

DISCUSSION CLUB



Vadim Smirnov

TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE 'KALININGRAD ISSUE'



This interview with two former special presidential representatives for the Kaliningrad region (Dmitry Rogozin, representing the Russian party and Gediminas Kirkilas, representing the Lithuanian party) recounts the EU-Russia negotiations on the Kaliningrad region and the enlargement of the European Union in the early 2000s. The interview provides an important assessment of the negotiations and their results and explains for the first time the role of individual European states and politicians in the 'Kaliningrad issue'. These facts allow the reader to understand and compare two different — Russian and Lithuanian — points of view.

Key words: Kaliningrad region, visa regime, European Union (EU), Lithuania, negotiation.

Dmitry Rogozin: "IN CASE OF KALININGRAD, WE OUT-PLAYED THE EU ON ITS HOME FIELD".

At the end of May, it was ten years since the joint statement, so important for the Kaliningrad region, had been signed after the Russia-EU summit. The document placed emphasis on a mutual readiness to discuss “the impact of future [...] enlargement on Russia’s trade and economic interests as well as the country’s special interests in the Kaliningrad region”. Then, over several years, the western-most region of Russia was the focus of attention of both Russian and EU leaders. The negotiations on the impact of the EU enlargement took a few years. One of the officials responsible for conducting the negotiations on the Russian side was Dmitry Rogozin, Special representative of the President of the Russian Federation for the Kaliningrad region (currently, he is a permanent representative of Russia to NATO).

— Mr. Rogozin, what was the position of the EU on Kaliningrad at the start of the negotiations? How did it change towards the end?

— In spring 2002, after the May Russia-EU summit, it became evident that the proposals on Kaliningrad formulated by the Russian side were not acceptable for the EU and Lithuania. One of the "peculiarities" of the negotiations was that Lithuania was only preparing to accede to the EU, and a separate negotiation with that country was also necessary. It was also necessary to calm down and shape the public opinion in Russia and the Kaliningrad region in particular, because it was, let us put it like this, in an ‘agitated’ state.

Then, we were being persuaded to "accept reality". And the reality was the introduction of a new Lithuanian visa for all types of transit — by train or by car — for the residents of both mainland Russia and the Kaliningrad region from January 1, 2003. In return, we were promised — there was no official statement, though such ideas were aired — that, in the short term, Lithuania would be ready to open an additional consulate and issue visas for everybody interested in obtaining one. I made a simple calculation and understood that it was a bluff, because it was simply impossible. Moreover, if we imagine that a simplified regime of obtaining transit visas — not the Schengen ones, as it was speculated then — had been established for Kaliningraders, it would not have brought about the same changes in the Lithuanian visa policy for other citizens of Russia. So, residents of other regions of Russia would have had to travel to Kaliningrad via Moscow or Saint Petersburg, apply for a visa at the Lithuanian embassy, or a consulate, pay 20—30 euros, and spend several days in the capital waiting for the visa to be issued. In short, it would have been a deadlock. The EU and Lithuanian proposals were not acceptable."

— **What was done to change the position of the western partners?**

— When I came to office, I formed a team of intellectuals ready to work on a voluntary basis. First of all, we scrutinized the Schengen legislation, the so called *acquis communautaire*, particularly the points that embraced deviations from the general Schengen approach. It was the basis of my work, which consisted of two stages. The first one was the proposal of President Vladimir Putin to the leaders of the EU and its member states to abolish visas in general. And, as a temporary decision, to apply a scheme that would not imply visas per se (i. e. would not require a visa in the passport) but would take into account the obvious intent of Lithuania not to let onto its territory those put on the country's "stop-list". In other words, this decision affected just tens of people on the stop-list rather than millions of decent law-abiding citizens who did not violate any rules or laws on the territory of Lithuania. Moreover, we ourselves were responsible for monitoring the transit via Lithuania, as this "visa gap" became a let out for many Chechen rebels and their families: a pull of the train emergency brake — and a Basayev's militant may vanish into thin air. Even a half-legal transit centre was organised for them in Vilnius, I am sure, the authorities were aware of it.

