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ON SHIPPING AND PASSENGER CONNECTIONS
BETWEEN GDYNIA AND BALTIYSK/KALININGRAD

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INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted at the request of Municipality of Gdynia, a partner of the project entitled: *'INTERFACE – Intermodal and Cross-border Passenger Transport Solutions supporting Integration in Interface Regions in SBA'*, (INTERFACE project) in accordance with an agreement dated 26 September, 2011.

According to the agreement, the study is supposed be an expert opinion and it includes elements which were strictly defined by the ordering party. It is based on the assumptions formulated in the INTERFACE project –and contains a search for solutions supporting the idea of 'Gdynia as the passenger-friendly seaport'.

The aim of the study was the analysis and evaluation of existing conditions of passenger shipping transportation between Gdynia and Baltiysk/Kaliningrad, as well as defining prospects for the line development in the future.

The authors of the study gathered available data and opinions from workers of 'Żegluga Gdańska' Co. Ltd. Gdańsk, which is nowadays the sole carrier on the line analysed in the study, and from land carriers: PKP S.A. (Polish State Railways S.C.) and PKS-Gdańsk Sp. z o.o. (Bus Transport Company Co. Ltd.). The information concerning visa requirements was obtained from consulates: Russian Federation General Consulate in Gdańsk and General Consulate of Poland in Kaliningrad.

In order to supplement gathered data and opinions, the authors of the study went on the cruise from Gdynia to Baltiysk and back, and went on a coach trip on the route: Gdańsk – Kaliningrad – Gdańsk. The information concerning tourist offers was obtained from travel agencies and their experience in organizing trips to Kaliningrad.

Finally, the results of introducing local visa-free traffic on the analysed line were considered and the factors determining the development of passenger shipping connection in long-term prospect.

1. PASSENGER SHIPPING CONNECTION BETWEEN GDYNIA AND BALTIJYSK/KALININGRAD - STATUS QUO

1.1. Conditions of obtaining a visa, border control and passenger service in Gdynia and Baltijsk analysed in terms of passengers' expectations.

The duty of obtaining a visa has always a negative influence on passenger traffic between countries. In case of restrictive regulations the flow of travellers is severely limited. A good example of such restrictions is the passenger traffic between Poland and the USA where the refusal of granting someone a visa can be caused not only by some objective criteria, but also by the consulate official's suspicions that an applicant plans to work in the USA. There's no guarantee of crossing the frontier, even if a person has the visa, because an immigration official can turn the passengers back to the country from which they arrive, if he considers it right.

However, even if obtaining a visa is quite easy, it still constitutes a certain limitation. The countries which derive profit from constant tourist traffic have simplified visa procedures to a great extent. Visas can be obtained on a border crossing after paying a fixed fee, and they are obviously an additional cost and a burden especially for tourists who are not comfortably well-off.

As of 1 June 2007 the Agreement between the European Communion and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of European Communion and the Russian Federation¹ came into force. The purpose of the Agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas for an intended stay of no more than 90 days per period of 180 days to the citizens of the European Union and the Russian

¹ The announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland concerning the Agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the European Union and the Russian Federation dated 29 May 2007 (The Agreement does not apply to Denmark, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or Ireland) as well as the Information on Visas by General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad for Polish entities offering trans-frontier co-operation with partners in Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation.

Federation. The Agreement introducing the rules of obtaining visas to the Russian Federation applies also to the citizens of the Republic of Poland. At the same time, the provision of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Russian Federation on conditions of travel of Polish citizens and citizens of the Russian Federation signed on 18 September 2003, which enabled to issue free-of-charge visas to Polish citizens, legally residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland, and travelling to Kaliningrad Oblast, became invalid.

In connection with the Agreement mentioned above, the rules of obtaining visas in reciprocal travelling between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation changed in some cases. These changes also apply to some elements of trans-frontier co-operation. Since 1 June 2007 visa procedures defined in some articles of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Russian Federation on conditions of travel of citizens of both countries, and concerning the passenger traffic to Kaliningrad Oblast, have no longer been valid. The changes in relation to previous solutions are presented below:

- a) The Agreement introduces an obligation to present original documents justifying the purpose of the journey during the visa application process. In order to conduct the trans-frontier co-operation, the Polish entity should deliver to their Russian partner an original document proving that there is a will to maintain such a contact. The document should contain all identification data of the Polish entity, including the name and position of the person who signs the document together with addresses and telephone numbers, as well as similar data concerning the Russian entity. Detailed personal data of invited Russian citizens should be given, including date of birth, number of the identity document, time and purpose of the journey, number of entries and name of minor children accompanying the invited person. Documents sent by fax or e-mail do not meet the condition of original documents. Specific solutions for presenting documents by different groups of travellers are defined in Art. 4 of the Agreement.
- b) Articles 5 and 6 of the Agreement are the most significant as far as the realization of trans-frontier co-operation is concerned.
- c) Art. 5 defines categories of persons who are entitled to apply for multiple-entry visas with the term of validity of up to 5 years in some cases. For example, these persons are: members of national and regional Governments and Parliaments, close relatives, members of official delegations, business people, persons participating in scientific,

cultural, artistic and sports activities, journalists, participants in official exchange programmes organized by twin cities.

- d) Art. 6 of the Agreement determines the standard fee for processing visa applications amounting to EUR 35, regardless of a type of the visa (single or multiple, stay or transit visas).
- e) In cases where the visa application and the supporting documents have been submitted within 3 days before the applicant's envisaged date of departure the fee amounts to EUR 70. At the same time, fees for processing visa application are waived for some categories of persons, e.g. close relatives, members of official delegations, members of national and regional Governments and Parliaments, pupils and students, disabled persons and the person accompanying them, cases of misfortune (urgent medical treatment, funeral, serious disease of a close relative), participants in youth international sports events, persons participating in scientific, cultural and artistic activities (including university programmes and other exchange programmes), participants in official exchange programmes organised by twin cities.
- f) Art. 4 of the Agreement specifies documents sufficient for justifying the purpose of the journey, which are required during the visa application process. In cases of trans-frontier co-operation the documents are, among others::
- official delegations of central and regional authorities,
 - business people and representatives of business organisations,
 - journalists,
 - persons participating in scientific, cultural and artistic activities, including university and other exchange programmes,
 - pupils, students, post-graduate students and accompanying teachers who undertake trips for the purposes of study or educational training including the framework of exchange programmes and other school related activities,
 - participants in international sports events and persons accompanying them in a professional capacity,
 - participants in official exchange programmes organised by twin cities,
 - close relatives of persons legally residing on the territory of the Republic of Poland on the basis of permit or long-term visa,
 - persons visiting military or civil burial grounds.
- g) Art. 7 of the Agreement determines the length of procedures for processing visa applications which amounts to 10 calendar days. The period of time for taking a decision on a visa application may be reduced to three working days or less in urgent cases (subject to an additional charge mentioned in point 4) or extended to 30 calendar days.

- h) In practice, provisions which introduce facilitation of the issuance of visas for members of official delegations, national and regional governments and parliaments (authorities) and twin cities, apply to basic elements of trans-frontier co-operation of local governments. Therefore a sufficient document justifying the purpose of the journey is an original written request from Polish authorities at voivodeship, county, municipal or district level; i.e. from a voivodeship governor/marshal, presidents/mayors of cities/towns, prefects and village administrators. In other cases detailed instructions are included in articles to the Agreement mentioned above.
- i) Persons applying for tourist visas can obtain them by presenting the evidence of service reservation and the purchase of tourist services on the territory of the Republic of Poland. These visas enable a person to entry and stay only for fulfilling the purpose of the journey and within the period defined in the above-mentioned documents, which means they are single visas.

Visas to the Russian Federation

Obtaining a Russian visa in the Consulate in Gdańsk is not very troublesome. In order to receive a visa it is necessary to submit a completed form with a valid photograph, a passport, as well as the confirmation of paying for the passport fee and insurance. The fee for visa amounts to PLN 137 in the normal course of processing, which means that the visa will be ready within 5 to 10 days. In case of the faster course (receipt of visa within 1 to 3 days) the fee amounts to PLN 275. The fee can be paid for at the bank or at the post office.

Insurance cost for a trip of up to 5 days amounts to PLN 18 -21. Most visas are obtained on the basis of a written request from the host person residing in the Russian Federation; however, it must meet the requirements which are strictly defined. If a person is invited by an institution and it concerns scientific co-operation visa issuance is free of charge.

Travel agencies receive visas for organising trips to the Russian Federation without invitations but with co-operation of counterpart agencies in Russia. In the case of an individual tourist trip it is necessary to pay for the mentioned fees and vouchers for every day of the trip. On the grounds of own observations made in the Russian Consulate in Gdańsk, it can be noticed that travel agencies obtain visas much faster and more efficiently because they use developed relationships with the Consulate visa office. There are also some

firms which offer their assistance in obtaining visa and purchasing insurance and vouchers at an extra charge.

