

# Transformation of the Pskov Region`s Border Trade with the European Countries under the Application of Special Economic Measures

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**Abstract**—This article assesses the impact of special economic measures on the commodity and geographical structure and dynamics of the Russian Federation border region`s (the Pskov region) foreign trade with the countries of Europe. Using a three-stage analysis scheme, the authors assessed the foreign trade potential and foreign trade activity of the Pskov region in the context of Eurasian integration processes and the special economic measures application in relation to imports from Europe; identified factors, effects and directions of the analyzed region border trade transformation. It has been established that in this context, transformations are manifested in the strengthening of foreign trade flows imbalance and reorientation, the negative structural commodity trade tendencies and the illegal imports growth in the framework of Eurasian integration, and an asymmetry increase in the border regions` economic development.

**Keywords**—border trade, Pskov region, Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), European Union (EU), special economic measures, sanctions, economic integration, import

## I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the present economic and political circumstances, the search process of the new models of international cooperation and the trade potential development makes more topical the enhancing of economic relations between the Russia`s border regions and adjoining countries. One of the main components of the border regions` foreign economic activity is foreign trade. The special economic and geographical position of the border regions conditions direct and intermediary activities in the export and import of goods, as well as additional institutional, infrastructural, transport, logistics and other opportunities for the foreign trade development.

The creation of the Customs Union in 2010 between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as the expansion of its format in 2015-2018 to the stage of economic union with the admission to the Eurasian Economic Union of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan caused changes in export-import relations, the transformation of the goods and capital movement between the participating countries. Such an institutional impetus could have a positive impact on the border regions development, since it would remove almost all the restrictions in mutual trade. However, a number of political disagreements between Russia and its trading partners among non-CIS countries provoked the special economic measures

application in mutual trade led to specific transformations of cross-border cooperation in a number of regions.

This article analyzes the dynamics and structure of the Pskov region`s foreign trade, due to its unique geopolitical position – being one of two subjects of the Russian Federation (with the Altai Republic) to have a border with three states. The Pskov region borders with the EAEU member Belarus, as well as with the countries of the European Union – Estonia and Latvia. This fact allows the authors to identify key trends and transformations related to the external political and economic factors impact on border trade in 2010–2017. The problem of this article is to assess the impact of the special economic measures application on the border trade between Pskov region, its European partners and Belarus in the framework of Eurasian integration processes. The object of the study is the trade and economic relations of the Russia`s border region (Pskov region) with the European countries in the context of Eurasian economic integration. The subject of the research is the evaluation of transformations in the Pskov region`s border trade with the European countries in the context of integration processes and the Russian Federation`s trade restrictions effect based on the example of agricultural products import.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant amount of both Russian and foreign scientists` works is devoted to the issues of socio-economic and institutional border regions` development, as well as their role in integration processes and the national welfare formation. A significant contribution to the study of the Russian border regions` foreign economic activity is made by L.B. Vardomsky [1; 2]. The author has studied in detail the economic parameters of the border regions` development, analyzed their positions in the system of international economic relations, proposed models of border cooperation. The study of the integration impact on the border regions` development is presented in the works of P. Krugman [3], Komornicki T. and Wiśniewski R. [4], among Russian researchers we can distinguish N. Ryzhova [5], R. Zuykov [6], M.V. Zharikov [7], N.V. Zubarevich [8], K.A. Morachevskaya [9; 10], I.Gurova [11] and other authors. The trade effects of the Customs Union creation are highlighted and analyzed in the work of L.E. Limonov and co-authors [12].

### III. METHODS

Exploring the methodological approaches used by various authors, we present the following scheme for analyzing the border trade transformation. The first stage of analysis was assessment of the foreign trade potential of the Pskov region as a border area in the context of Eurasian integration and imposing trade restrictions on imports from several European countries. At the second stage, the assessment of the development of foreign trade activity of the Pskov region with the countries of Europe under conditions of external restrictions was carried out. On the example of cases with the illegal importation of a number of goods from the sanctions list (based on materials of the Pskov Customs), problems of compliance with the law and the conflict of trade and economic interests of participants in foreign economic activities are identified. The third stage was the description of the effects for the development of cross-border interactions with the participation of the Pskov region in the context of the use of special economic measures and features of their implementation in the context of the formation of the EAEU.

