

Natalia Zaslavskaya

Cross-Border Cooperation between Russia and the European Union in Studies Abroad

Cross-border cooperation between Russia and the member countries of the European Union is a popular topic for foreign researchers. They demonstrate their interest in various aspects of cross-border arrangements along the EU-Russia border. Cross-border activities are usually less dependent on political context. Cross-border cooperation is more practice-oriented form of interaction. It is determined by necessities of the people living along the border. For researchers it is interesting to study it because of multiple projects involved in cross-border cooperation and low political scale of it. Another factor that has influenced the interest of foreign researchers in this field is the stimulation of various regional projects by the European Union, as in the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe. But geographical proximity of the European Union and the Russian Federation makes the EU and its regional projects dependent on Russian policy. Such dependence on the RF stimulates further interest of foreign scholars in the policy of the Russian Federation in Northern Europe, as well as in specific subregions of this part of Europe: in the Baltic Sea region, the Barents Sea region and the Arctic region. The concrete projects of the European Union (the Northern Dimension Framework Program and the Baltic Sea Region Development Strategy) had a particular impact on the development of the research agenda.

This review of foreign studies on cross-border cooperation between Russia and the European and the Northern Dimension is based on publications in academic journals (e.g., Cooperation and Conflict, European Security, Europe-Asia Studies, European Journal of Migration and Law, Geopolitics, The The International Spectator, the Journal of Baltic Studies,

the Journal of Borderlands Studies, the Journal of Contemporary European Studies, the publications of research institutes (for example, the Center for European Policy Studies, the Finnish Institute of International Relations), books and special volumes, reports from the academic conferences, and others. There is an obvious interest to this issue on the part of researchers from the Nordic and Baltic Sea region. Quite often foreign researchers also invite Russian scholars to participate in academic projects dealing with cross-border cooperation. In fact, the research interest grows intensively during the periods of some political initiatives in specific regions: the formation and transformation of the Northern Dimension (in the early 2000s and after 2006), the discussion about the EU strategy in the Baltic Sea region and then its implementation.

This review enables to determine key issues studied by the foreign scholars dealing with cross-border cooperation. Some of the publications are more theoretical, they address the problems of conceptualizing construction of regions and regional development in Northern Europe, the theoretical aspects of the formation and development of borders in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region. But the majority of publications are devoted to various practical aspects of the implementation of cross-border cooperation and influence of the common border on the development of relations between Russia and the member states of the European Union. Some researchers examine problems of formation of the Baltic Sea region. Of course, many foreign researchers study the role of the Russian Federation in the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe, as well as the Russian foreign policy towards the EU member states in the Baltic Sea region and in Northern Europe. Special attention researchers pay to Northern Dimension as an important regional initiative, which became an efficient framework for cooperation between Russia and the EU.

Taking into account multiple foreign publications devoted to the cross-border cooperation between the EU and Russia, it is difficult to refer to all research tendencies, but this review gives an idea about major tendencies demonstrated by the foreign scholars, their research interests and priorities.