In view of the humanitarian situation, on which we were trying to base our argumentation, we managed to prolong the internal passport regime for a year; as you remember, the internal passport was sufficient to cross the territory of Lithuania. Although it was a clear deviation from the Schengen agreements, the European party had to do it. Furthermore, I obtained the consent of the Lithuanian party for the free transit of children if accompanied by parents in case the parents' internal passports have the photos of the children. Earlier, it had been forbidden. At my request, all Kaliningraders got an opportunity to obtain an international passport. The passport printing house worked three shifts and provided the residents of the region with the document necessary for international travel. President Putin instantly reacted to every proposal of mine and paid attention to the details of the negotiations, which guaranteed its success.



In November 2002, the Russia-EU summit was held in Brussels, where the decision on the Kaliningrad region was reached. The atmosphere at the summit was very nervous. Putin stopped the meeting demanding that the main negotiators — Christopher Patten, the European Commissioner for External Relations, Sergey Razov, deputy Minister of foreign affairs (today he is the ambassador to China), a representative of the Danish prime minister and I — leave the meeting and perfect the final document. We were advancing arguments for an hour and a half. And Patten agreed with all our amendments and proposals. In particular, with the introduction of the mechanism of the facilitated railway transit document, issued free of charge. A citizen of Russia just bought a ticket at any railway ticket office and could use it the next day. During those 24 hours, the Russian and Lithuanian railways exchanged information on passengers, and only in case of concerns of the Lithuanian side regarding a certain passenger, the Russian (not Lithuanian!) authorities notified them of the impossibility of transit and suggested an air connection. In practice, such limitations affected just few Russian citizens, while millions of our compatriots got the opportunity of almost free transit.

These exhausting negotiations put Patten on edge. He insisted that, anyway, the visa regime should be introduced, because the train was so slow that all Kaliningraders would jump off it. I suggested that Patten try to jump off the train at this slow speed himself and make sure that it was not that easy. And if he had landed safe and sound, I would have left the negotiations and admitted my defeat. But Patten did not dare. So, in an hour and a half we rejoined the meeting. I reported to the President that all the issues he had addressed had been settled. I believe it was a great success. In those years, it was a tangible practical result, when we outplayed the European Union on its home field, reaching a very important compromise and resolving the situation.

— **Nevertheless, not all decisions reached in Brussels were implemented. For instance, the 'visa free' train to Moscow, which would be designed to pass the Lithuanian territory at a high speed without stops, was never launched...**

— Yes, I have some regrets now. As the "Kaliningrad issue" lost the special attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and became a routine, very important elements disappeared from the document we successfully fought for in November 2002. In particular, I agreed on the launching of high-speed visa-free non-stop train routes from Kaliningrad to Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Europeans suggested that we submit the feasibility study in 2004—2005 to settle the financing issue. As a result, nobody seemed to need it. I am afraid that even the Russian party lost its interest in this project, because by then, the agitation had been over. I regret it very much and think it was a mistake of both the federal and Kaliningrad authorities. This important item of the agreement should not have been lost.

Let me remind you, that President Putin supported our idea to open a ferry route across the Baltic Sea. Maybe, it would not have played an important role in alleviating the transit problem, but, as a point of negotiations, it was very important. Furthermore, the extension of the runway in Khrabrovo airport was commenced on our initiative. If there had been a threat to the

visa-free railway transit, it should have been compensated for by an increase in the number of flights, the creation of an "air bridge". It would require the extension of the runway so that it could handle larger aircraft of the IL-96 type. Given its initial size, the transit volume would have required up to 80 aircraft of the Tu-154 type per day.

The most complicated issues came next — practical implementation of the agreement reached. The EU presidency passed from Denmark to Greece. The latter gradually started to go back to the earlier agreements. Most of the spring 2003 I had to spend on securing the adequate implementation of the signed document and adopting a number of important documents promised to Lithuania — the agreements on the border and readmission. It was the right thing to do. How can we speak about the transit across the border if the border has not been officially recognised? Nevertheless, I had to face criticism of different factions in the State Duma. I still remember, 242 deputies voted in support. To be honest, I put much blood and sweat into it. But I'm sure it was the right thing to do.

