

4.5. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



Pskov oblast is the only Russian region, bordering three foreign states – Estonia, Latvia and Belarus. That is why crossborder cooperation in one of the important directions of activity of Pskov Oblast administration.

It was the initiative of Pskov Oblast administration to open in Pskov in March of 1994 the office of the St. Petersburg department of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, which later became the department of MFA of Russian Federation of Russian Federation in Pskov.

The Administration of Pskov Oblast suggested opening in Pskov the Consulates of neighboring countries in Pskov. The

Consulate of Latvia was opened in 1993 in Pskov and the Office of the General Consulate of Estonia in St. Petersburg in Pskov was opened in August of 1994.

The activity of the administration of Pskov Oblast is aimed at the resolution of the existing issues related to the revival of the impaired economic and cultural ties, to the establishment of the new forms of the mutually beneficial cooperation with the neighbors.

The cross-border traveling of the border zone residents was significantly complicated following the emergence of sovereign states of Latvia and Estonia and the transformation of the administrative frontier into inter-state frontier.

In 2004 the Administration actively participated along with MFA of Russia in consultations which resulted in the preservation of the simplified procedure for across-border traveling for the border zone residents and multiple free of charge visas to Estonia for the different categories of Russian border zone residents.

In 2004 Euro-region "Pskov-Livonia" was created, including Pechora, Palkino, Pskov, Pytalovo and Sebezh regions and city Pskov. The head of Pytalovo region Dmitri G. Andreev is the president of the Euro-region "Pskov-Livonia". The administration of Pskov Oblast assists Euro-region to develop projects and cooperation, and participates in the activities of Euro-region as an observer. The main purpose of the project is the sustainable development of the border zone territories by means of joint efforts and coordination of the activities of the executive branch of power and local governments of both Russia and its neighbors. The project might serve as model of good neighbor relations with EU.

Border zone cooperation is based on the European framework convention on the border-zone cooperation of the territorial communities and governments (Madrid, May 21, 1980). The activities of the Euro-regions and the participation in the joint projects with European Union, The Council of Baltic Sea Region States and The Council of Ministers of the Northern Countries will constitute a major part of the cooperation.

In 2004 the standard project for the treaty of cooperation with the local governments of Latvia, Estonia and Pskov Oblast was developed. The treaty of cooperation of the Administration of Pskov Oblast and the town Gulbene in Latvian Republic was signed.

Several projects of the crossborder cooperation in the framework of EU programs are implemented in Pskov Oblast, including the TACIS crossborder cooperation Program. Besides the mentioned TACIS program the Baltic Sea region INTERREG IIIB Neighbourhood programs are implemented in Pskov Oblast. The budget of programs is 7.5 millions euros each.

In September 2004 the experts of the Council of Baltic Sea Region States has researched the opportunity for opening European studies department at one or several colleges and universities in Pskov. Pskov Oblast is highly interested in opening of the European studies department in Pskov.

The bilateral programs of crossborder cooperation of various scales: starting from small-scale local projects for specific transborder regions and ending with the large-scale projects (considering the scale of financing and territory). Denmark is the leading partner in cooperation with Pskov Oblast, considering the number of joint projects.

The main directions of crossborder cooperation of the municipalities of Pskov Oblast are the following:

- *cooperation of local governments of Pskov Oblast, Estonia and Latvia in the framework of the project Euro-region "Pskov-Livonia";*
- *cooperation of non-profit organizations of the bordering countries, such as "The Project Lake Peipsi"*
- *cooperation in the sphere of nature conservation and nature conservation technologies;*
- *cooperation in the spheres of culture and education;*
- *cooperation of the public sphere organizations;*
- *stimulation of business activities at the border zone territories.*

Pskov Oblast proved to be one of the advanced regions in the sphere of crossborder cooperation. Non-profit organizations of the Oblast conduct independent and active policy of cooperation with non-profit organizations of Latvia and Estonia, local governments are also active in this respect.

