	Verden
Gvardeisk	Rotenburg
Guryevsk	Delbrück
Neman	Preetz
Zelenogradsk	Unterschleißheim
Zelenogradsk district	District Pinneberg
Krasnoznamensk district	District Harburg

The “Yantar” free economic zone regime of the early 1990s offered, *inter alia*, tax preferences for businesses with international participation. Their number was rapidly increasing (mainly through reorganising the extant enterprises into joint ones). By the end of 1994, Germany ranked second (after Poland) in the list of enterprises with international participation — there were 180 Russian-German enterprises. However, the capital invested in them was modest. The largest investment was made into the Rossbahn Russian-German construction company and the Cetruss pulp-and-paper mill.

Today, the volume of German investment (as well as other international participation) into the regional economy is quite insignificant. By the end of the first half of 2011, the cumulative investment from Germany amounted to 33 ml USD, which accounts for less than 4% of the total foreign investment.

As of mid-2011, the most significant enterprises with German participation within the processing industry were as follows:

- OAO Avtotor-Holding Group (assembly of BMW motor cars),
- OOO Grammer-Kaliningrad (clothing manufacture),
- OOO MN Baltika (textile interior details for motor car assembling industry).
- Königsberg upholstered furniture manufacturer,
- Hipp baby food manufacturer.

The volume of Kaliningrad region-Germany bilateral trade was insignificant in the 1990s (see fig.). However, in the 2000s it increased considerably (with the exception of the crisis year of 2009), mainly through importing units and parts for car assembly, industrial and agricultural equipment, meat foods and other consumer commodities. The export to Germany is dominated by oil products and rape.

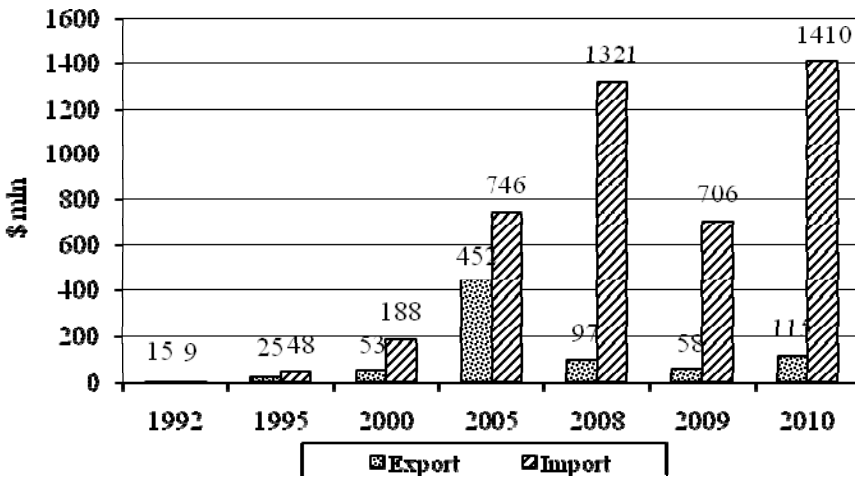


Fig. The trends of Kaliningrad region-Germany bilateral trade, 1992—2010, mln USD

Source: [3].

The region is home to non-governmental organisations assisting the local Russian Germans in maintaining the German language and culture and contributing to the development of humanitarian contacts. The Germans residing in the region are mostly migrants, who arrived in the region from other constituent entities of the Russian Federation and neighbouring countries in the 1990s and 2000s. While in 1989, the regional German community amounted to 1,300 people, at the end of the 2000s (according to the 2002 census) it increased to 8,300 people [1]. More than half of them (4,700 people) reside in rural areas. Many of those involved in farming are supported by German organisations.

Russian and German experts combine their efforts in restoring important cultural heritage objects in the Kaliningrad region. The residents of the region can get acquainted with German culture through cultural and educational projects of the German Goethe Institute. University cooperation, as well as relations between vocational secondary education institutions and schools of the two countries, is actively developing.

Of great social and political significance is the cooperation in uncovering war time burial sites and tending war memorials. The Russian “Memory Watch” project focused on the search for military burial sites of World War II period brings together search organisations from Russia and Germany. The German War Graves Commission with the assistance of the “Military memorials” association reburies the remains of the fallen of World War II and equipment of 9 cemeteries in the Kaliningrad region.