According to unofficial information gathered in the Consulate, the number of issued visas for the last three years has remained on the level of around 60 thousand per year. It applies, however, to all visas to Russia. There is no information how many of these visas were issued to Kaliningrad Oblast. It should be also noted that a lot of tourist groups and individual persons travel to Kaliningrad only to get on the airport and fly to other parts of the Russian Federation from there.

Visas to the Republic of Poland

The conditions of obtaining a Polish visa in the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad are similar to the requirements imposed in the Russian Consulate in Gdańsk. There are, however, certain differences. A very important facilitation for persons applying for a Polish visa is the possibility of downloading forms of visa applications from the website of the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad. Forms are available in Russian and English language versions. On the website the Consulate points out that it is necessary to submit original documents justifying the purpose of the journey to Russian partners appropriately in advance, however, if it is impossible to submit the original invitation in due time, the Consulate accepts a fax copy of the document. Moreover, since 1 February 2010 the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad introduced a rule which says that visa applications are accepted after their prior registration on the website.

The visa department issues so called coupons which entitle a person to submit a visa application if they have a private invitation from natural persons or in urgent cases, e.g. telegrams etc. Detailed information on the Internet registration is available on the website in Russian version.

The information on visa fees is also available on the Consulate website and the example of it is presented below:

Tab.1. CONSULATE FEES (paid in EUR)

Type of visa	RF	Belarus	Serbia	Balkans	Other
Airport Schengen (uniform)					60
Stay, short-term Schengen (uniform) - single, double, multiple	35	60	35	35	60
Stay, long-term national - single, double, multiple	60	20	20	60	60
Special procedure – stay visas, transit - Schengen (uniform) - Russia	70	n/a	70	n/a	n/a
Acceptance and consideration of application for repeated issuance of Schengen or national visa	60				

ATTENTION:

1. The above mentioned fees apply to the process of considering visa applications and in case of refusal the fees are not given back.
2. Children under 12 who have the Russian and Belorussian citizenship are exempted from the obligation to make Consulate payments for visa issuance, whereas children who have the citizenship of other countries are exempted from the obligation to make payments – only a decision of the Consul.
3. Children under 18 who have Ukrainian and Moldavian citizenship are exempted from the obligation to make payments for visa issuance.
4. Foreigners who apply for a repatriation visa (on the grounds of certain regulations), as well as family members of repatriates who leave permanently their country and want to reside in Poland receive a free-of-charge visa.
5. All other cases of exemption from payments are specified in Art. 6 of the Agreement on simplification of visa regime between the European Communion and the Russian Federation, as well as Ukraine, Moldavia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania.
6. Citizens of Albania who have biometric passports are exempted from the obligation to have a visa.
7. Citizens of the Russian Federation who accompany person with I disabled category are exempted from the obligation to make Consulate payments.

It should be particularly emphasized that the rule of exempting persons who accompany the disabled from the obligation to make visa payments significantly helps and makes it easier for the disabled to cross the Polish frontier.

The number of positive visa decisions made in individual years 2009 to 2011, in the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland appears as follows²:

2009	-	56950
2010	-	74114
2011	-	82299 (to 11.10.2011)

The significant increase in visa traffic is easily noticed. The General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad is the only Polish institution in Kaliningrad Oblast which issues multiple tourist visas under a condition to buy at least 3-day stay in any place in Poland. Multiple tourist visas are issued for 90 days and are valid from 6 months to 1 year and they constitute about 60% of the total number of issued visas. For over two years the Consulate has been issuing more and more visas with the validity period of 2 or more years.

The most frequent reason of applying for a visa is a 'tourist and shopping' motive. Applications for issuing visas because of this reason constitute about 50-60% of the total number of submitted visa applications. Moreover, even the applications for visas within the trans-frontier co-operation are mostly the trips combined with holiday and shopping in different cities and department stores in Poland.

A little alarming phenomenon is the fact that more and more often Russian tourists from Kaliningrad treat Poland as a transit country. One reason for this situation is the fact that residents of Kaliningrad Oblast have already visited Poland several times and now they look for more interesting tourist offers in other countries of the Schengen Area. Russian tourists from other parts of the Russian Federation who visit the health resorts in Kaliningrad Oblast and Poland are becoming quite high percentage. If certain visa and communication facilitations were introduced, a similar offer could be very interesting for Polish and West Eastern tourists, who go on holidays to Polish eastern coast.

² Data gathered from the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad.

Border control

Russian border guards require that the intention to go on the voyage should be submitted at least three days before the cruise. Formalities can be conducted at the cash desk of Żegluga Gdańska in person or by telephone. Passengers of the cruise to Baltiysk should arrive at the terminal an hour before the cruise begins. The border control takes place in the redecorated building of the sailing station in Nabrzeże Pomorskie. At the customs check-point passengers should submit a valid passport, a ticket and visa voucher which makes it possible to take an active part in the trip around Baltiysk town. Border control and customs clearance in Gdynia, on the way to Baltiysk, is fast and lasts, depending on the number of passengers, up to 30 minutes. Passengers will not face any difficulties while going ashore or boarding the ship in Baltiysk, either. However, after coming back to Gdynia, the border control is much longer, which is caused by fairly detailed customs control in terms of allowed limits of alcohol and tobacco products import.

The border control in Baltiysk takes place in a newly-built ferry terminal which is well-equipped in order to cope with necessary border procedures. The waiting time for the border control is comparable to the border control on Polish side.

The situation is quite similar as far as the passengers travelling to Kaliningrad Oblast by train, coach or car, are concerned.

Polish border control when travelling from Poland to Russia is fast and efficient. The control of Russian citizens and citizens of countries not belonging to the EU is a little longer. The customs clearance is also cursory and random. Car drivers must open a bonnet and a boot and allow the border officers to control the car's interior.

The border control lasts longer on the Russian side. First, passengers must fill in a two-part border crossing form, which they sometimes find difficult. Next, Russian border guard checks the form (he must take one part and the other part of the form must be returned while coming back), passport and visa and enters data to the informatics system. Thus, the

border control of the whole coach takes about 1 to 2 hours, which often causes traffic jams, especially when a few coaches arrive at the same time.

Russian border control is usually cursory, although a little more thorough in relation to Russian citizens. However, from time to time, quite unexpectedly, strict and detailed controls with almost repressions take place.

The situation is different while travelling from Kaliningrad Oblast to Poland. Russian border control and customs clearance are the same as the one upon entry. However, on the Polish side the border control and customs clearance are on principle very detailed. All rooms and lockers on trains and coaches are controlled and searched; random control of passengers' luggage and even body search can also take place.

Cars are searched very scrupulously with the help of tools, mirrors and speculums. Car upholstery is frequently taken off, the seats and bonnets are taken out. For passengers, who are not interested in border trade but tourism, such situations are really deterring.

1.2. Evaluation of voyage conditions

The basis of the evaluation was the cruise by the ship of Żegluga Gdańska from Gdynia to Baltiysk and back, in which the co-authors of the study took part. During the cruise a survey among passengers was conducted and the information on travelling motives and on opinions about travelling conditions was gathered. Cruises between Gdynia – Baltiysk – Gdynia are carried out by Żegluga Gdańska with the use of catamarans, type: 'Koral'. The photograph and technical specification of one of them is presented below.

m/s AGAT	
type:	passenger catamaran IMO no 8805949, Call sign SPG 2625
owner:	Żegluga Gdańska Sp. z o.o., Ship Register ROG/S/137
length	37.59 m
beam	11.50 m
freeboard	4.40 m

draft	2.83 m		
total height	16.5 m		
Built	1988 in Stocznia Wisła, Gdańsk		
GRT	568		
NRT	170		
Speed	12 knots		
Radio	GMDSS A1	ISM Code	ISPS holder
Classifier	PRS KM III/1/pass	Class certificate valid to 15.03.2014	
Transport capacity	max. 490 persons + 50 bicycles		
Central engines	2xSULZER (lic.) type 6 AL 20/26 2x420 kW AT 750 rp/m		
Supporting engines	2xHENSCHTEL (lic.) type 52 H6 2x147 kW AT 1500 rp/m		

The ship seakeeping ability allows operating effectively in sea state of 4-6 Beaufort



Source: website of Żegluga Gdańska
Fig. 1 Ship AGAT

The cost of ticket for the Gdynia – Baltiysk – Gdynia cruise is PLN 50. Each passenger receives a voucher which enables to cross the border with Russia without the necessity of having a visa. However, the intention to participate in the cruise must be submitted 4 days before the cruise. The list of passengers, made on the basis of applications, is sent by Żegluga Gdańska to the Russian border guard and on its basis the border control is conducted in Baltiysk. However, the necessity of personal or telephone application for the cruise in the cash desk is certainly a disadvantage and an inconvenience. There is no possibility to submit an electronic application. Tickets are sold in cash desks in Gdańsk, at Długie Pobrzeże, on the Motława, in Nowy Port and Gdynia, at Nabrzeże Pomorskie.