The information base of the research was constituted by regulatory legal acts, as well as data from analytical studies and reports on the development of the economic and foreign trade potential of the Pskov Region. The empirical base of the research includes data from the customs statistics of the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, statistics of the EAEU, as well as analysis of specific situations from the practice of the Pskov customs.

### IV. RESULTS

#### A. Assessment of the Foreign Trade Potential of the Pskov Region as a Border Area in the Context of Eurasian Integration and Imposing Trade Restrictions on Imports from Several European Countries (Stage 1)

The foreign trade turnover of the Pskov region in 2017 amounted to 570.3 million USD. The share of the Pskov Region in the trade turnover of the North-Western Federal District (0.7%) decreased by 0.1 percentage point compared with 2016. It may be noted import orientation of foreign trade, imports accounted for 63% of the turnover of the Pskov region [14]. Since the Pskov region is a border region of Russia, its key European partners are the borderland countries Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, as well as other countries of the Hanseatic League (Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland) (Table 1).

The main European counteragents in the export of the Pskov region in 2017 were the Republic of Belarus (66.0%), Estonia (7.3%), Latvia (7.1%) (Table 2). Metals and products from them (54%), wood (16%), machinery, equipment and vehicles (13%) predominate in the Pskov region export structure [14].

TABLE I. THE MAIN TRADING PARTNERS OF THE PSKOV REGION IN 2016-2017 [13; 14]

Partner Country	Turnover, thousand USD		Share in the turnover, %	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
CIS countries	129115.19	215774.64	26.1	37.8
Other foreign countries	366383.7	354527.17	73.9	62.2
Belarus	115067.4	197430.71	23.2	34.6
Latvia	44278.6	55074.54	8.9	9.7

Germany	44018.8	43388.10	8.9	7.6
China	44963.9	31857.24	9.1	5.6
Italy	26577.0	31380.83	5.4	5.5
Austria	12781.8	17750.48	2.6	3.1
Estonia	17171.8	17555.14	3.5	3.1
Poland	13690.5	14622.34	2.8	2.6
Netherlands	14514.3	13235.08	2.9	2.3

TABLE II. THE PSKOV REGION EXPORTS BY PARTNER COUNTRIES IN 2015-2017 [13; 14]

2015		2016		2017	
Export, thousand USD	Share in export, %	Export, thousand USD	Share in export, %	Export, thousand USD	Share in export, %
<b>1. Total export</b>					
208 390.9	100.0	122 955.4	100.0	213 307.1	100.0
<b>2. CIS countries, including:</b>					
159 215.1	76.4	69 896.8	56.8	156 370.0	73.3
<b>2.1. Belarus</b>					
140 633.2	67.5	57 381.4	46.7	140 771.3	66.0
<b>2.2. Kazakhstan</b>					
8 932.4	4.3	6 315.3	5.1	8 026.0	3.8
<b>3. Other foreign countries, including:</b>					
49 175.8	23.6	53 058.6	43.2	56 937.1	26.7
<b>3.1. Estonia</b>					
13 803.4	6.6	14 927.1	12.1	15 487.1	7.3
<b>3.2. Latvia</b>					
13 459.3	6.5	14 964.6	12.2	15 105.3	7.1
<b>3.3. Finland</b>					
4 659.0	2.2	5 831.0	4.7	4 466.6	2.1
<b>3.4. Netherlands</b>					
2 613.5	1.3	1 688.7	1.4	4 352.9	2.0
<b>3.5. Lithuania</b>					
4 820.3	2.3	3 174.8	2.6	3 124.2	1.5
<b>3.6. Germany</b>					
3 960.5	1.9	3 654.6	3.0	2 953.9	1.4
<b>3.7. Switzerland</b>					
362.8	0.2	935.1	0.8	956.8	0.4

The main European counteragent countries in imports are: the Republic of Belarus (15.9%), Germany (11.3%), Latvia (11.2%) (Table 3). Machines, equipment and vehicles (31%), food products (24%), chemical products (11%) dominate in the Pskov region import structure [14].