I remember how the transit was launched. I got on the train and took four European officials with me. And, of course, as it often happens in Russia, the "human factor" came to the fore! Some railway employees working at ticket offices ignored the instructions and were selling tickets to Kaliningrad by the old rules, i. e. without the required facilitated transit document. As a result, at the Belarusian-Lithuanian border, Lithuanian border guards took several dozens of Russian passengers off the train. Then I got off the train myself and discussed the issue with the Lithuanians. My Lithuanian colleague — Gediminas Kirkilas, Special representative of the President of Lithuania — was also there. He immediately contacted President Brazauskas and the passengers were allowed to get back on the train. Such "hitches" were happening during the first three days when the new rules came into force, but then everything settled down." "I reported to the President almost every week, and even every day during the first days. I got more than one lock of grey hair solving the Kaliningrad issue. But I fell in love with the region and still feel devoted to it.

— **Mister Rogozin, during the negotiation with European partners, did not you have an impression that some of your colleagues wanted to play a "passing move" aimed to gradually separate the Kaliningrad region from Russia?**

— As they say, I do not want to point my finger at anybody... But I had some information that, in the EU, a number of "political players" considered the Kaliningrad situation an occasion to stimulate the separatist attitudes in the region. To present it as if the EU wanted to give Kaliningraders special rights, but Russia laid hold on it. Of course, everybody understood that there was such a game and tried to take it into account.

— **At the same time, some information about nuclear weapons in the Kaliningrad region appeared in American media. The repercussions were enormous. Was it just a coincidence?**

— It was related to several issues. The isolation of the Baltic fleet, the obstacles to the upgrading of the fleet's arms and military equipment in order

to dislodge the real defence potential from the region — all this did take place. We should not lie to ourselves. Such 'humanitarian situations' are often used to expedite the implementation of requirements concerning 'hard' security.

— **There is an opinion that the "Kaliningrad issue" was, to a great extent, settled due to the support of the leaders of the countries of the "old" Europe — quite important, for instance, was the support of Italy — which had a more constructive attitude towards Russian initiatives than the "newcomers" like Lithuania and Poland.**

— On the instructions of the President of Russia, before the summit in Brussels, I met the leaders of almost all EU countries. I was received by Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, Dominique de Villepin in France, Jose Aznar in Spain and others. The friendliest welcome I got, of course, was in Italy. Mr. Berlusconi took our side and was highly critical of the Danish party. Denmark, as I mentioned earlier, presided in the EU then; throughout the negotiations, Denmark was represented by the then prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Currently, he is Secretary General of NATO. Recently we were talking about those negotiations. He said that, for a long time, he had considered me a tough negotiator.

Everybody had a different role. Germans supported us, but due to obvious reasons, did not interfere. Kaliningrad — the former Königsberg — is a sensitive issue for them. But the France, Spain, Italy, as well as the Greece, did lend their support to us, and, of course, I am grateful to them. The Polish party behaved improperly. President Kwasniewski immediately stated that he would not participate in the negotiations on transit, because it would remind the Polish of the SS echelons, which went, waving flags, through the Polish corridor to East Prussia. I said that I am grateful to him as to a former Komsomol member for his straightforwardness. The Nordic countries took the most radical position.

— **But why the Nordic countries?**

For them, the interests of the Baltic States are of great importance. There is an informal division of responsibility: Denmark is in charge of Lithuania, Sweden — of Latvia, and Finland — of Estonia. And they acted as if they were afraid that every achievement of Russian diplomacy in this context would jeopardise the interests of the young democracies of the Baltic Sea. It was the time when Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were preparing to accede to the EU, everything was complicated. I tried to persuade the ex-president of Finland Martti Ahtisaari to play the role of a mediator, but he straightforwardly told me that he would not help me with the Kaliningrad issue.

— **It reminded me of an article in the issue of the "Danish Politiken" that came out right after the November Russia-EU summit, where the decision on the Kaliningrad region was reached. The article created a clear impression that the EU politely outdid Russia.**

The truth is that Denmark did not have the crucial influence on the negotiations. Right before the Russia-EU summit, there was a terrorist attack on the Dubrovka theatre. At the same time, in Copenhagen, the Danish authorised the Congress of the Chechen people. We demanded its cancellation, but

all was in vain. Then I suggested to Vladimir Putin that he should call off the visit to the Russia-EU summit in Copenhagen. And they had to rapidly organise the summit in Brussels. The Danish party felt offended. So, they decided to put a brave face. I am absolutely sure, it was us who 'won' the negotiations. I am proud of our work, whatever they say.

* * *

Gediminas Kirkilas: "RUSSIA SHOULD OPEN KALININGRAD TO EUROPE".