4.5.1. Participation of Pskov Oblast in Baltic Sea region Neighborhood Program in 2004-2006

The purpose of the Program is to increase spatial integration and competitiveness of Baltic Sea region by developing regional economic and social interaction and development. Several projects are being realized in the framework of the Program in the following spheres:

- Developing joint strategies and realizing various activities for the macro-region;
- Assisting sustained spatial development of certain sectors;
- Sustained and integrated development of the coastal zones, islands and other specific territories;
- Assisting balanced development of polycentric residential areas;
- Creating sustained system of communications for the improvement of the spatial integration;
- Improving the management of the cultural and natural heritage, unique landscapes and natural resources;
- Transnational measures of institutional building and increasing potential of organizations

Following countries and regions participate in the Program:

- Denmark, Sweden, Finland
- Germany (north-east)
- Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia
- Poland, Norway
- Belarus: Minsk Oblast, Grodno Oblast, Brest Oblast, Vitebsk Oblast
- Russia: St. Petersburg, Murmansk Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Pskov Oblast, Novgorod Oblast, Kaliningrad Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Republic of Karelia, Nenetskiy autonomous region.

In the framework of the 8th and 9th calls of proposals of the Baltic Sea region Neighborhood Program 5 projects with participation of Pskov Oblast were approved:

The name of the project	The partner from Pskov Oblast	The leading partner	Budget in euros
HINTERLAND potentials for a spatial development under the aspects of decline (HINTERLAND)	The Pskov regional Administration, the Committee for the Local Self-Governing	Regional Planning Authority Havelland-Flaeming (Germany)	979,532
Hinterland Explorer - Exploring transnational development opportunities for SMEs in the Baltic-Belarus-Russia hinterlands (HinterlandXP)	State committee for economic development and property relation of Pskov region	Municipality of Barnim-Oderbruch	931,692
Baltic Euroregional Network-EAST (BEN-EAST)	NGO 'Lake Peipsi Project (Pskov)'	Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in Saint-Petersburg (Denmark)	508,693
Establishing Wind energy use in the Russian Federation (EastWind)	PskovRegionInfo	City of Rostock (Germany)	285,000
An integrated approach on entrepreneurship promotion for specific target groups (Greenhouse)	Sociological and Marketing Information Service, municipal enterprise; Municipality of Pskov	Rogaland Training & Education Center	471,612

4.5.2 The project of international festival "Druzhba" (meaning "Friendship" in Russian)

The project for elaboration of strategy for development of the international festival "Druzhba" in the situation of enlargement of European Union borders, presented by Gdov municipality of Pskov Oblast, was awarded the status of "the best practice" in the contest for the best practices in the sphere of crossborder cooperation, which was conducted in the framework of "Professional premium of the Council of Europe in the sphere of crossborder cooperation in the North-West of Russia in 2005" program.

Participants in the project are Gdov high-school, Tyrvass gymnasium (Estonia), Salantai high-school (Lithuania), Priekul high-school (Latvia). The project is implemented at the territories of such towns as Gdov (Pskov Oblast), Salantai (Lithuania), Priekul (Latvia), Tyrva (Estonia) since 1966. The funds for the project are provided by the Danish fund for development of democracy, regional administration for education of Gdov region municipality, private enterprise "Vardanyan", regional administration and participants of the project.

The project was initiated, because of the need for developing of new approaches for the concept of the International festival "Druzhba" in the changing geopolitical situation. Gdov high-school since 1966 is accumulating the experience of cooperation with high schools of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the framework of international festival "Druzhba", which should be adapted for the new geopolitical situation.

The main purposes of the project are: updating the program of the international festival "Druzhba" for the four states (Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), extending cooperation with Estonian partners as the most close neighbors of Gdov region, raising the proficiency in planning and conducting festivals.

In the process of the project implementation the content of the festival was updated, the modern equipment was bought, the positive experience of the crossborder cooperation was obtained.