TABLE III. THE PSKOV REGION IMPORT BY PARTNER COUNTRIES IN 2015-2017 [13; 14]

2015		2016		2017	
Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %	Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %	Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %
<b>1. Total import</b>					
530 459.4	100.0	372 727.9	100.0	356 994.7	100.0
<b>2. CIS countries, including:</b>					
56 400.1	10.6	59 348.7	15.9	59 404.6	16.6
<b>2.1. Belarus</b>					
54 645.7	10.3	57 810.7	15.5	56 659.5	15.9
<b>3. Other foreign countries, including:</b>					
474 059.3	89.4	313 379.2	84.1	297 590.1	83.4
<b>3.1. Germany</b>					
48 032.4	9.1	40 364.7	10.8	40 434.2	11.3
<b>3.2. Latvia</b>					
56 889.3	10.7	29 318.0	7.9	39 969.3	11.2

2015		2016		2017	
Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %	Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %	Import, thousand USD	Share in import, %
<b>3.3. Italy</b>					
29 833.4	5.6	26 517.8	7.1	31 353.8	8.8
<b>3.4. Austria</b>					
13 610.2	2.6	12 758.2	3.4	17 725.0	5.0
<b>3.5. Poland</b>					
20 440.4	3.9	13 153.4	3.5	14 487.1	4.1
<b>3.6. France</b>					
19 697.3	3.7	6 289.6	1.7	9 002.8	2.5
<b>3.7. Netherlands</b>					
17 973.2	3.4	12 830.8	3.4	8 882.2	2.5

Among the countries of the CIS and partner countries of the Russian Federation for the EAEU, the Republic of Belarus is a key partner of the Pskov region, with which it borders. We will separately consider the foreign trade flows of the Pskov region with the Republic of Belarus. Table 4 presents the analysis of foreign trade of the Pskov region with the Republic of Belarus in 2010-2017.

TABLE IV. INDICATORS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS IN THE PSKOV REGION FOREIGN TRADE IN 2010–2017 [9; 13; 14; 15]

Year	Indicators				
	Exports to Belarus, mln. USD	Share in the region's export, %	Imports from Belarus, mln. USD	Share in the region's import, %	Balance with Belarus, mln. USD
2010	73.1	53.2	60.6	5.3	12.5
2011	232	77.5	79.2	5.5	152.8
2012	71.2	35.7	118	8.2	-46.8
2013	66.1	19.8	124.2	10.5	-58.1
2014	52.4	15.1	105.4	10.9	-53.0
2015	140.6	67.5	54.6	10.3	86.0
2016	57.4	47.6	57.8	15.5	-0.4
2017	140.8	66.0	56.7	15.9	84.1

Despite the entry of Russia and Belarus into the common customs territory of the EAEU, there is a rather uneven dynamics of the Pskov region trade flows with the Republic of Belarus. The volume of foreign trade is several times smaller compared with other regions of the Russian-Belarusian border area, which is primarily due to the industrial potential of the Pskov Region. However, this does not negate the possibility of using the transit potential of Belarus for the supply of a number of goods from the countries of the European Union and Turkey that fall under the use of special economic measures introduced by Russia with regard to the supply of agricultural products from these countries.

#### B. The Assessment of the Development of Foreign Trade Activity of the Pskov Region with the Countries of Europe Under Conditions of External Restrictions (Stage 2)

Although it is not obvious when analyzing the foreign trade statistics of the Pskov region, however, in our opinion, it is possible to highlight the problem of trade and economic cross-border cooperation of the Pskov region. On the one hand, the problem lies in the problem of controlling the movement of goods from the territory of the EAEU countries (first of all, the Republic of Belarus, with which the region

borders) to the territory of the Russian Federation in the context of the customs territory, due to the presence of economic and legal exemptions in the institutional and customs mechanisms of the single customs territory functioning. On the other hand, the problem is caused by the favorable border position of the region, which makes it possible to use illegal schemes for the entry of prohibited goods into the territory of Russia.

In 2014, Russia conducted a food embargo on imports from a number of developed countries (primarily EU countries, the USA, etc.). Compliance with the requirements of Russia in the import of agricultural products is further complicated by its entry into the EAEU, where the principle of unity of the customs territory and the absence of internal customs borders are applied. This situation provokes the emergence of "bypass" schemes for the supply of sanctions products to Russia, which is very relevant for the regions of the Russian border area, through which the goods prohibited for importation are received. The dynamics of food products imports in the Pskov Region is presented in Table 5. It can be noted that the share of food products in the Pskov Region imports remains stably high.