Source: photograph by M. Burchacz

Fig.2. A queue of cruise participants in front of the Marine Terminal – ticket purchase and border control

According to the timetable, the ship leaves from Gdynia at 8:30 a.m. and the cruise takes 5 hours, depending on weather conditions. The return to Gdynia is planned at 7:00 p.m. Taking into consideration the time spent on the border control passengers have about half an hour for a short trip round Baltiysk.

Passengers and co-authors of the study agree that the service both in terminals and on the ship is polite and efficient. Disabled passengers have ramps and lifts for wheelchairs at their disposal in Nabrzeże Pomorskie. It is much worse, however, on the ship where

thresholds between compartments make it impossible for passengers on wheelchairs to move around and the crew help is then necessary.

The ship is clean and well-preserved, and the cruise is calm and smooth. Safety requirements are fulfilled and the passengers are informed in detail what to do in case of emergency.

The basic disadvantage is the length of the cruise. It is practically impossible to visit Baltiysk let alone to visit Kaliningrad or to go on a trip to the Sambia Peninsula. The five-hour-long journey is not attractive even for travellers who want to taste charm of the sea. The ship does not offer any attractions apart from a duty-free shop, a bar and music on board. The situation becomes even worse if weather conditions are bad.

1.3. Communication accessibility of terminals for non-motorized passengers in Gdynia and Baltiysk.

Communication accessibility of the terminal in Gdynia is quite satisfying. Whether you travel from Tricity or any place in the whole voivodeship, it is very easy to reach Gdynia using train or bus transport. It is very comfortable to use the SKM-trains on the route between Tczew and Wejherowo.

There is a well-developed bus network in Gdynia which enables efficient communication with Nabrzeże Pomorskie, where catamarans belonging to Żegluga Gdańska begin their journey to Baltiysk. However, because the closest bus stop is located in Świętojańska St., opposite Kościuszko Square, it is necessary to cover a distance of several hundred meters to reach the Marine Terminal.

During holidays there is also a free bus line 050 from the train station and the passenger boat marina in Nabrzeże Pomorskie. The location of the initial bus stop in the distance from the train station, by the market hall (Central Railway Station – Market Hall) , as well as the lack of information at the train station or on the Internet is a serious disadvantage concerning the cruises to Baltiysk.

The situation is much worse in Baltiysk. In the town only selected connections are operated by buses and taxis. There is no regular connection between the ferry marine and the railway station and the city centre, so travel to the ferry terminal is possible only with the help of one's own or hired means of transport. The situation is caused probably by the fact that the terminal is not used frequently.

On the other hand, communication from Baltiysk to other cities of Kaliningrad Oblast is good. There is a developed bus network and train connections which make the communication effective. The route Baltiysk – Kaliningrad is operated by buses line number 107, which leave Baltiysk from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Kaliningrad from 6:00 a.m. to 0:20 a.m. During rush hours buses run every 15 minutes, and during remaining time they run every 30 minutes. The length of travel amounts to 1.5h. Baltiysk is also connected with Kaliningrad by a non-electrified single-track railway, which is 47 km long. There are plans for the year 2012 to begin works to open a railbus connecting the railway station in Baltiysk with the marine terminal, which would certainly solve the existing problem of lack of any communication in this section. The marine terminal in Baltiysk operates not only connection with Gdynia, but also connections with Saint Petersburg, Sassnitz and Klaipeda.

1.4. Information on voyage destinations.

Market economy is described as the economy controlled by demand. Thus, before considering the purposefulness of any activity, the analysis of potential demand should be taken into account.

A starting point of such an approach, in case of the shipping connection which is under consideration in this study, should be searching for the answer to the following question: who and for what reasons will use the connection. Connections between Tricity with a population of 800 thousand people, and Kaliningrad with a population of 400 thousand, are obvious only in theory, because the existing connections are not attractive regarding the length of the journey.

It would take 8 hours for a train from Gdynia to reach Kaliningrad if there were standard railway tracks on the whole route. The exploited railway line is electrified only in the section Gdynia – Bogaczewo. It is necessary then, either to use the diesel traction on the whole route, or to change it, for example, in Elbląg. At the same time, the existing plans of developing railways include modernisation of this line only in the section Gdynia – Malbork as a part of connection Gdynia – Warsaw – Cracow. The present quality of transport can be thus improved only in relation to the state of rolling stock, which is really poor. This connection, which is frequently closed, is open only in summer which proves that it is not very attractive.

The journey by coach takes now about 6 hours, however this time can be shortened when the modernization of the expressway S7 is completed, especially the sections between Gdańsk and Elbląg, as well as road networks in Tricity.

This way of travelling can be much more attractive or comfortable for a certain group of travellers than the shipping connection. It takes 5h for the existing tonnage to reach Baltiysk, from where passengers have to travel for 1.5h to Kaliningrad. The sea journey, however, has a lot of tourist attractions and the advantage of border controls taking place in the harbour, and not in the middle of anywhere. Moreover, the journey to ports of the Russian Federation, the only country at the Baltic Sea which is not a member of the EU, gives the opportunity to sell and buy duty-free products. This fact seems to be the decisive factor in choosing this form of journey and in its attractiveness.

Total demand for journeys of this type is created by the following potential groups of clients:

- A. ‘tradesmen’ who go shopping either on board of a ship or in the port of destination,
- B. tourists who choose the sea voyage either just for the sake of it, or because it is a convenient way of reaching certain places to visit,
- C. holiday makers who travel to the port of destination or its areas on holidays and for this reason they choose a sea voyage,
- D. members of official delegations or business people.

The two last groups of passengers are rather uncertain regarding the concerned shipping connection. Group D prefers travelling by car, especially a company car. In the future, this group will use airline connection when it is opened. Previous trials of LOT airlines from Warsaw have ended in a fiasco. Theoretically, ‘company trips’ could be considered as an additional attraction to such meetings and conferences. In practice, however, the necessity of having a visa for participants not residing in Kaliningrad Oblast or residing in a few counties of Pomeranian and Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship is a real obstacle and disadvantage. One way or another, this sector of demand will have a rather marginal character and influence on this shipping connection.

Sector C, i.e. a group of potential holiday makers both from Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast, seems not to have a great importance for the development of the shipping connection. Apart from the fact that citizens of both countries, who have the right for visa-free traffic, do not show any particular interest in this type of holiday, Kaliningrad Oblast does not seem to be very attractive for Poles. On the other hand, Russians, who can afford holidays abroad, choose different places and routes. Therefore, main sectors of demand for sea transport between Gdynia – Baltiysk / Kaliningrad are groups A and B. The data concerning transport carried out by Żegluga Gdańska on the route between Gdynia – Baltiysk, and presented in Table 1, seems to confirm the above-mentioned opinion. This data applies to 2003 and partly 2004 and it illustrates the size of transport in conditions of free-visa traffic. The year 2003, which was the last full year before Poland entered the European Union, meant 74.2 thousand of passengers in 339 cruises, with the average 58.4% of passengers aboard. Later on, it was worse and worse, until the use of connection in fact ceased at all. There was only 1 cruise in 2010. This state of affairs allows evaluating what was the influence of introducing paid visas on the way the connection was functioning. It can also be assumed that ‘commercial’ trips were of the key importance. During the months of rather unfavourable weather conditions the following numbers of passengers were transported:

January 2003 – 2288 passengers

February 2003 – 4282 passengers
March 2003 – 5503 passengers
November 2003 – 3444 passengers
December 2003 – 2407 passengers

It constituted about 24% of the total number of passengers using the connection in 2003. These proportions remained generally the same, with a certain increase in the number of passengers in the following months: from January to March and from November to December. The percentage was as follows: in 2004 about 26%, in 2005 about 26%, in 2006 about 28%, in 2007 about 30%. The majority of these passengers certainly were not tourists enjoying the pleasures of sea voyage or sightseeing in Baltiysk, Kaliningrad or Tricity. If the possibility of free-duty trade and differences in prices between Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast remain the same, it is possible that the passengers from sector A will play a significant part in transport numbers on the considered connection. The group will be probably dominated by residents of Tricity and counties of Pomeranian Voivodeship which will be included in the visa-free traffic.

Residents of Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, who deal with this type of trade, will not use the sea connection, but rather the connection from Elbląg. The thing of great importance for passengers from sector A will be the ticket prices.

This assumption was confirmed by observations made by co-authors of the study during the cruise to Baltiysk. The present profile of an average passenger is as follows:

- a male,
- average age: about 65 years,
- pensioner, retired, unemployed,
- place of residence: Tricity and areas.

