



Resolution 1298 (2002)¹

Ensuring a prosperous future for the Kaliningrad Region: the need for European solidarity

Parliamentary Assembly

1. As the European Union undergoes enlargement, the economic, social, public health and environmental problems of the Russian region of Kaliningrad – situated between Lithuania and Poland and separated from the rest of the Russian Federation – are becoming acute. Now it is up to the member states of the Council of Europe, including those belonging to the European Union, to do their utmost to ensure that the situation of the Kaliningrad region is rapidly improved in close co-operation between all parties concerned. Kaliningrad's unique geographical position constitutes a singular opportunity for Europe to build economic prosperity and political stability in the Baltic Sea region and beyond.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the Russian Federation's efforts to reduce the importance of the military sector in the Kaliningrad region's economy and to transform the latter through innovative steps such as the establishment of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). It believes that legal provisions governing the functioning of the SEZ could be further improved in order to stimulate entrepreneurial activity in the region, attract more foreign direct investment, increase the competitiveness of locally produced goods and services and permit the region to share fully the benefits of the Russian Federation's future membership of the World Trade Organisation. Every effort must be made to preserve the viability of the SEZ, for instance by defining more clearly the division of competences between the federal and regional authorities, and by considering setting up a federal agency for the development of the SEZ.
3. The Assembly strongly supports multilateral efforts to promote regional co-operation involving the Kaliningrad region, such as those undertaken in consultations between the European Union, the Nordic Council, the Council of Baltic Sea States and the Baltic Assembly on the one hand and the Russian Federation on the other, as well as in direct contacts between the Kaliningrad region and its neighbouring countries of Lithuania and Poland. It encourages the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Nordic Council to establish, at the earliest opportunity and with the approval and assistance of the Russian Federal authorities, their information offices in Kaliningrad. Furthermore, it encourages the opening or expansion, as the case may be, of the consulates of Lithuania and Poland in the Kaliningrad region of Russia and the opening or expansion of Russian consulates in Lithuania and Poland, on the basis of a common agreement and as soon as possible.
4. With the approaching accession of Lithuania and Poland to the European Union, it is becoming urgent for all parties involved to reach a mutually acceptable solution as regards the movement of persons and goods to and from the Kaliningrad region through the territories of Lithuania and Poland. Taking into account the existing economic and cultural ties and human contacts between Lithuania, Poland and the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation, all parties should be ready to participate in discussions, on the understanding that the agreements reached should be compatible with the high standards of the Council of Europe and international agreements.
5. The Assembly calls on the European Union and its member states to assist the authorities of the countries concerned in preparing for the issue, in due course, of multi-entry long-term visas at reasonable cost, which could be made free of charge for students and young people. It also invites the Russian federal

1. Assembly debate on 25 September 2002 (28th Sitting) (see [Doc. 9524](#) Doc. 9524, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mrs Burbiene).



authorities to facilitate the issue of passports valid for foreign travel to its citizens, in particular those residing in the Kaliningrad region, and asks the European Union to provide financial assistance for this process. This would also serve to promote cross-border economic co-operation.

6. The Assembly calls for an upgrading of the infrastructure and procedures at Kaliningrad border crossings, and asks the European Union to enhance its assistance to the federal and Kaliningrad authorities in this field.

7. The Assembly welcomes the ambitious Targeted Federal Programme for the Development of the Kaliningrad Region up to 2010 drafted by the Russian Government, and hopes that the Russian federal authorities, the Kaliningrad administration and the Russian State Duma will ensure the allocation of adequate budgetary funds for the implementation of this programme, in line with commitments undertaken. In view of Kaliningrad's pronounced dependency on imported energy and raw materials and its need to develop international trade, the Assembly considers the development of its energy and transport sectors to be of particular importance.

8. The shortage of investment in the Kaliningrad region, aggravated by decades of under-investment, is a major obstacle to its development. The Assembly therefore asks the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank to consider establishing, jointly with the federal and Kaliningrad authorities and the region's business sector, a multilateral insurance fund for the protection of investment within the framework of the SEZ and the Targeted Federal Programme. It also hopes for a speedy conclusion of the negotiations for treaties on the protection of investment and on the avoidance of double taxation between the Russian Federation on the one hand and Lithuania and Poland on the other, with special reference to the Kaliningrad region.

9. The standard of living in the Kaliningrad region is still substantially below that of the neighbouring states. The multilateral aid agencies concerned must therefore do their utmost to secure adequate financing for development projects in the region. The European Union should co-ordinate the use of Phare, Tacis and Interreg programmes for the co-financing of projects in Kaliningrad together with Russian federal and regional authorities, draw up the list of priority projects and envisage the creation of a separate budget line for the Kaliningrad region within the Tacis programme for the Russian Federation.

10. Following recent consultations between the European Union and the Russian Federation, in which the parties expressed concern over the problems of the Kaliningrad region and especially the visa and goods transit issues, the Parliamentary Assembly hopes that all problems will be solved without prejudice to the sovereignty of either the Russian Federation or the neighbouring countries. The Assembly calls on all parties concerned to take an active part in the quest for the best possible solutions for all.