One of the most important centres of Russian-German cooperation is the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University. It has concluded 15 bilateral part-

nership agreements with German universities and institutes. The most active cooperation takes place with Göttingen University, Kiel University, University of Greifswald, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), and DBU (German Federal Environmental Foundation). Every semester 10 German citizens study at IKBFU at different faculties; every year, more than 50 people take part in Russian language schools, conferences, workshops, and field studies. More than 30 IKBFU's graduate and postgraduate students pay academic visits to German universities and research centres every semester; more than 50 people take part in language schools, conferences and workshops in Germany every year.

IKBFU implements joint training projects in collaboration with German partners, namely:

- the “Dialogue” project (organisation of international summer schools);
- establishment of a Russian-German law school;
- the “Intense” programme in collaboration with the University of Greifswald;
- cooperation with German universities within the “Erasmus Mundus” academic mobility programme.

The “Dialogue” initiative, which was aimed at the creation of a research and educational platform between Russian, German, and Polish University (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) was a logical progression to the development of cooperation with Viadrina European University. At the moment, the project can boast a series of workshops and round tables, which brought together graduate and postgraduate students and professors of the three universities. The meeting between the rector of IKBFU, Prof. Adrey P. Klemeshev and the president of Viadrina European University, Prof. Gunter Pleuger in Berlin in September 2011 focused on the discussion of a new stage of “Dialogue” — the creation of a fully equipped project office and conditions for the integration of research results into the training process.

German partners make an important contribution into the implementation of the “EU4U: the establishment of the EU centre at IKBFU” project. Due to its geographical position, the Kaliningrad region plays an important role in Russia-EU relations. The understanding of the importance of these relations becomes a major factor affecting the training and research priorities of IKBFU — the leading research and academic centre of the region. In order to facilitate Russia-EU cooperation, the EU centre aspires to develop as an expert and analytical platform, which promotes professional communication between people from different professional communities. The German party is represented within this project by Göttingen University, Viadrina European University (Frankfurt-on-the-Oder), and Kiel University. This initiative was supported by the German Consulate General in Kaliningrad.

An indicator of the interest in German history, economy, and culture is the fact that 3,000 IKBFU's students learn the German language. A better command of the language is ensured by DAAD lecturers, who have been working at IKBFU for more than 10 years. More than 25 people annually take German proficiency *TestDAF* at IKBFU.

The German language and culture are promoted at IKBFU in the framework of the following events organised with the help of German partners:

- days of Germany at IKBFU (with the support of the German Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in Kaliningrad);
- performances of German theatres at IKBFU;
- lectures of German researchers, writers, and intellectuals.

IKBFU's researchers, graduate and postgraduate students take part in numerous research projects together with German partners. As of 2011, the following international projects with the participation of the Baltic Sea countries (including Russia and Germany) were implemented at IKBFU:

- **INTERFACE** — the development of passenger ferry services in the southern Baltic Sea area. The German participants are Hanseatic city of Rostock, the Warnau public transportation association, the administration of Rostock city port, the Ministry of Transport, Building, and Regional Development of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Regional Planning Association of Middle Mecklenburg (Rostock), and German Scandinavian Lines.

- **Hardwoodsaregood** — support for entrepreneurs in the southern Baltic Sea area: HolzClusterNord, European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs, Forestry Association Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

- **Ecoregion**. The principal project partner is the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

- **AGORA 2.0** — sustainable development of tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The principal partner is the University of Greifswald.

- **BalticGreenBelt**. The principal partner is Kiel University.

The development and implementation of Russia's modernisation strategy and its economy taking the path of innovation require joint research and its practical application. The establishment of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University on the basis of the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia in 2011 and the improvement of its research base create prerequisites for the development of cooperation in the sphere of innovation. IKBFU — with its broad experience in joint Russian-German research and academic ties with numerous German universities — can become an important link in the international cooperation in the field of education, science, and innovation. Russian-German cooperation in the implementation of joint educational and research projects contributes to the integration of the Kaliningrad region and the Russian Federation into the common socioeconomic space of the Baltic region.

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