Tab. 1 THE ANALYSIS OF CRUISES between 2003 and 2011

month	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
NUMBER OF CRUISES													
2003	12	20	26	19	40	35	59	44	35	14	20	15	339
2004	7	11	12	19	41	63	32	36	17	23	12	13	286
2005	7	10	12	20	14	13	19	15	14	12	15	9	160
2006	6	1	9	8	8	9	9	8	7	7	9	9	90
2007	4	7	8	4	11	9	8	7	8	8	5	7	86
2008	1	5	4	7	6	3	3	1	2	0	1	1	34
2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	1	9
2011	0	0	2	4	4	3	5	4					22
NUMBER OF PASSENGERS													
2003	2288	4282	5503	4585	8115	7587	13521	12000	7857	2602	3444	2407	74191
2004	901	1611	2080	2961	3565	6407	2745	3653	2297	2948	1965	1973	33106
2005	740	1046	1397	2133	1997	2535	3600	2504	2246	1559	1594	1105	22456
2006	1120	550	3108	2752	3047	3541	4169	4227	3827	2894	3317	3116	35668
2007	1100	2422	3575	1868	4066	5061	4671	3526	3730	2981	1907	2264	37171
2008	297	1249	1048	1541	963	307	373	102	152	0	50	48	6130
2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	102	102
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	193	692	618	194	1697
2011	0	0	436	612	884	664	1192	928	0	0	0	0	4716
FILLING RATIO (percentage)													
2003	52,96	59,47	58,79	67,03	56,35	60,21	63,66	75,76	62,36	51,63	47,83	44,57	58,39
2004	36,01	40,81	46,72	46,34	36,80	53,50	32,74	34,95	34,65	32,87	41,99	38,93	39,69
2005	27,11	26,82	29,85	27,35	36,58	49,99	48,58	42,80	41,14	33,31	27,25	31,47	35,19
2006	23,93	70,51	36,31	41,20	38,09	50,41	46,32	52,84	54,67	41,34	36,86	34,62	43,93

2007	27,50	34,60	44,69	46,70	36,96	56,23	58,39	50,37	46,63	37,26	38,14	32,34	42,48
2008	38,08	32,03	33,59	28,22	20,58	13,12	15,94	13,08	9,74	0	6,41	6,15	18,08
2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36,43	36,43
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,74	20,72	20,60	19,40	21,37
2011	0	0	27,95	29,88	43,16	43,23	46,56	45,31	0	0	0	0	39,35
TOTAL 2003 – 2011:													
NUMBER OF CRUISES													1027
NUMBER OF PASSENGERS													215237
FILLING RATIO %													37,21

The average passenger gathers some information about the cruises from friends, takes part in the cruise at least twice a month, and their key purpose of the journey is duty-free shopping and social meetings.

The most promising sector in relation to the future of the sea connection is sector B, i.e. passengers who are tourists. These passengers, however, are very demanding. The price is not the most important thing that they pay attention to. The comfort of travelling, tourist offer and the level of complications and difficulties in dealing with formalities, are more significant aspects. The passengers will, in majority, come from areas that are not covered by visa-free traffic. The way the consulates work and the level of formalities completed by travel agencies will be of great importance for them. The number of potential passengers from this group will probably increase together with the growth in earnings of Polish and Russian citizens (however, not only, or not above all from Kaliningrad Oblast). Winning these clients will mean fulfilling a lot of requirements which are described in next parts of this study. A certain, temporary increase in numbers of passengers can be expected during EURO 2012, which fact could be used for a special promotion of the shipping connection.

1.5. Barriers of passenger transport between Gdynia – Baltiysk

While taking into consideration the barriers of passenger transport development between Gdynia - Baltiysk/Kaliningrad one cannot examine only the shipping line. Other, competitive means of transport, such as trains, coaches and cars, should be taken into account.

Without a doubt, the basic obstacle in passenger transport development between Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast, including the line concerned in the study, is the necessity of obtaining visas. This obligation is related to all passengers and all means of transport. Obtaining a visa entails specific and negative implications, such as:

- the necessity to plan the journey much earlier,
- the necessity to go to the Consulate,
- a few-days' waiting period,

- incurring the costs of a visa, insurance, travel to the Consulate and vouchers.

Data presented in Table 2 show how much the transport on the shipping route between Gdynia – Baltiysk decreased after introducing visas (1 June, 2007).

Another obstacle, partly connected with visa duty, is the fact of a lot of difficulties in crossing the border. This obstacle is also connected with all types of transport; however, it is the most troublesome in case of the journey by car. The difficulties are presented below:

- long-lasting border control on the Russian side, which means, especially for cars, traffic jams and can sometimes lengthen time of crossing the border to several hours,
- restrictive and time-consuming customs clearance, especially on the Polish side (see: p. 1.1 and 1.2),
- occasional repressive behaviour of border and customs officers towards people crossing the border.

As mentioned above, passengers travelling on the route between Gdynia and Baltiysk/Kaliningrad can use not only the sea connection, but also railway or coach transport, or travel by car. The individual means of transport are characterized below.

Railway transport

Railway transport offers one direct route between Gdynia and Kaliningrad. The train runs from Gdynia, through the border crossing in Braniewo and to Kaliningrad. The whole route is 261 km long. The train leaves the station Gdynia Główna at 4:50 a.m., and arrives in Kaliningrad at 4:00 p.m. The journey takes 9 hours and 10 minutes, including a more than 2-hour-long stopover in Tczew which is connected with changing the locomotive and completing multiple units. The return connection, Kaliningrad – Gdynia, is very similar. The train leaves Kaliningrad at 6:23 p.m., and arrives in Gdynia Główna at 0:28.

The price of a one-way ticket bought in Poland is PLN 80.

Because of the lack of electrical traction and single-track system on the major part of the route, both from Kaliningrad to the border station Mamonowo/Braniewo and on the Polish

side, the railway line is operated by diesel locomotives, type SU46-004. The line is operated by PKP Intercity on the Polish side and Russian railways.



Source: sigman.kolej.org.pl

Fig. 3 A train to Kaliningrad – a stopover in Tczew

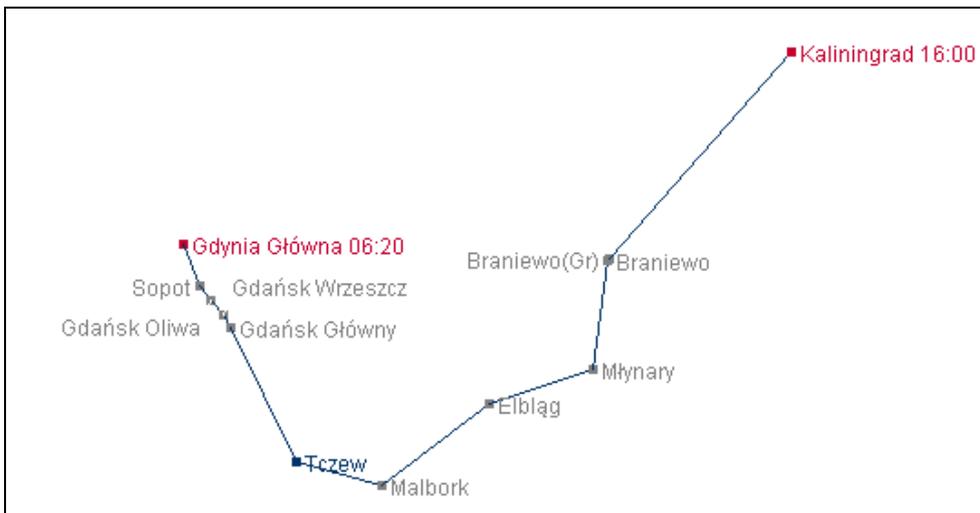


Fig. 4 Train connection line Gdynia - Kaliningrad (with a change of trains in Tczew)

Source: PKP website

In February 2010 the connection was suspended because of the small number of passengers. Therefore, the train which so far had run every day, started to run only in summer period; in timetable in 2010 from 29 May to 6 October. In 2011 the direct railway connection from Gdynia was open only to 3 October. After that, the connection was suspended and the railways offered another connection, however with three changes of trains through Warsaw – Sestokai – Vilnius and lasting 30 hours.

The decision to re-open the direct connection next year depends on the level of interest in the connection, as well as on the market and political situation. The decision is usually made at the last possible moment, during making changes to the temporary timetable.

The multiple unit of the international train Gdynia – Kaliningrad has on a standard basis 144 seats (i.e. 2 railway cars with 72 seats in each). If there is an increase in the number of passengers willing to travel this way there is a possibility to extend the unit with next railway cars. The information gathered from PKP Intercity office shows that the connection was not very popular among passengers and the attendance was very low. The average number of passengers was from 20 to 30 passengers, which means the 15% usage.

Main groups of passengers travelling by train on the route Gdynia – Kaliningrad are:

- residents of Braniewo, Młynary and neighbouring towns and villages,
- ‘tradesmen’, who go shopping in Kaliningrad,
- members of official delegations or business people,
- cadre, soldiers and their families from the military unit located in Braniewo.

The timetable of the international train from Gdynia to Kaliningrad is available on the websites of carriers and on national and foreign railway information portals. Moreover, the information concerning timetables can be obtained with the help of info-line and directly at the PKO information offices, at the railway stations in Gdynia, Gdańsk, Tczew, Malbork, Elbląg, Braniewo and in Kaliningrad.

Although the ticket price for the train journey is low, the lack of continuity of the connection, limits opportunities to start any business or tourist cooperation which require long-term planning.

Low attendance, with only 15% usage, makes the connection unprofitable for carriers. During summer period the interest in travelling by this connection is higher.

