

SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT



Natalia Klimenko

THE TERRITORIAL COHESION AS THE BASIS FOR A BALANCED TERRITORIAL POLICY IN THE KALININGRAD REGION



The territorial cohesion concept became a key priority of the European spatial development policy due to the growing awareness of the role of geography in ensuring sustainable regional development. The article is focused on the way of adapting this concept to the Kaliningrad region as a foundation for a sustainable spatial development policy in the context of the EU and the Baltic Sea Region cohesion policy.

Key words: regional development, spatial policy, territorial cohesion, sustainable development, Kaliningrad region, Baltic Sea Region, European Union.

The analysis of development of principles, content, and instruments of regional policy carried out by European countries at least over the last two decades, shows a growing trend towards the increasing role of territorial conditions and geographical factors in the development of plans and strategies for balanced regional development.

One of the major international trajectories of spatial economics development is the so-called "new economic geography" (NEG) formulated by the American economist Paul Krugman, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 2008 (for his works on international trade theory and NEG). Research in the field of NEG contributed enormously to the arising interest in geographical aspects of economic development. There occurred a "rediscovery" of the role of space in economy. It is worth noting, that, for example, the 2009 World Bank's annual report on global development was entitled *Reshaping economic geography* and was dedicated to the reconsideration of discussion on urbanisation politics, territorial development, and regional integration.

This tendency also affected the changes in European politics of spatial development after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty¹ by EU countries in December 2009. Until then, according to the *European Spatial Development Perspective* of 1999 and the *Territorial agenda of the EU* of 2007, the common European principles, goals and objectives for balanced spatial development had

¹ The Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community is an international agreement that amends the two treaties, which comprise the constitutional basis of the European Union (EU). The Lisbon Treaty was signed by the EU member states on 13 December 2007.



been implemented in the legal framework and according to the practices followed in each individual country. In other words, European space was divided for the purposes of planning and development predominantly on the administrative territorial principle, while common goals and objectives differed substantially both in the implementation mechanisms and in the vertical and horizontal coordination of programme initiatives at national levels. The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty foregrounded the idea of territorial cohesion. Cohesion policy resting on the principles of geographical determinism implies a greater focus on local socioeconomic and environmental conditions, as well as the vertical and horizontal coordination of spatial development plans in the identified relatively cohesive macroregions on the basis of formulation of a special macroregion strategy for each of them. Today, six macroregions are distinguished in Europe; for two of them (the Baltic and Danube regions), macroregional strategies for spatial development have already been developed (fig. 1).