Gediminas Kirkilas is a famous Lithuanian politician. He, like his Russian colleague D. Rogozin, dealt with the "Kaliningrad issue" during Lithuanian accession to the EU. Afterwards, G. Kirkilas became Minister of Defence and, later, Prime Minister. He stepped down as Prime Minister in 2008, but did not leave politics: firstly, he was the leader of the Social Democratic Party, and now is an active parliamentarian, a member of the Lithuanian Seimas. Exclusively for the "Baltic region", he gave an interview, in which he did not only recall the negotiations on Kaliningrad transit but also shared his opinion on the role of the Kaliningrad region in Russian-Lithuanian relations and its position in the Baltic region.

— Mister Kirkilas, could you, please, tell me about the period when Lithuania was preparing to accede to the European Union. How did you come to the decision to take into account the Kaliningrad aspect of the EU enlargement?

— Lithuania's close relations with Kaliningrad were established long before those negotiations. One of the first meetings I participated in took place in Nida in 1997, when members of Seimas met deputies of the Kaliningrad Regional Duma. We, in particular, decided to establish a common parliamentary assembly. It became the basis for our cooperation, a serious groundwork.

As Lithuania's accession to the EU was approaching, to be honest, there were different opinions on the Kaliningrad issue, including radical ones — 'there is nothing for us to do there, it will be an obstacle to the accession to the EU, we will not solve anything, let Russians handle the transit problem themselves, let them travel through Poland'. There were different opinions. But if one takes a look at the map, one understands that the transit route through Lithuania is much shorter. And then the constructive opinion prevailed. In Russia, there were some hostile opinions too. Zhirinovskiy, for instance, said that they would travel through Lithuania as they wanted. Then, there were talks about cheap flights and ferry connection with Saint Petersburg if there were no other transit opportunities. There were various attempts.

The decision of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to appoint a representative for Kaliningrad was wise. Valdas Adamkus, in response, offered me, the then head of a parliament committee, an analogous position. And we started the negotiations in spring 2002.



First, Russia demanded the introduction of the visa-free regime. But in this case Lithuania would be denied accession to the Schengen union. In the EU, we were told the following: the EU is ready to cooperate, provide financial help — and you should find a model of cooperation. But how could it be found? Russia did not want visas. On the other hand, the Schengen convention requires control. We considered different variants. I personally went to California, saw how the work is organized at the US-Mexico. We tried to look for appropriate electronic technologies. Finally, we came up with a compromise decision — the facilitated transit document. But the technical issue came to the fore. There are more than 2,000 railway stations in Russia, and we have to obtain information about every passenger. However, we could not open our consulates everywhere on the enormous territory of Russia. What should we have done? Finally, the EU allocated funds for a special information system.

— **Russia suggested launching a high-speed non-stop train, passengers of which would not require visas. Why did you not go for it?**

— It is a several billion investment. Our railway is not straight; it has a lot of turns and curves. The legend says that the German engineers who built it were paid extra for the turns... Though the railway has been modernised since then, it is still the same, the average speed of trains is 60 km/h. According to the EU requirements, a high-speed train should move at a speed of 160—180 km/h, which is technically impossible in Lithuania. Of course, we rejected the idea. As a result, we decided for the simplified transit document. Mister Rogozin and I were among the first passengers, we saw how the agreements would work. In Russia, there was a widespread opinion that this system would reduce the passenger traffic, but it did not happen. I refer only to the passenger transit. But we also discussed the cargo and military transit. The latter one was regulated by the agreement on the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Germany, but it is still in force, is extended every year, remaining a problem in our relations. There are points to discuss: for instance, the transit of out-dated weapons and past due missile fuel. Russia is still reluctant to insure cargoes. We, in our turn, are concerned — if anything happens, the environmental damage will be enormous. Such cargo should not be transported by sea; it is more dangerous than oil. The only variant is the railway transportation, but the negotiations on the issue were suspended.