Investments in the railway infrastructure made in Kaliningrad Oblast, including extensive modernisation of the railway station in Kaliningrad, may suggest that the Russian party will support the development of railway connections, especially with South Europe.

Taking into account a relatively short length of railway connection, i.e. 261 km and the existing infrastructure there is a possibility of preparing a good product in the form of a convenient railway connection between Gdynia and Kaliningrad, shortening the time of travelling to 5 hours. However, such a project requires changes in the legal-political situation, marketing activities and mutual arrangements among carriers.

Coach connection between Gdańsk and Kaliningrad

The connection is operated by a Russian carrier which offers 3 connections a day in both directions. The route is 170 km long and it takes about 6 hours from Gdańsk to Kaliningrad and from 4 to 5 hours while going back. The price of the ticket is PLN 50 and there are no reductions of price. Tickets can be bought at the cash desk (every day but Sunday) or from the driver. Baggage allowed must not exceed 50 kg.

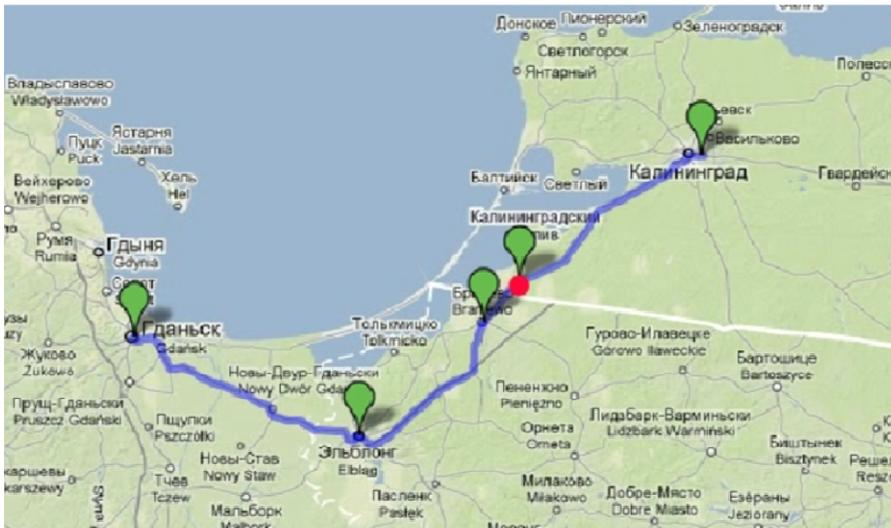


Fig. 5 Coach route: Gdańsk – Kaliningrad

Source: The website of the Russian carrier

A coach leaves PKS station in Gdańsk Główny every day at 6:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., and arrives in Kaliningrad at 12:15, 9:00 and 9:30 respectively. Departures from Kaliningrad are at 6:00 a.m., 6:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., and the planned arrivals in Gdańsk are 9:00, 10:00 and 20.10 respectively.

Information about connections and ticket prices is available on the Internet (PKS Gdańsk website); however, there is no detailed information about possibilities of buying tickets or number of a departure stand.

Railway and coach connections from Kaliningrad to Gdańsk, together with the time of the journey and prices, are available on the website: <http://www.konigsberg.ru/eng/kaliningrad/gdansk-kaliningrad.htm>. Information is given in Russian and English versions.

Attendance in coach connections is also rather low, although it ranges within 10% to 80%, depending on a day and season of the year.

Yacht cruise to Kaliningrad - <http://www.rejsymorskie.net/locja/kaliningrad/>

There is also a possibility of reaching Kaliningrad by yacht. Kaliningrad – which once was Królewiec, is the closest port east of Gdańsk, which can be visited in 3 days.

While entering territorial waters of the Russian Federation the yacht should report its position via marine VHF radio (canal 16), call out ‘Russian Coast Guard’ and give the destination port.

Baltiysk port is a naval base located at the sea, in which customs clearance and passport control take place. The yacht should come into an indicated pier and wait for the border guards and customs officers. When passports and visas are controlled, all other necessary documents are filled in and copies of main yacht and crew documentation is left, the yacht can continue its journey.

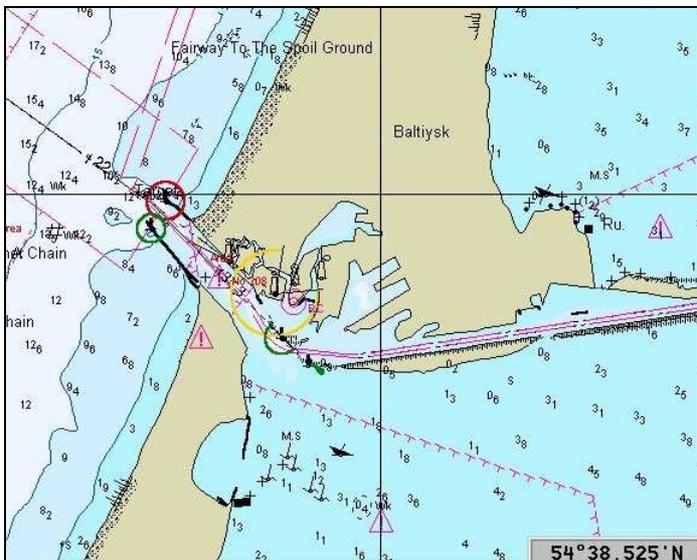


Fig. 6 Entrance from the sea to the Vistula Lagoon and the port in Baltiysk

There is a canal from Baltiysk to Kaliningrad, which is 20 nautical miles long (1 nautical mile = 1.852 km). It is very well marked with a lot of buoys and boards on its banks every 100m. The canal is limited by the spit from the Vistula-Kaliningrad Lagoon almost on its whole length. On the banks of the canal there are remains of the naval base, buildings, old ships and beautiful wild nature.



Fig. 7 Baltiysk – Kaliningrad Canal

The canal automatically goes into the port. However, finding a place to moor the yacht is a serious problem.

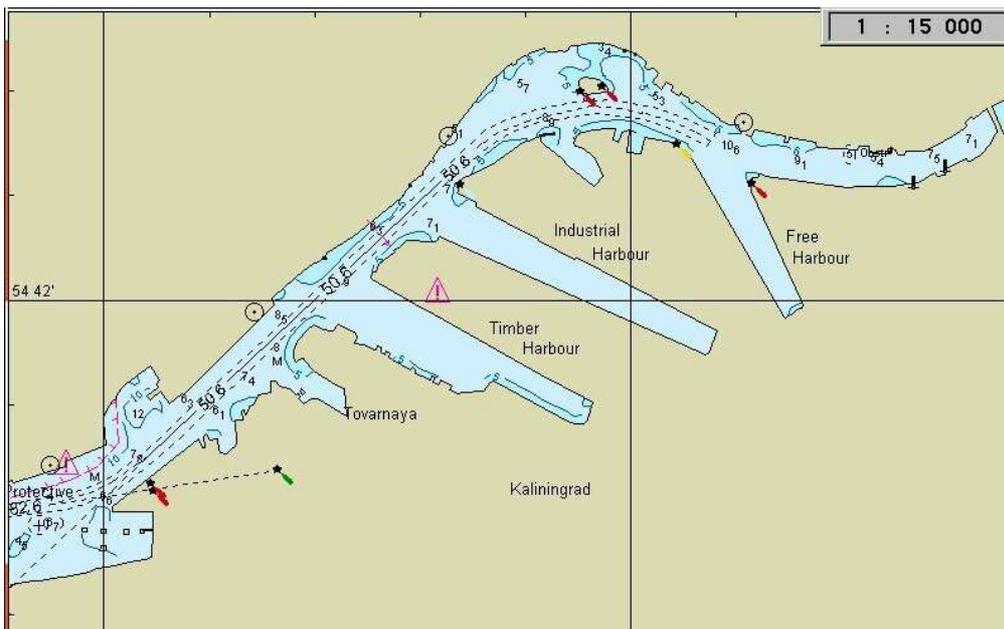


Fig. 8 Port of Kaliningrad

There are two possible places to choose. One is the quay: (free harbour), and the other possibility is a hydrofoil marina (for hydrofoils which used to come from Gdańsk and Frombork. The hydrofoil marina is a little bit friendlier for yachts. There are bitts and fenders

but the embankment is so high that it is difficult to climb it up. There are also washing facilities and toilets.

Co-authors of the study analysed the guidelines which are available on the portal for sailors and water tourists: POMORSKI SZLAK ŻEGLARSKI <http://www.zalewwislany.pl/zalew-kaliningradzki/nawigacja-prowadzenie-rejsu> (Pomeranian Shipping Route) and found out that the most fundamental problems water tourists wishing to visit Kaliningrad by yacht can face are as follows:

What can be surprising while shipping in the Kaliningrad Lagoon?

