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**"The Kaliningrad issue" in relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union: perspective of Russian researchers 1992-2015**

In the study of relations between the Russian Federation and official Brussels, there have always been several questions which have treated with great attention. The aggravation of relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union during the "war of sanctions" 2015-2016 influenced the perception of the "Kaliningrad issue" for both Russian and foreign researchers of international relations. From the perspective of politicians, the region once again began to change its meaning from the "harbor of opportunities" and the "economic center of influence" to "the island surrounded by enemies."

In the articles of the middle and the end of the 1990s we note the dominance of comparative studies assessing differences in the existence of the region in the late Soviet period and summarizing the first 5-6 years of the 1990s, and also taking into account the geopolitical location of the region. So V.Abramov, A.Anisimov, V.Ivchenko and V.Utukina consider Kaliningrad to be "a typical region" in comparison with other regions

of the USSR. The only specific feature was the special militarization of the region. From the political and economic point of view, the dominants of the development of society were representatives of the elite of marine fishing and Kaliningrad mechanical engineering, which formed a common loyalty to the regime. At the turn of 1990-1992, "European" centrifugal sentiments began to form in the region, while the populist threat of secession from Russia was fueled by the economic insolvency of the center. This forms the "Kaliningrad dream": to exercise economic and political independence from Moscow while maintaining cultural and traditional proximity and connectivity with Russia.

The idea of separate political and economic values is also traced in the works of G. Fedorov, Yu. Zverev, V. Korneevets, V. Yegorov of different time, which are based on the comparisons of the past and the present, and suggest in the mid-1990s to abandon the separatist arguments in favor of developing the region's economic independence on the one hand and the formation of a "window of opportunity" for the main Russia to engage in dialogue with the European Union through the mediation of the Kaliningrad region. At the same time G. Fedorov's studies ascertain already in the late 1990s the revival of fears of the border regions, mainly the Baltic States, in view of the continued high militarization of the region.

It should be noticed that in the works of the mid-late 1990s, it is often noted the development of strong ties of the region with Denmark, Sweden and Finland. In the works of V. Korneevets, D. Lanko, K. Hudoley, there is also an indication of the rationale for the phenomenon of the Baltic region and the "participation of Kaliningrad in this phenomenon as an integral part". It also should be mentioned that in the mid-to-late 1990s the Baltic region is more often referred to as a multilateral developing integration process, and later will point to both a developed phenomenon.

The threat of the economic erosion of the region in the framework of integration processes in the political danger of Kaliningrad's separation from central Russia is found in V. Shumeiko, A. Anisimova, A. Songal, A. Kuznetsova. V. Ivchenko points out the weaknesses of the special position of Kaliningrad and seriously returns to the scientific discourse the question of the need for Russia's economic return to the exclave, while it

has not completely dissolved into the business of neighboring countries. In A.Shergunin, we find assessments of the actions of the federal center, when Moscow in 1996 through the MFA office in Kaliningrad almost openly prevented "excessively independent initiatives of local authorities" associated with excessive, in the opinion of the capital, political fraternization with neighboring states, forming dangerous messages for perception of the population greater proximity with Poland and Germany than with Russia. A.Shergunin in this connection enters into a polemic about the possibilities of greater independence from central Russia with T. Zonova, who gives examples of solving the Kaliningrad problem within the framework of the supranational model modeled on the Tyrolean Euroregion, the Pomerania Euroregion. The idea of the Hanseatic Euroregion with the center in Kaliningrad, designed to unite some Russian, Baltic, German and Scandinavian territories, also sounds. Against this background, a number of researchers often hear the notion of a special "political subjectness" of Kaliningrad, which does not seem to violate the sovereignty of Russia, but creates a dangerous perception (N. Koshevskaya, V. Zhdanov, M. Dudarev, I. Melamed and A. Diagilev).

2000 years bring and fundamentally new ideas. So A.Kuznetsov, O.Kuznetsova, V.Mau, S.Medvedev write about the possibility of integration of the Kaliningrad region into EU structures and, obviously, about the formation of some kind of new institutions. And although the basic documents of the EU do not provide for the possibility of gradual integration of the country through the gradual incorporation into the structures of the EU and its individual territories, cooperation with European structures, according to the authors, is possible. L.Karabeshkin adheres to the alternative point of view on the future of Kaliningrad. According to L. Karabeshkin a joint political and economic project of Russia and the EU in Kaliningrad is a possible thing; in this context, the author notes once again the actual possibility of losing control over the formation of the agenda and the adoption of necessary Russia's decisions, which could undermine Russia's sovereignty in the region.

At the same time, in 2000, the visa and transit problem of the Kaliningrad region becomes an important issue in the relations between the EU and Russia. For example, Voynikov V. in his researches notes this event as a positive trend with regard to the visa

issue, but notes a lot of shortcomings. In particular, serious problems with obtaining visas by persons who do not make official trips to the Kaliningrad region. E. Vinokurov that despite close ties between the federal center and the regions of Russia, the Kaliningrad economy is closely linked with Europe and should not be separated from it in an artificial manner. In addition to the fact that the dialogue between Russia and the EU will prevail in deciding the fate of the Kaliningrad region, and the region will remain hostage to the relations between "big" Russia and the "big" EU. Security, especially in the second half of the 2000s, will be a key aspect of the talks, E. Vinokurov echoes E. Abramova.

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the scientific community is actively discussing the question of what the relations between Russia and the EU will be in the future. From the studies of N. Koshevskaya, V. Dykhanov, V. Kolosov, O. Vendina, A. Krasovsky, G. Chmykhov, D. Trenin, T. Bordachev, G. Chmykhov one can make three main scenarios: the transformation of Kaliningrad into a military outpost, the economic competition of the EU and Russia for Kaliningrad against the backdrop of the political "status quo" and the rapidly fading idea of Moscow's interest in the institutional interaction of the EU and Russia for joint development of the region. What characterizes the conclusions are considered both from the economic, political and social sides, where special attention is paid not only to traditional aspects, but also, for example, the social orientation of the youth of the region, visa aspects and transport nuances. It is characteristic that a number of works at the same time speak of competition in the format of "soft power" (A. Makarychev, A. Sergunin), while others focus on the traditional format of competition, with arguments from the sphere of visa policy regulation (G. Kritinin, D. Mironyuk, V. Smirnov), scientific and cultural interaction (G. Fedorov, M. Gorodkov, I. Zhukovsky), transport and energy dialogue (T. Romanova, L. Karachurina, N. Smorodinskaya, M. V. Mkrtchyan).

The crisis of 2014-2016. encourages the authors to look for more obvious forms of interaction, however, most authors assume that interaction slows down and does not take constructive forms, which is obviously connected with "the instability of the legal environment in Russia, the lack of mechanisms for financial support for energy saving projects and a lack of political assistance" . And the new "Kaliningrad Europluralism", as

perhaps the most interesting scenario for finding a special status for the region, dies before it has time to start properly.