— **The negotiations between Moscow, Vilnius, and Brussels showed that, in some cases, the Schengen legislation can be rather flexible — otherwise, the Kaliningrad transit system would have been unfeasible. Does it mean that, in the long run, a more tangible simplification of the visa regime can be possible?**

— Lithuania can work harder on the visa-free regime not only for the Kaliningrad region, but for Russia in general. Our government, for instance, reached an agreement on the visa free zone that extends for 50 km on both sides of the border. We can go further after we see how it works. We have always actively cooperated with Kaliningrad. We appealed to the EU asking for more programmes on the Kaliningrad region. But, over the last years, this work has come to a standstill. Though, residents of the border regions do need it.

You know, other countries are overwhelmed by different fears. I, as a representative of the President of Lithuania for the Kaliningrad region had to visit all EU countries. I took out a map and showed: here is Lithuania; here is Kaliningrad that is the transit problem. It was so clear to us, but not to them. But it was them who would have to make a decision. The highest level was in Italy — I was received by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. In other countries, it was the level of ministers for foreign affairs. Many did not believe that I would be received by the Head of state. But Berlusconi listened to me and said that he wanted to develop relations with Putin and Lithuania should reach an agreement with Russia. He asked what Lithuania needed. I said our problem was the accession to the Schengen Union; we wanted to get in the 'first wave' of the enlargement, which did take place in 2008. All in all, I want to say, to find solutions optimal for everyone was not easy. And if the transit mechanism had not been worked out, Russians would have had to travel to Kaliningrad only by plane or ferry, it would have damaged Russian-Lithuanian relations much more than the law on damage compensation.

— **The 'Law on compensation of damage resulting from the occupation by the U.S.S.R.' adopted on the initiative of the Conservative party is still a stumbling block in the Russia-Lithuania relations. To what extent are changes possible? Should such expectations be connected with the presidency of Dalia Grybauskaitė?**

— Our new President declares the improvement of relations with Russia, and I support it. But, you are right, there is an obstacle. It is the law on the compensation of damage. Russia strongly opposes it. This law was adopted by the conservatives, the ruling party. Its radical faction demands the implementation of the law. But now everything is standing still. I think the President can call for a moratorium on this law. Such issues can be settled only by negotiations. This law is a poor background for any constructive negotiation. The President, using her popularity, could opt for another solution and get into the normal way of civilised negotiations. For instance, you hold negotiations with Germany, and you return something to each other — pictures, valuables, etc. It is the only way out.

— **You said that earlier Lithuania had appealed to the EU proposing a more active involvement of the Kaliningrad region in different programmes, but later the interest wore off. Why?**

It is my personal impression, I may be mistaken. The Kaliningrad authorities also seem to have lost their interest. But earlier there was a keen interest. What has happened? Maybe, Moscow does not want it. I am sure if there were such interest, the EU would be able not only to introduce the visa-free regime, but also to go for other programmes. Both Russian federal and Kaliningrad authorities should be more active. We cannot always take the lead, if the other party does not want it. But, again, it is my personal opinion.

— **It reminds of the 2004 resolution of the Lithuania Seimas, where Russia was all but blamed for boiling down the Kaliningrad problem to the transit issue...**

— Yes, then everything revolved around transit. Afterwards, Russia adopted a number of programmes on Kaliningrad. I do not know to what ex-



tent they are implemented. There was an aspiration to give a boost to our relations at a little different level. But today I see nothing of the kind. If they keep thinking in Moscow that such programmes lead to separatism in the Kaliningrad region, it is ridiculous. Although, I know, some Russian politicians hold this opinion.

— **Would you be surprised to hear in Lithuania that you contribute to the soft "estrangement" of the Kaliningrad region from mainland Russia?**

— Such danger would have existed if somebody had really been claiming this territory. Germany, for instance, as some believe. But German politicians are very careful regarding this issue, they never talk about it. It is a fictional political threat. The Kaliningrad region can become a pilot one in the sense of its faster development. Let us see how other countries develop. China, for example, has certain regions that live by different rules. Russia is large and I do not think that it is possible to have the same policy for all regions. The fear of separatism is unfounded. The region is populated by Russians, there is no ethnic aspect. There is nothing awful in the fact that local authorities want more independence; the time of centralization is over. By the way, it is over everywhere.

— **But it is easier to eat up a big pie starting from the rim...**

— Today, Europe is more or less united. Economic cooperation and rationality should prevail when it comes to those issues. I cannot see anybody claiming Kaliningrad. The idea of the SEZ brought to life some time ago was very good. Something has been done. But it is time to go further. Kaliningrad has great development prospects due to its geopolitical position.