- Lack of possibility of mooring the yacht easily in Baltiysk port – embankments are uncomfortable and very high. The agreement to moor the yacht is given conditionally, e.g. when it is getting dark.
- Customs clearance and border control are very complicated, with a lot of forms to fill in. The necessity of having a few copies of yacht documentation (the crew list is a thing that is the most frequently missing, even if there are 5 copies on the yacht).
- Too few ports and marinas, in fact, there is only one genuine yacht marina called Kaliningrad Yacht Club which is, however, in the Kaliningrad Lagoon and not in the town. Other possible places are fishing ports where yachts usually moor only a few times a year.
- Lack of available data, especially for sailors, e.g. there is not even the Kaliningrad Yacht Club on official sea maps.
- Heavy traffic of ships on the Kaliningrad Sea Canal.

Travelling by car.

It could seem that the fastest way of travelling between Gdynia and Baltiysk/Kaliningrad is going by car, especially after modernisation of ‘Berlinka’, an old highway. Indeed, such a journey in favourable conditions could take about 3.5 to 4h. Unfortunately, the situation on border crossings mentioned above can make this type of travelling the longest of all.

To sum up the foregoing, the length of the journey on a relatively short distance is one of the most important barriers in the passenger transport development between Gdynia -

Baltiysk/Kaliningrad. It concerns all means of transport described in the study, and the shipping connection does not seem to be the worst one taking into account this point of view.

Undoubtedly, the scarcity of information or advertisements both from carriers and travel agencies does not help to develop the passenger transport between Gdynia - Baltiysk/Kaliningrad. There are no tourist guides working in Kaliningrad Oblast on the Polish market. Another barrier is relatively little economic exchange or scientific and technological cooperation with Kaliningrad Oblast. It is obvious that such a situation affects negatively the passenger transport.

Finally, it should be stressed that political factors also have an influence on the passenger transport development. Despite the fact, that Kaliningrad Oblast has its own regional government and partial independence it is still dependent on the central government which have strongly hindered the efforts of regional authorities and dampened citizens' enthusiasm and expectations of further integration with neighbouring countries. During the VII International Conference on 'Border Co-operation between the Russian Federation and EU and Norway' which was held in Kaliningrad on 22 – 23 September 2011, the Russian party showed willingness to intensify cooperation, however, it is not certain whether this tendency is of a permanent character or not. It seems that the Russian central government has not developed a consistent and clearly defined concept of the future of Kaliningrad Oblast. So far, regular political tensions between Russia and Poland immediately leave their imprint on economic cooperation, trans-frontier contacts, or even influence the traffic on border crossings.

1.6. Evaluation of brand names and tourist products, and co-operation of travel agencies.

The town of Baltiysk is a seaport and, because of its character (a naval base) and lack of tourist attractions, it is not a popular destination among tourists and travel agencies. People who use the shipping connection from Gdynia are mainly interested in free-duty shopping on board. The place which is much more interesting and attractive for tourists is Kaliningrad, located not far from Baltiysk.

One of the most famous tourist attractions in Kaliningrad is the Immanuel Kant Cathedral which has been reconstructed for a few years. It is located on the Kneiphof Island between the old and new Pregolya River.

The Immanuel Kant and Königsberg Museum on the tower of the Cathedral is truly fascinating and worth visiting. There are unique and extraordinarily interesting exhibitions presenting the history of the city, the Kneiphof Island and the cathedral. Old photographs, city maps and other items connected with the history of the city are also displayed. Because of these unique collections, during summer, the museum and cathedral are enormously popular among tourists, especially participants of trips from Germany.



Source: <http://www.national-geographic.pl/artykuly/pokaz/kaliningrad-bliski-wschod/>
Fig. 9 The Cathedral in Kaliningrad

The Kaliningrad Amber Museum, which is situated in the Dohna tower near the Rossergarten Gate, is also a major attraction. The museum houses extremely beautiful and interesting amber artworks and amber goods. There are amber pieces originating from tsarist Russia, as well as reconstructed fragments of the old Amber Room, which was brought to Kaliningrad during the World War II and stayed here for some time.

Another popular and attractive place in Kaliningrad is the central square together with the remains of pre-war buildings and battlements. One of the biggest markets in this part of Europe is situated here and it offers wide commercial variety of goods and low prices.

The newly-built Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, located on Victory Square, and the Museum of World's Oceans, which displays the newest technology on sea research and houses a lot of fascinating pieces, are also more and more popular among tourists. Next to the museum, there is a big submarine which can also be visited.

The Curonian Spit, with its unique flora and high dunes, is, undoubtedly, another very important tourist attraction of Kaliningrad areas. Seaside resorts, such as Sviety, Svetlogorsk and Zelenogradsk are also worth visiting.



Fig. 10 The landscape of coastal dunes in the Curonian Spit

Source: a photograph from W. Kuszewski's collection

Therefore, taking into account possibilities of increasing attractiveness of the shipping connection, it should be considered rather as the Gdynia – Baltiysk/Kaliningrad connection.

The sea and land connection could be used by people who travel to Kaliningrad Oblast as tourists and treat the cruise as an attraction, but also by people who travel for commercial and business reasons and want to join their trip with tourism. The size of potential demand for passenger transport by sea is, of course, the basic issue in the feasibility study of every shipping connection. However, the analysis of individual groups who may wish to use this shipping connection was discussed earlier in the study.

Assuming that passenger shipping transport is correlated with coach connection from Baltiysk to Kaliningrad, such a trip will cover:

- sea journey to Baltiysk,
- travel by coach from the marina to Kaliningrad,
- sightseeing tour round the city with night's lodgings,
- return by coach to Baltiysk,
- return by ship to Gdynia.

Organising the trip in this way will determine conditions of the shipping connection functioning. For tourist trips it will mean also longer time of the trip, as well as higher cost, especially because of high costs of night's lodgings in Kaliningrad. According to information given by travel agencies organising coach trips to Kaliningrad and its areas, the price of night's lodgings in the city centre amounts to about PLN 120, whereas on the outskirts about PLN 80. However, it is evaluated that such trips could become quite popular in summer, especially for tourists from other regions of the country (provided that visas are abolished).

In spite of the fact that Kaliningrad has a very rich history, saved or rebuilt historical monuments and museums, as well as very attractive touring areas, the town still is not very popular among Polish tourists. Opinions of travel agencies functioning in the regions neighbouring with Kaliningrad Oblast confirm this fact. The main reason of such a situation is the fact of the duty of having a visa while crossing the border with the Russian Federation, including Kaliningrad Oblast.

All travel agencies underline the importance of abolition of visas for increasing tourist traffic between Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast. At the same time it would foster the growing interest in journeys to Poland on the side of tourists from Kaliningrad Oblast, and develop tourist attractions on the side of Poland. Abolition of visas would significantly reduce journey costs and eliminate the necessity of dealing with all formalities connected with obtaining visas.

This assumption is confirmed by travel agencies which point out that this tourist destination had been extremely popular before the duty of having a visa was introduced. The most exciting and most popular attraction was a trip by hydrofoil from Elbląg to Kaliningrad. Therefore, it can be expected that introducing the 72-hour-long duty-free traffic for Polish citizens residing in border regions (Pomeranian and Warmian-Masurian Voivodeships), which has been discussed for a long time will contribute to the increase of mutual contacts and tourist trips.

Much higher interest in this tourist region can be observed among citizens of Germany where the destination was given wide publicity. The prices do not matter so much for this group of tourists, however, certain historical relationships and issues do.

One of the crucial issues in the study of purposefulness and functioning conditions of the shipping connection from Gdynia to Baltiysk/Kaliningrad is the problem of encouraging tourists to include sea journeys in the programmes of land trips and extending the journey to Kaliningrad.

The analysis of opinions of travel agencies, which function in the regions of Pomerania and regions of Kaliningrad Oblast and offer coach trips, indicates that Polish tourists are not very interested in such trips, mainly because of higher costs and longer duration. No travel agency showed any interest in trips on the basis of sea transport. Tourists could be possibly encouraged to such trips by organising events on the ship, such as music, concerts, advertisements, duty-free shopping etc.).

Therefore, it should not be expected that Polish or foreign tourists staying on holidays in Tricity will be highly interested in travelling to Kaliningrad by sea and land.

Foreign tourists, coming to Poland in organised groups, may be interested in the journey to Kaliningrad by ship. This category of tourists constituted majority of all passengers travelling from Poland to Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad Oblast. In this case, however, frequency, length of the cruise, prices and possibility of visiting attractive places are of essential importance. Then, the ships should be smaller; they should travel at high speed (hydrofoils) and run more often than once a week.

It should be emphasized that this group of tourists would use the offer only in summer period. There is still a question to be answered, though: ‘how to use the ships out of season?’

Passengers who use the shipping connection for the purpose of duty-free shopping and who want to join such a journey with tourism will also be interested in the offer.

However, persons travelling within economic and commercial cooperation, or whose offices are in the surrounding areas of Gdynia or Kaliningrad, will not be much interested in the offer. They will probably still use coach connections or travel by car.