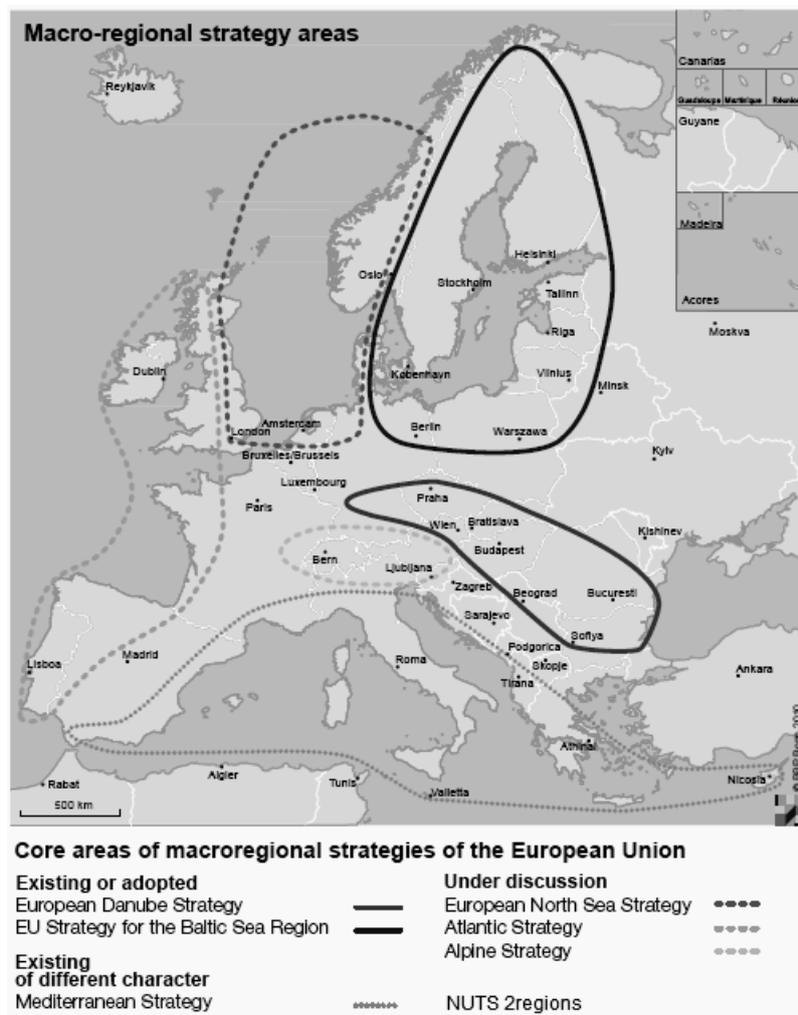


Fig. 1. Macroregional strategy areas [5]

The conditions for implementation of the above principles are formulated in the Mid- and long-term strategy for the socioeconomic development of the Kaliningrad region² [3] and the Programme for the socioeconomic development of the Kaliningrad region for 2007—2016³[2], and the Comprehensive territorial scheme of urban planning of development of the Kaliningrad region and its district until 2030 (CTS)⁴ [4]. According to these strategic documents, the goal of spatial development of the Kaliningrad region is to raise the living standards to those enjoyed in the neighbouring European countries, to improve the competitiveness of the Kaliningrad region in the Baltic macroregion, and to create an efficient system of state management of regional development processes.

The CTS formulates the following objectives for the spatial development of the Kaliningrad region implemented through the improvement of settlement system, planned zoning and functional organisation of the region, and the development of regional engineering and transport infrastructure:

- facilitation of transnational integration of the region with the Baltic region state;
- creation of balanced regional settlement systems;
- improvement of the living environment in peripheral rural districts of the region, overcoming the narrow specialisation of regional towns' economies;
- development of a network of natural and cultural landscapes, formation of large integrated natural zones — centre of the region's environmental stabilisation;
- development of regional tourism, infrastructure and creation of conditions for its integration in the tourism infrastructure of the Baltic region;
- development of an effective systems of protection of the aquatic environment and coastal areas of the Vistula and Curonian Lagoons from anthropogenic stress;
- technical upgrade of transport communications and public transportation systems, reduction in the environmental impact of transport;
- development of energy supply systems ensuring long-term energy and environmental safety of the region;
- improvement of social services system and development of residential construction.

Moreover, the strategic and spatial planning documents of municipal level are aimed mostly at the development of social sphere within the authority of municipal bodies.

In the course of administrative reforms (related to the adoption of the federal law on general principles of municipal local self-governance organisation in the Russian Federation of October 6, 2003), the spatial structure of local self-governance formed in the Kaliningrad region only in 2009, being sometimes

² Approved by the Government of the Kaliningrad region on March 9, 2007.

³ Adopted by the Kaliningrad regional дума on December 25, 2006 and approved by the governor of the Kaliningrad region on December 28, 2006.

⁴ CTS was approved by the administration of the Kaliningrad region on October 24, 2004. In 2007, a project of the spatial planning scheme for the Kaliningrad region was developed; however, it also requires adjustment to the changing socioeconomic conditions.

incompatible with the major strategic priorities and regional development trajectories formulated in earlier approved documents of the regional level. Since, according to the new Urban planning code of December 29, 2004, major authority in spatial planning and development is vested in municipal bodies; their poor agreement with the regional level document decrease, to a degree, the efficiency of implementation of territorial cohesion policy.

In order to increase the efficiency of regional policy implementation in the Kaliningrad region, it is important to ensure a balanced spatial organisation of society (economy, social aspects, nature management) at all territorial administration levels — local (municipal), regional, federal, and international ones.

Territorial organisation of society (TOS) is an interdependent combination and functioning of the systems of settlement, economy and nature management, information and utility systems, administrative and territorial organisation and management. To a great extent, TOS depends on the stage of socioeconomic development. At this stage, the most acute problems of socioeconomic development are those relating to the flaws of its spatial organisation, namely:

- inefficient and often hardly rational use of a significant part of the region's territory for the socioeconomic development purposes;

- the uses of regional territory is not adjusted to the goals and objectives of sustainable development, territorial policy is almost nonexistent in the region;

- the centre-periphery differences in living standards are widening, which is accompanied by the degradation of rural territories and smaller towns;

- increasing incompatibility between nature management and land use, which entails the decrease in investment attractiveness of territories, real estate values, efficiency of industry-specific programmes and development plans, as well as the increase in capital costs of infrastructure development of territories, expenditures on environmental protection initiative implementation and territory revitalization, etc;

- decrease in the attractiveness and competitiveness of the region in terms of investment into manufacturing and tourism development in view of the absence of a comprehensive vision of regional development or a strategy for the active promotion and positioning of the region, poor coordination of territorial administration bodies of different level, industry-specific programmes and development plans;

- the region is becoming "isolated" from the Baltic region-Russia communication space, the situation is aggravated by the problems of freight and passenger transit, regional energy safety, and geopolitical factors;

- the gap between the living standards in the region and neighbouring countries is widening, which is fraught with an increase in social tension in the region.