— **You said 'to go further'. But in what direction?**

— To open up to the European Union! Many models of cooperation have already been tested in Kaliningrad — visas, for example. The visa free regime with the EU is essential to Russia. It is a matter of political will. During the negotiations on the Kaliningrad issue, there were technical difficulties; Soviet passports were still valid, for example. But today, you have a different situation. It means it is time for new decisions. You should be braver. No country is plotting against Kaliningrad. Everybody wants to trade. Investments will come if the Kaliningrad region is more open. I hear that President Medvedev speaks of the development of new technologies? Why not develop them in Kaliningrad? Research on the Baltic Sea could be conducted in collaboration with Klaipeda University.

— **You said you did not see anybody willing to claim the Kaliningrad region. I think, you remember the initiative of a bloc of German parliamentarians on the creation of a certain 'Prussia' Euroregion under the supervision of the region's neighbouring countries, including Lithuania. Does Lithuania need it?**

— No. Lithuania refused Kaliningrad as early as the Soviet period, though it is difficult to prove in terms of the science of History. But we think that Stalin offered Kaliningrad to us and the then first secretary Antanas Sniečkus refused. He understood that it was not our territory; and the situation in Lithuania was very difficult after the war. There are always radical

opinions. But neither Merkel, nor Sarkozy, nor Mitterrand, nor Blair has ever expressed them. I do not see the followers of such an idea. For Europe, there is no point to argue over territories. Today it has a common market, common currency and Schengen area — all these things are more important than territorial disputes. Moreover, it is very difficult to say who is right. These issues are for historians to deal with. And politicians, who have nothing to contribute to economic development, usually aspire to go down in history.

— **Our international relations. For instance, Kaliningraders got to know the current foreign minister of Lithuania Audronius Ažubalis when he, being a member of the Seimas, suggested closing down the Kaliningrad transit to punish Russia for the Georgian conflict. How serious were such statements in your opinion? Were they made solely for the internal use, to play upon Rusophobic attitudes?**

— Yes, there were such statements, but they did not gain any support. It was said for internal use. A significant part of the conservative electorate did not like it. The current minister has more than once made bald statements concerning Tibet, and the Chinese Embassy was, by the way, very surprised. But Ažubalis, speaking as a member of the Seimas and Ažubalis speaking in his capacity as a minister — are two different issues. Until a politician has worked in the executive branch, he does not know what a word is worth. Parliamentarians always speak for the general public, especially, about external policy. What would happen if we paid attention to all the statements by Zhirinovsky, for example?

— **In the very beginning of our conversation you mentioned the military aspect. In the West, the Kaliningrad region is often seen as an excessively militarised region, we are often encouraged to look for the nuclear weapon, which is allegedly hidden on the territory of the region. What are those suspicions based on? Or is it just politics?**

— Of course, it is mostly politics. But let me be honest: Russian politicians also give grounds for such opinions, saying, for instance, if some military facilities appear in Poland, missiles will be deployed in Kaliningrad. I do not think that it is right. In my opinion, politicians resort to outworn rhetoric. If Kaliningrad starts opening up to Europe, demilitarisation will increase trust. A decision should be made as to what to do with spent weapons. It concerns, by the way, not only Russia, but also Ukraine, for example. But the discussions on the issue have gone quiet.

Today we need a new attitude to the cooperation between Lithuania and the Kaliningrad region, a new approach, maybe, it is worth involving scientists. A peculiar situation is developing in energy; there are a lot of common issues.

— **Once you called the Russian decision to construct an NPP in the environs of Kaliningrad a PR event. Has your opinion changed?**

— Back then, it looked like a PR event. And we wanted to support the construction of our own station. The construction of several NPPs in the Baltic region is complicated. The one, who finishes first, wins. To my regret, Russia is ahead of us, we lost time. But then it was hard to believe. The position of the Kaliningrad region offers great opportunities for energy export. Now one starts to understand, it was not a PR event.

— **Why did Lithuania refuse to participate in the construction of the Baltic NPP? Putin proposed it to Grybauskaitė...**

— The new government rejected our own NPP project either and opted for a new one. It is wrong to take a new project every time. Last time we reached an agreement with the neighbouring countries. Today we do not have partners.