Opening (in 1990s) Kaliningrad Oblast for foreign citizens created the opportunity to travel from Poland for tourist, commercial and business purposes and forced national travel agencies to offer and organise group trips to Kaliningrad and other attractive places. Travel agencies, referred to in this paragraph, are mainly situated in Gdańsk and Gdynia, as well as in Elbląg. They can organize trips from Tricity or Elbląg in cooperation with each other. It can be expected that part of the tourists, who use services of these travel agencies and for whom the journey by ship is an attraction, will be interested in taking part in a new, sea and land offer.

Offers which include programmes and cost of trips are available on the Internet sites of individual travel agencies. The programmes are framework and they can be adjusted to passengers’ needs and requests, whereas the costs depend on the route and the length of the trip.

Individual travel agencies, which are in the market of tourist services, cooperate with each other in the field of organisation, but particularly in the field of winning customers in order to complete whole groups of tourists, based on the number of seats in the coach.

Large travel agencies (so called tour-operators) sign employment contracts with their agents for a limited or indefinite period. If they have a client with a lower number of passengers than the number of seats in the coach, they offer free seats to their agents. However, because tourist offers are prepared on the base of the clients' needs and requests, they must agree with the solution presented above, or incur the total cost of the trip.

Polish travel agencies have also contacts with foreign agencies, for example, the Russian ones, and work together in the field of providing their customers with a tour guide at the place of destination.

Travel agencies run extensive advertising campaigns: they prepare folders, brochures, exhibitions during tourist fairs, offers sent to different possible customers, such as companies or schools. This procedure does not apply to Kaliningrad Oblast which is not rather a popular tourist destination.

Coach trips to Kaliningrad and surrounding areas are rarely organised in the period of May to September. Coaches that are used on this connection have about 40 to 50 passenger seats.

Moreover, travel agencies try to collect groups by means of regular ticket sale (for an individual client), for example, during so called 'long weekends'. However, even such offers are not popular among tourists. It is evaluated that abolition of visas could encourage individual tourists and it would be possible to organize one or two groups during the season.

The consequence of the situation on the tourist market presented above is the fact that only a few travel agencies succeed in winning clients, whereas other agencies stopped organising such trips, e.g. Travel Agency 'LAUER' in Gdańsk.

One of the tourist agencies which deal with organizing trips from Elbląg to Kaliningrad and Kaliningrad Oblast is ELTUR civil law partnership – Travel Agency in Elbląg. In season 2011, the agency organised a few group trips for Polish tourists who were staying on holidays in the Vistula Spit and around it. Their frequency depended on the demand for tourist trips.

The trips mentioned above last from 1 to 3 days and are organised to the following destinations:

- Kaliningrad,
- Kaliningrad – Svetlogorsk,
- Kaliningrad – The Curonian Spit - Zelenogradsk.

Below there are examples of trip programmes which are offered to a client, especially a collective one.

Programme of 1-day trip to Kaliningrad:

6:30 a.m. leaving the gathering point in Elbląg and crossing the border in Gronowo/Mamonowo.

11:00 a.m. (local time), meeting a tour guide, sightseeing: museum and Immanuel Kant's grave in the Cathedral, Gates: Friedland Gate, King's Gate, Rossgarten Gate, Kaliningrad Amber Museum, city fortifications of Wranger and Der Doha towers, a newly-built orthodox church, a theatre, Victory Square, the most beautiful and the only surviving residential area called Amalienau, port district, sailors' cultural centre, a submarine on the Pregolya River. After sightseeing there is some free time (shopping on the central market).

5-6:00 p.m. leaving for Poland, time of arrival at about. 9:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Cost of the trip: PLN 96 per person (for a group of 40 persons). The price includes: travelling by coach, a guide, a local tour guide (5 h), insurance of medical expenses. There is an additional possibility of ordering dinner for about EUR 8 or EUR 10. The cost of entrance tickets (about EUR 8) and costs of obtaining a visa should also be added.

Trip to Kaliningrad – Svetlogorsk - length of time: 2 days.

Day 1:

6:30 a.m. leaving the gathering point in Elbląg and crossing the border in Gronowo/Mamonowo.

11:00 a.m. (local time), meeting a tour guide, sightseeing tour in Kaliningrad according to the programme of the 1-day trip.

After sightseeing – dinner and night's lodging in Kaliningrad.

Day 2

Breakfast and leaving for Svetlogorsk (40 km from Kaliningrad), meeting a tour guide, a walk around the health resort, sightseeing: the pre-war bathing institution with a water tower, old wooden summer houses, concrete Soviet holiday camps, cliff coast, which can be reached by cable railway or in a lift built after war, a sea front with the famous colourful summer clock. Next: dinner in Svietlogorsk (tasting a fish dish), afternoon coffee break.

5:00-6:00 p.m. leaving for Poland, expected arrival to Elbląg in the evening hours.

Cost of the trip: PLN 350 per person (for a group of 40 persons). The price includes: travelling by coach, 1 night at a hotel, board according to plan, a guide, a local tour guide, insurance of medical expenses. The price does not include costs of obtaining a visa or entrance tickets (about EUR 8).

Programme of a 3-day trip: Kaliningrad – The Curonian Spit – Zelenogradsk:

Day 1

6:30 a.m. leaving the gathering point in Elbląg and crossing the border in Gronowo/Mamonowo.

11:00 a.m. (local time), meeting a tour guide, sightseeing tour in Kaliningrad according to the programme of the 1-day trip.

After sightseeing – dinner and night's lodging in Kaliningrad.

Day 2

Breakfast, meeting a tour guide, travelling to the Curonian Spit ('Kurskaja Kosa' which is 98 km long), listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site as of its unique physical significance, shifting dunes, beautiful forests, charming villages, crystal clear, unpolluted air. Isolation of this area from urbanized Europe helped to maintain original nature. The most famous places in the area are:

- a national park 'Kurskaja Kosa' (with 140 species of different birds),
- an ornithological station, bird ringing centre (the whole process from catching a bird through bird ringing to setting it free, can be seen),
- Sergiusz of Radonezh orthodox church (a building of red brick and very simple interior, consecrated again in 1990),

- the witches' mountain (82 wooden sculptures presenting characters from Lithuanian mythology).

After sightseeing there is dinner and lodging in Zelenogradsk

Day 3

Breakfast, meeting a tour guide and going on a sightseeing tour around Zelenogradsk (a charming sea village which is a perfect place to have a good rest far from civilisation).

The sightseeing programme includes: a gothic St. Adalbert church, a building of a pre-war post office, old hotels, the Town Hall, old German villas for visitors to a spa, palaces.

5:00-6:00 p.m. leaving for Poland, expected arrival to Elbląg in the evening hours.

Cost of the trip: PLN 590 per person (for a group of 40 persons). The trip includes: travelling by coach, 2 nights' lodging, board according to the plan, a guide, a local tour guide, insurance of medical expenses. The price does not include costs of obtaining a visa or entrance tickets (about EUR 20 per person). There is an additional possibility of ordering dinner for about EUR 8 to EUR 10 per person.

Another travel agency VARIUSTUR in Elbląg deals with organising trips to Kaliningrad. During the summer period it organised 1-day trips to Kaliningrad together with obtaining visas for three groups of German tourists (within a trip round Poland). However, this travel agency did not record any interest shown by Polish tourists who, for example, stayed at the holiday camps.

At the same time, the travel agency offers the possibility to prepare a 1-day trip by 7-seater car with the sightseeing tour (about 5 h long) and a local tour guide. It can be also a trip for 1 or 2 persons provided that they incur the total cost of the trip.

Although VARIUSTUR offers 2-day trips, there were no people interested in the offer. In the travel agency's opinion the reason of such a situation is too high a cost because of night's lodging prices. Examples of offers for German tourists are available on the Internet. Framework programme of the trip is as follows:

Day 1

Arrival to Braniewo (from different places in Poland) in the afternoon hours, with accommodation in Warmia hotel***. Dinner served in a shelter with a barbecue and

combined with a regional evening party. Feast music, possibility of karaoke, night's lodging.

Day 2

Breakfast (smorgasbord). Departure (in the predetermined time) for a whole day's trip to Kaliningrad. Crossing the border in Gronowo/ Mamonowo.

The programme of sightseeing is similar to the programmes presented above. Moreover, the agency offers participants to visit places such as: Brandenburg Gate, the railway station, the statue of Kalinin, a ride to the cathedral – museum. Next, the visitors take a ride through the town and along Lithuanian battlements where Friedland Gate, King's Gate, Rossgarten Gate and numerous fortification structures can be seen. Subsequently, the participants of the trip visit the Kaliningrad Amber Museum, ride between two beautiful ponds towards the city centre and past a big city market. Next the ride goes past the Hanseatic Square (nowadays: Victory Square), the newly-built orthodox church, the Victory Column, Town Hall, department stores, the 'Mother Russia' monument, the Stock Exchange, Technical University, the Theatre, Schiller's Square and monument, the building of Baltic Fleet, the monument of two European bisons fighting with each other and symbolizing conflicts of opinions and views. There is a beautiful ZOO nearby, and opposite it there is an old, classical hotel 'Moscow'. Other places to see during the trip are 'FC Baltika' football stadium, the Cosmonaut monument, a park and St. Louise Church, the old residential area 'Amalienau', which is the best-preserved old part of the city and where there is the Embassy of Sweden and Embassy of the Republic of Poland. Finally, the participants of the tour take a ride to the port district where there is a submarine anchored on the Pregolya River.