TABLE V. IMPORTS OF FOOD PRODUCTS AND RAW MATERIALS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE PSKOV REGION IN 2015-2017 [13; 14; 15]

Year	Indicators	
	The value of the volume of imports of food products and raw materials for their production (code TN VED 01-24), thousand USD	Share in the import of food products and raw materials for their production, %
2014	209745.24	27.1
2015	174950.89	36.8
2016	127 040.60	34.0
2017	85 971.80	24.0

This situation stimulates the emergence of a variety of schemes for the importation of products [16], falling under the action of special economic measures (embargo).

#### 1) Re-export scheme of delivery through Belarus as a EAEU member country to the border region of the Russian Federation.

The scheme consists in the delivery of goods through those countries that are members of the EAEU. According to the principles of functioning of the economic union, the goods are transported between the EAEU member countries in a single customs territory due to the absence of internal customs borders and are not subject to customs inspection. Within the framework of this scheme, two main directions can be distinguished. The first direction is smuggling into the Pskov region from the Republic of Belarus. There are a lot of examples of smuggling, and the volume of such supplies is constantly increasing. For example, in April 2019, employees of the Pskov customs as a result of an operation to prevent agricultural products within the territory of the Russian Federation from falling within the scope of special economic measures on the highways of the south of the region detained 6 vehicles with large quantities of vegetable goods. All goods moved from the Republic of Belarus without any accompanying documents. As part of the shipment, plant products prohibited from import were found: 34 tons of strawberries (country of origin - Poland, Greece) and 58 tons of fresh apples (country of origin - Poland) [17]. The second

direction is the delivery of goods from the Republic of Belarus, where the documents confirming the country of the goods' origin to the EAEU member country are changing, and the goods are already imported into the Pskov region under the guise of the EAEU goods. So, in March 2019, the Rosselkhozadzor banned the import into the Pskov Region of 19 tons of dairy and meat products from Belarus and the Baltic countries due to the lack of necessary documents for it, including veterinary certificates [18].

2) *Re-export scheme of delivery to the Pskov region through a country that is not a member of the EAEU (for example, Lithuania) and is not under the food embargo.*

The scheme is that goods from countries that have fallen under the food embargo of Russia come to a country that does not fall under the food embargo (for example, Lithuania), where labels are glued on and a new package of foreign trade documentation is being prepared, and the goods are disguised as, for example, Lithuanian imported into Russia. Thus, at the customs post (multilateral automobile checkpoint "Burachki" of the Pskov customs), located on the Russian-Latvian border, seized more than a ton of Polish beans moved from Lithuania to the territory of the Russian Federation. The customs authority has decided to seize beans, produced in Poland, with a total weight of 1,030 kg, which will be subsequently destroyed [19].

3) *Scheme of importation of prohibited goods in Russia under the guise of another product that does not fall under the embargo.*

Thus, the Pskov Customs detained a freight vehicle placed under the customs procedure of customs transit at one of the posts located on the Russian-Belarusian part of the State Border of the Russian Federation, as a result of the operation to prevent the movement of agricultural products prohibited for import into the Russian Federation. According to the transport documents in the car had to move animal feed. When conducting a search in the customs control zone, fresh pears were found in wooden boxes. Marking on the boxes contained data on the country of origin of the goods. Instead of animal feed, Polish pears moved in the cargo hold of the car. The total weight of products illegally imported into the Russian Federation amounted to 19.6 tons. In the framework of compliance with the legislation of the Eurasian Economic Union, the fruits were destroyed [20].

### *C. Analysis of Effects for the Development of Cross-Border Interactions Involving the Pskov Region in the Context of the Use of Special Economic Measures and the Characteristics of Their Implementation in the Context of the Formation of the EAEU (Stage 3)*