Urban planning is of pivotal importance for the development of an effective spatial strategy for the development of the Kaliningrad region on the basis of sustainable development principles, the creation of favourable living environment, the harmonisation of economic, social, and environmental interests. At the same time, the situation, which has developed in this sphere, hampers the effective solution of the problems of territorial and economic planning and management.

5—6 years ago, the Kaliningrad region was still one of the top three regions in terms of spatial planning development, being the first one that drew

up and approved a Comprehensive territorial scheme of urban planning (CTS). This scheme was awarded the first prize of the Federal agency of construction, housing and housing services as the best project in the field of urban planning in the Russia Federation at an international exhibition in Moscow in 2004. However, the formally approved document is not implemented in practice.

The project of a general layout for Kaliningrad recreation area was developed in view of the basic provision of CTS; however, it was not approved. General layouts for a number of towns were presented later.

The administrative reform, which started in 2005 and completed in the Kaliningrad region only in 2009, suspended the process of preparation of spatial planning documents. As a result, today, none of the levels of territorial administration can boast a full package of approved spatial planning documents complying with the requirements of the current Urban planning code, while in all other constituent entities of the Russian Federation, this process has been completed at all levels from municipal and urban districts to rural and urban settlements.

The spatial planning documents, which are being prepared at the moment, are hardly compatible with the strategies for the development of the Kaliningrad region and its municipalities. They are not coordinated at all levels, lack actual indicators of development prospects. For example, in the project of spatial planning scheme, as a result of the scientifically unjustified 2.7 times increase in the regional population, the required number of new preschool and secondary education institutions is defined as 51 for the Guryevsk district alone.

The adopted Kaliningrad land use rules often contradict the city's general layout, which is considered a violation and requires rectification according to the Urban planning code of the Russian Federation. At the same time, most municipalities have neither the land use nor construction rules, which will not allow municipalities issue construction permits from 2012.

The solution to the problems of this key area of regional policy requires the following initiatives.

Firstly, it seems reasonable to formulate promptly an action programme on the preparation of spatial planning documents, as well as land use and construction rules on the basis of an integral and scientifically justified approach to spatial planning issues, which must be harmonised with the system of documents on strategic planning and socioeconomic development of the region and its municipalities. Of special importance is the creation of organisational and legal framework for the harmonisation of processes of spatial planning and development of municipal districts and individual settlements, including the organisation of tendering procedures. The first priority initiatives of the Programme should include the rectification of the current Comprehensive territorial scheme (CTS) in view of the changing socioeconomic conditions and the requirements of current legislation.

Secondly, within the key areas of regional urban planning policy, special attention should be paid to the strategy for spatial development of towns (of all regional urban areas, only Kaliningrad falls into the category of cities), which serve as "provincial capitals" — centres catering for large territories and rural settlements. From the strategic perspective, it implies the transition from the unipolar development strategy to a multipolar one. In view of the limited demographic, economic, and financial potential of towns and municipalities, in this

area, an important role is played by the development of intermunicipal cooperation and rural-urban partnership.

Thirdly, in view of the tourism potential of the region, it is necessary to launch initiatives aimed at the comprehensive development of regional tourism and hospitality infrastructure integrated in the related systems of the neighbouring countries, first of all, Lithuania and Poland.

Fourthly, the geopolitical position of the Kaliningrad region emphasises the need for its integration into the processes of spatial development and planning with the neighbouring countries, the Baltic macroregion, and North-western federal district. At the macrolevel, it implies a more active participation of the Government of the Kaliningrad region in the intergovernmental panel of spatial planning in the Baltic region states (VASAB 2010). The spatial planning commissions of the Russian-Polish and Russian-Lithuanian councils on cross-border cooperation should pay attention to the development schemes for the spatial development of Kaliningrad region's border territories.

Fifthly, the formulation of regional urban planning policy should foreground the improvement of territorial and planning organisation and the architectural profile of Kaliningrad. Chaotic, ill conceived in terms of transport infrastructure, scale and style development hampers the improvement of the city's image. It is important to study the experience of other Russian cities (Moscow, Yaroslavl, etc) of development of tourist site development schemes, as well as the international experience of revitalisation of historic centres (Poland, Germany). The employment of an efficient methodological framework should be extended to the process of planning and development of regional towns, almost all of which are historic sites.