**THE REPRESENTATIVES ARE GONE,
THE PROBLEM REMAINS**

Two interviews, two different perspectives. Dmitry Rogozin has one set of arguments, Gediminas Kirkilas has another one. Although, both admit that the Kaliningrad issue is a special case that required maximum effort from Russian and European diplomacy for the solution of this seemingly regional problem. One of the distinctive features of the Kaliningrad region as an exclave territory is its proneness to conflict. In the early 2000s, the leaders of Russia and the European Union paid careful attention to the situation in the Kaliningrad region. It seemed it would always be so. However, as the further developments showed, special representatives come and go, but the Kaliningrad problems (the risk of becoming a double periphery, the "outskirts" of Russia and EU) linger on. The region cannot solve the problems on its own. It is possible to reach a solution only by means of effective cooperation between Russia and the neighbouring countries (Poland and Lithuania), as well as with the European Union in general.

Terms used in the interview

Acquis communautaire is the accumulated legislation, legal acts, court decisions which constitute the body of European Union law. Every candidate member state should abide by it. The term *acquis* is also used to describe laws adopted under the Schengen Agreement, prior to its integration into the European Union legal order by the Treaty of Amsterdam, in which case one speaks of the Schengen *acquis*.

The Baltic NPP is a nuclear power plant, the construction of which commenced in February 2010 in the Neman district (the North-East of the Kaliningrad region). The first power unit should come online on 2016. The total investment into the construction of two power units will exceed 190 bln roubles. The capacity of each power unit is 1150 MW. The BNPP is expected not only to satisfy the energy demand of the region but also to export energy into the EU.

Law on Compensation of Damage Resulting from the Occupation by the U.S.S.R was adopted on the initiative of the conservatives by the republican Seimas in 2000. Earlier, the issue of the compensation of damaged inflicted on Lithuania was tackled in a referendum of 1993. The commission set up by the Seimas estimated the amount of damage at 28 bln dollars. For a long time, no actual steps have been taken towards the implementation of the law.

A survey among Lithuanian citizens, conducted in December 2007 by the Vilmorus company, showed that 49.4% of the respondents believe that the dialogue with Russia should begin with the moral compensation for the occupation, 43.9% insisted on the material compensation, 6.7% gave no answer. At the same time, most respondents (83.7%) do not believe that Russia will anyway consent to compensations.

The "Eastern Prussia" Euroregion was proposed in the address of CDU/CSU bloc of the German Bundestag to the German government (October 2004) entitled "On the economic future of the Königsberg region after the EU enlargement" ("Wirtschaftliche Zukunft des Königsberger Gebietes nach der EU-Osterweiterung"). It outlined a specific regional formation within the geographical border of East Prussia on the basis of the Kaliningrad region and the adjacent territories of neighbouring states (in particular, Lithuania). Such ideas are not new and were pronounced as early as the 1990s, for example, by countess Dönhoff.

The *parliamentary assembly of Lithuania and the Kaliningrad region* is a parliamentarian forum, which was officially established in summer 2001. The corresponding statement is the only document signed by the Lithuanian Seimas and the parliament of the Kaliningrad region. The forum brings together the deputies of the Seimas and the Regional Duma representing different factions, committees and commissions.

The *2004 resolution of the Lithuanian Seimas on the Kaliningrad region*, in particular, declared that Lithuania would not, under any circumstances, participate in the creation of the passenger and cargo transit corridor between the Kaliningrad region and mainland Russia via the territory the European Union and expressed strong disapproval over the memorandum issued by Russia in May 2003, which set out the Kaliningrad transit would be conducted according to the domestic legislation of the Russian Federation and considered as internal transit, as well as over the 2004 Russian proposals of the visa-free regime regarding the visa-free train. It also proclaimed that the inability of the Kaliningrad region to adjust to the dynamic development of the neighbouring territories can, over time, become a source of social and political tensions.

The *Facilitated railway transit document* is a special document for a return transit train trip through the territory of the Republic of Lithuania from mainland Russia to the Kaliningrad region. It is valid for three month and is issued for free. The time of transit should not exceed six hours. The FRTDs are distributed by a competent Lithuanian representative prior to the crossing of the border of the Republic of Lithuania. The decision on the issue of an FRTD is made by the consulates and diplomatic institutions of Lithuania on the basis of information retrieved from railway ticket offices on the territory of the Russian Federation.