Exploring the effects for the development of cross-border trade in the Pskov region, it is necessary to emphasize 2 important conditions that set the modern vector of its transformation: the use of special economic measures (sanctions) and features of their implementation in the context of the formation of the EAEU. Analyzing the prevailing import schemes for the supply of goods to the Pskov region under special economic measures, it can be noted that the import channels for the supply of prohibited for importation of agricultural products do not cut off, but are transformed under the influence of institutional, trade and transport and logistics factors. These factors manifest themselves most vividly through the contradictions between

the national interests of the Russian Federation and the interests of the rest of the EAEU member countries, which in turn opens up the possibility of applying re-export schemes for sanctions products. Such a situation in the context of the conflict of national interests of the EAEU member countries does not allow for efficient use of the tools of customs control and trade regulation on the territory of the economic union, and for Russian importers it complicates supply chains and increases logistics costs, which affects the price of goods. The consequences of the introduction of special economic measures at the national level in the context of the implementation of the principles of unity of the customs territory within the framework of the EAEU result in the problem of creating an effective traceability system for goods moving across the EAEU territory. The solution of this task is especially important for the border regions of Russia (in particular, the Pskov Region).

Analysis of the structure and dynamics of development of border areas allows us to talk about strengthening the negative "border effect", which cannot be overcome within the framework of the current development of trade policy and economic integration in the EAEU, as the trade-political and economic interests of the participating countries are transformed under the influence of sanctions and lead to conflicts of interest within an integration alliance. The insufficient level of harmonization of trade policy within the EAEU leads to trade and political tension among the participants of the integration association due to the "asymmetry" of economic vectors" [21], as well as attempts to realize their own economic interests and benefit from the current situation of "sanction war".

The trade effects, in many respects, are determined by the situation with trade and political restrictions in relation to the Russian Federation. The effect of the transformation of import channels for the supply of prohibited goods is intensified under the influence of institutional, trade and transport and logistics factors. Foreign trade effects (imbalance in foreign trade of the Pskov region, negative dynamics of foreign trade with EU countries, including New Hanse) will not be overcome in the near future against the background of the implementation of sanctions policy. The presence of institutional barriers and underdeveloped institutions of cross-border cooperation from the Russian side limits trade flows, forms of foreign economic interaction and limits the process of socio-economic development of border areas. The lack of a modern infrastructure of the Pskov region will not allow to speak about the implementation of transport and logistics effects. At the same time, the unique geopolitical position of the region as a border area, which allows to connect the largest centers of international trade (China and the EU), defines a huge potential for the development of cross-border trade.

## V. CONCLUSION

The development of border trade for the Pskov region with the countries of Europe is historically determined and significant for maintaining its own identity, socio-economic stability and sustainable development of the region. At the same time, there is a transformation of foreign trade in the border region under the influence of a number of trade-political and institutional factors. The analysis shows the following directions for the transformation of the border

trade of the Pskov region with the countries of Europe: 1) increased imbalance in foreign trade, due to the influence of external restrictions, which leads to a reorientation of foreign trade flows from the countries of the New Hanse to the rest of the borderland countries; 2) the growth of negative trends in the structure of foreign trade with the Republic of Belarus, which aggravates the underdeveloped export and transit potential of the Pskov Region; 3) the growth of illegal imports through the territory of the Republic of Belarus from European countries, which leads to the deterioration of good-neighborly relations in the border regions; 4) transformation of foreign trade channels under the action of sanctions, which leads to an increase in transaction costs of traders, additional state expenses and an increase in conflicts in the EAEU; 5) strengthening the asymmetry of the vectors of economic development of border areas due to the transformation of foreign trade under the influence of sanctions.

The results of the study allow us to identify key areas of development of foreign economic activity and cross-border trade of the Pskov region. Overcoming negative tendencies in the foreign trade of the Pskov region is possible through the development of the export potential of the region, the infrastructure of foreign economic activity (primarily through the development of transport, logistics and customs services), as well as the consistent implementation of the region's investment policy. The significant presence of Asian partners in regional investment projects (the Moglino SEZ) and the development of transport and logistics corridors with access to the Baltic will contribute to an increase in transit to the EU countries through the territory of the Pskov Region. The strengthening of Asia-EAEU-EU trade and transport links, the creation of transport corridors with access to the ports of the Baltic Sea will not only increase the transit potential of the region, but also create a new strategic industry in the Pskov region economy. Further institutionalization of cross-border cooperation, involving the active involvement of border areas in the work of numerous regional and international organizations, will make it possible not only to intensify the foreign trade activity of the Pskov region, but also to stimulate trade and economic development, innovation and investment cooperation, and the formation of border infrastructure in the region.

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