Sixthly, the spatial planning documents, which are being prepared at the moment, must be harmonised with the Kaliningrad environmental protection scheme and the environmental safety objectives (including the specially protected natural site regime), and rational nature management.

Seventhly, the implementation of adopted programmes and development plans must be controlled more strictly, which includes a number of political decisions. So, the bilateral agreement of the joint use of the Curonian Lagoon was signed more than two years ago, but the process of its implementation has not taken place yet (there are neither moorages, nor crossing points for servicing yachts). There is a need for a procedure that would ensure the introduction of adopted decisions.

From the theoretical perspective, the ideas of territorial cohesion are not new for Russia. Its theoretical principles were popularised as early as the Soviet times, mostly within the concept of the unified settlement system (B. S. Khorev, D. G. Khodzhaev, A. V. Kochetkov, etc) based on the principles of vertical hierarchy and horizontal cooperation of settlements of different taxonomic ranks and functional types. The development of unified settlement system was aimed at ensuring access to basic social services, the decrease in peripheral territory isolation and the increase in their competitiveness, and balanced regional development. However, in practice, the stimulation of "development poles" was considered more cost-beneficial, since average development indicators would be higher, and the profit generated could be allocated to less developed regions. In effect, even the latter did not take place, which contributed to the centre-periphery disparities.

Over the last two decades, these conceptual provisions have been adopted to the modern conditions and the goals and objectives of regional development and territorial administration. In the Kaliningrad region, this process relates mostly to the coordination of the EU and Russian regional policies in the context of strategy for the Baltic region development. The most significant achievements in this area were the development of the Kaliningrad regional landscape programme by the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in collaboration with the Technische Universität Berlin (Germany) at the request of the administration of the Kaliningrad region (the development of an environmentally-friendly and spatially balanced nature management strategy, 2005), the implementation of the Interreg IIIb East-West window project (development of rural-urban partnership, 2007—2009), etc. However, the implementation of this and many other approaches to regional nature management and land use is hampered, to a great degree, by legal, institutional, and economic circumstances.

Despite the priority status of harmonisation of spatial development, the Kaliningrad region is still poorly integrated in the spatial planning and development infrastructure of the Baltic region and the EU due to the absence of common spatial development plans for border territories devised with the neighbouring countries. The reduction in intraregional spatial disparities is complicated by the difficulties of transitional period, demographic features, transit conditions, and geopolitical and other factors.

References

1. *Dedkov, V. P., Fedorov, G. M.* 2006. Prostranstvennoe, territorial'noe i landshaftnoe planirovanie v Kaliningradskoj oblasti: monografija. Kaliningrad.
2. *Programma* social'no-jekonomicheskogo razvitija Kaliningradskoj oblasti na 2007—2016 gg. 2007. In: Klemeshev, A. P., Mau, V. A. Strategii razvitija Kaliningradskoj oblasti. Kaliningrad, pp. 401—423.
3. *Strategija* social'no-jekonomicheskogo razvitija Kaliningradskoj oblasti na sredne- i dolgosrochnuju perspektivu. 2007. In: Klemeshev, A. P., Mau, V. A. Strategii razvitija Kaliningradskoj oblasti. Kaliningrad, pp. 423—459.
4. *Logistika*. [Postanovlenie administracii Kaliningradskoj oblasti ot 24 dekabrja 2004 g. №600 «Ob utverzhdenii osnovnyh polozhenij Territorial'noj kompleksnoj shemy gradostroitel'nogo planirovanija razvitija territorii Kaliningradskoj oblasti i ee chastej na period do 2030 g.»]. [online] Available at: <http://www.logistics.ru/9/16/i20_21711p0.htm> (Accessed 23 January 2001).
5. *Ahlke, B., Perner, A., Schön, K. P.* 2010. The future of European spatial development policy. Research review. Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development. N 2 / December 2010, pp. 2—3.
6. *Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung (BBSR)*. [The European policy of territorial cohesion IzR 8.2010, Ed.: BBSR]. [online] Available at: <http://www.bbsr.bund.de/cln_016/nm_139382/BBSR/EN/Publications/IzR/2010/Issue8.html> (Accessed 20 January 2010).

About author

Dr Natalia Klimenko, deputy director of the Institute of the Baltic Region, Associate Professor, Department of Socioeconomic Geography and Geopolitics, Immanuel State Kant University of Russia.

E-mail: natklim@mail.ru