



Summary

An integral part of the Russian Federation sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland, the Kaliningrad oblast has no geographical connection to mainland Russia. The only overland route runs through the territory of Lithuania, an EU Member State since 2004. The Facilitated Transit Scheme (FTS) came into operation in July 2003 and enables the passage of Russian citizens through Lithuania with the use of transit documents. Approximately 1.5 million Russian citizens transit through Lithuania each year to Kaliningrad. The FTS enables the passage of Russian citizens through Lithuania with the use of transit documents.

The overall objectives of the project are to analyse practical aspects of the FTS, examine areas that could be improved or modified, to encourage dialogue, increase cooperation, and build trust between officials from Lithuania and the Russian Federation.

IOM IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT HUMANE AND ORDERLY MIGRATION BENEFITS MIGRANTS AND SOCIETY.

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ASSIST IN MEETING THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION;

ADVANCE UNDERSTANDING OF MIGRATION ISSUES;

ENCOURAGE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MIGRATION; AND

WORK TOWARDS EFFECTIVE RESPECT OF THE HUMAN DIGNITY AND WELL-BEING OF MIGRANTS.



On-site evaluation of the border-crossing inspection process.

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Free Movement, Secure Borders Analysing the Facilitated Transit Scheme between the Russian Federation and Lithuania

Background and Objectives

The Kaliningrad oblast is a political subdivision, or oblast, of the Russian Federation, separated from mainland Russia by Lithuania to its north and east, Poland to its south, and the Baltic Sea to its west. In the newly enlarged EU, the Kaliningrad oblast's geographic isolation from the rest of the Russian Federation raises issues about the movement of Russian citizens through EU territory, i.e. Poland and Lithuania. Despite

its geographical location, the Kaliningrad oblast is an integral part of the Russian Federation. Approximately 1.5 million Russian citizens transit through Lithuania each year to Kaliningrad, a vast number considering the population of the Kaliningrad oblast is around 1 million. The FTS is an expression of the EU's intention to ensure that borders do not become barriers, leading to the adoption of a unique arrangement within the framework of the Schengen regime taking into account the Kaliningrad oblast's particular circumstances.



IOM International Organization for Migration



For more information please contact :

International Organization for Migration
Regional Office for the Nordic and Baltic States, and the European Neighbourhood countries (East)
Unioninkatu 13, 6th Flr • P.O. Box 851 • FIN-00101 Helsinki • Finland
Tel: +358.9.684 11 50 • Fax: +358.9.684 11 511 • E-mail: mrfhelsinki@iom.int
Internet: <http://www.iom.fi>



Passengers travelling to Russia preparing to board the train to Kaliningrad.

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The overall objectives of the project are to analyse practical aspects of the FTS and areas that could be improved or modified, and to encourage dialogue, increase cooperation, and build further trust between officials from Lithuania and the Russian Federation.

Project Activities

ACTIVITY I: INTERACTIVE SEMINAR TO ANALYSE THE FTS

An interactive seminar was organized in April 2005 for representatives of institutions involved in the FTS in Lithuania and the Russian Federation, experts, IOM and donor representatives. The seminar was held in a train carriage during a journey between Kaliningrad and Vilnius. This allowed participants to observe relevant procedures related to the FTS in situ. The interactive seminar facilitated dialogue and open discussion between participants on a wide range of practical issues related to the FTS. The contributions of participants were published in a seminar report.

ACTIVITY II: DEVELOPMENT OF A MANUAL FOR OFFICIALS

Following the seminar, IOM Vilnius will coordinate the development of a manual for officials that will provide background information on the FTS and practical guidelines for officials on inter-agency cooperation and non-standard or emergency situation management. The manual will not replace existing agreements relating to the governance of the FTS. The idea of the manual is to help ensure that the scheme runs smoothly. The manual will be published in Russian, Lithuanian, and English and IOM will distribute it to relevant officials in Lithuania, the Kaliningrad oblast, Moscow, EU institutions, embassies in neighbouring countries, and transportation providers (e.g. railway companies).

In order to develop the manual, IOM will draw on information from different sources including existing publications and statements from relevant government ministries and recommendations from the interactive seminar. IOM will also carry out interviews with representatives

of relevant organizations, including consular officials, border guards, police, government officials, and railway employees.

As the subject matter entails many legal and practical considerations, specialists will be involved in the development of the manual to provide expert advice on the specific legal regulations of the FTS.

Contact Information

International Organization for Migration
IOM Vilnius Office, Jakšto 12, 2nd Flr.,
Vilnius LT-01105, Lithuania
Tel.: +370 5 261 01 15
Email: iomvilnius@iom.elnet.lt

International Organization for Migration
Regional Office for the Nordic and Baltic
States, and the European Neighbourhood
countries (East)
P.O. Box 851 FIN-00101, Helsinki, Finland
Tel.: +358 9 684 1150,
Fax: +358 9 684 11511
E-mail: mrfhelsinki@iom.int