During the sightseeing there is a planned break for dinner and some free time, for example to do some shopping in one of the department stores.

The return journey starts on the same day, driving past hotel 'Kaliningrad' and the King's Hill where a castle used to stand (there is an unfinished tower-block on it now, which in earlier plans was supposed to be the House of Communist Party). Next, the participants drive across the bridge on the Pregolya River and see the building of previous Stock

Exchange (nowadays it is the Sailor Culture Centre). Travel towards the border and the possibility to do some shopping at the duty-free shops (alcohol, cosmetics, and sweets). Return in the evening hours (in the predetermined time).

Cost of the trip:

- accommodation (lodging and breakfast) in Braniewo at the ‘Warmia’ Hotel *** - EUR 22 per person,
- a regional evening party with feast music from EUR 16 per person,
- a guide, the whole day (assistance in border crossing) – EUR 150 per group,
- visa costs: EUR 100 per person,
- a tour guide speaking German in Kaliningrad (the whole day) – EUR 150 per group,
- dinner during sightseeing (3 courses with a dessert) - EUR 16 per person,
- entrance tickets to chosen places – about EUR 10 per person.

Trips from Gdańsk to Kaliningrad are organised by SUNSET TRAVEL HOLIDAYS C.H. with its office in Gdańsk, and with its offices in different parts of Gdańsk and Gdynia.

This travel agency offers trips to Kaliningrad and the Curonian Spit for organised groups (at least 40 persons) on the predetermined dates. It also deals with obtaining visas for individual persons travelling to Kaliningrad by coach or car.

Cost of the trip: PLN 710 per person for groups of minimum 40 persons. Just like in the above-mentioned cases, the programme is general and can be changed according to clients’ request. An example of programme is presented below.

Day 1

5:00 a.m. Departure from Tricity. The journey to Kaliningrad and sightseeing tour around the city with a tour guide. The programme of sightseeing includes the most interesting and popular places and it is similar to the programmes mentioned above.

Day 2

After breakfast travelling towards the Curonian Spit separating the Curonian Lagoon from the Baltic Sea. Similarly to the trips described previously the participants of the trip visit all attractive places on the Curonian Spit.

Dinner on the road. Return to the hotel for a night.

Day 3

After breakfast travelling and sightseeing tour round Svetlogorsk and Jantarnoje. Visiting the museum and buying some souvenirs. Dinner. Departure to Poland in the afternoon.

In previous years there was one more travel agency 'FiFiTravel' with its office in Gdańsk, which provided services for group trips to Kaliningrad Oblast. The groups, which they used to work for, were tourists from Germany and Austria who had come to Poland on holiday trips. Nowadays, however, the travel agency does not report any interest in such trips.

Lately, Kaliningrad has tried to present itself more actively on the Polish tourist market by showing its offers on the national tourist fairs. For example, Kaliningrad took part in the International Tourist Fair which was held on 7-8 October 2011 in Sejny.

The data, which was gathered for the purpose of this study and presented above, indicates that nowadays the trips are rather occasional and thus, they cannot be a base for a regular shipping connection. What is more, there is always a risk of a change in the weather and the necessity of cancelling the night's lodging and services.

Apart from tourism Kaliningrad advertises itself on the market of medical services. Plastic Surgery Clinic 'Brazylia' in Kaliningrad offers a wide range of operations and treatment. The offer is directed to patients from different countries. According to the clinic's data the patients come from Russia, Lithuania, Poland, but also from Sweden, Germany and Great Britain. There are 80 operations a month on average in the clinic, including about 10-15% Polish patients, and 40% patients from Western Europe. In Poland the information about the clinic can be found on the Internet site of the Warsaw representative. The information presented there is very detailed and includes data concerning procedures and places of obtaining visas, as well as different options of reaching Kaliningrad from different Polish cities. The basic information on the journey involves coach and train connections, as well as travelling by car.

Żegluga Gdańska, the sole present shipping carrier between Gdynia – Baltiysk, offers only one tourist product: a short trip by coach to Baltiysk and its surroundings. The programme of the cruise and the trip is presented on the enclosed information from the website.



ZEGLUGA GDAŃSKA
Sp. z o.o.
ROK ZAŁOŻENIA 1946 * ESTABLISHED 1946

sklep wolnoctwowy
Baltiysk Kaliningrad

wielka przygoda na morzu

UK, DE, PL flags

Menu:

HOME

ABOUT COMPANY

NATIONAL CRUISES

- Gdańsk Bay
- Sea buses – Gdańsk Bay
- Sea buses – The Vistula Lagoon
- Cheap Shipping Lines
- The Vistula Lagoon
- Central Coast
- Cruises on order

CRUISE LINES

- cruises to Baltiysk
- shopping on sea
- cruises to Bornholm
- fishing cruises

CHARTERS

PRICES

- cruise line to Bornholm
- cruises on Gdańsk Bay
- cruises on the Vistula Lagoon and to Kaliningrad
- Hauler 'Jedrek II'

CONTACT

We are delighted to inform you on the resumption of cruises from Gdynia to Baltiysk after the winter break since 5 March 2011.

SPECIAL OFFER: COACH TRIPS ROUND THE SAMBIA PENINSULA

Every participant of the cruise has an opportunity to take part in a coach trip round the Sambia Peninsula upon prior purchase of an admission card in cash desks of Żegluga Gdańska or on the ship during the cruise.

PROGRAMME OF THE 30-MINUTE-LONG TRIP ROUND BALTIYSKA
MINIBUS OR COACH

- Crossing the border control at the terminal in Baltiysk and getting on the minibus/coach situated on the square in front of the Passenger Station in Baltiysk
- Departure to Baltiysk (towards Kaliningrad): an occasion to admire the flora and fauna of the Sambia Peninsula
- Travelling for about 10 km to the administrative boundary of Baltiysk, which used to be bordered until mid-2010 with control barriers as a closed city with a banning order for all citizens apart from persons who had special passes authorizing to enter the city
- Arrival at the control point in the place of removed barriers which limited the access to Baltiysk region
- Return to the passenger terminal in Baltiysk and border crossing, as well as getting on board of the ship moored at the quay.

Cost of trip: PLN 50per person

Timetable: September 2011	
cruises on 3, 10, 17, 24 September	
Departure from Gdańsk	8:30 a.m.
Arrival to Gdańsk	7:00 p.m.

2. CHANGES ANTICIPATED IN CASE OF INTRODUCING LOCAL VISA-FREE TRAFFIC

Taking into consideration the influence of introducing local visa-free traffic on the increase of number of passengers travelling between Gdynia and Baltiysk, it should be emphasized that introducing visas dramatically reduced the number of passengers. However, it does not mean that planned solutions will bring about the increase on a similar scale.

Undoubtedly, introducing local visa-free traffic will cause positive impulses for border passenger transport. The very information about introducing such a solution will encourage people, who earlier did not plan any journey to Kaliningrad Oblast, to apply for obtaining a right to cross the border without a visa. The difficulties and costs connected with obtaining visas will disappear, which can cause an increase of people interested in cruises to Baltiysk who come from places other than Gdańsk or Gdynia. It can be expected that also Russian citizens residing in Kaliningrad Oblast will be more interested in the cruises. At present they use the shipping connection between Baltiysk and Gdynia very occasionally. The possibility of organising cruises combined with 1-or-2-day long stay at the hotel in Kaliningrad will emerge and it will make visiting Kaliningrad much easier. Similarly, trips from Kaliningrad Oblast to Gdynia may be organised more frequently. Such trips used to be organised by Russian travel agencies in the past, when there was a visa-free traffic. Programmes of trips included journey by ship from Baltiysk to Gdynia, hotel accommodation, sightseeing tour round Gdynia and Gdańsk (sometimes Malbork), shopping at the department store and return to Baltiysk by ship. However, organizing such trips require that the cruises are much more frequent. If there is one cruise a week (as it is currently) it is simply impossible.

There will still be some factors which limit the growth of number of passengers willing to use the shipping connection on the considered route. Firstly, facilities in local visa-free traffic will only apply to the limited group of citizens. The final decisions and solutions have not been publicized yet, but it appears from the gathered information that visa-free traffic will concern citizens residing in Kaliningrad Oblast at least for a year and residents of some parts of Warmian-Masurian and Pomeranian Voivodeships.

Thus, local visa-free traffic will not cover, for example, tourists staying in the neighbourhood of Gdynia and Gdańsk who could go on the cruise to Baltiysk for entertainment. The same situation applies to the Russian tourists who spend their holidays in health resorts in Kaliningrad Oblast.

Moreover, it should not be expected that the significant increase in the groups of passengers using the shipping connection to Baltiysk mainly for commercial reasons (duty-free shopping) will be observed, since this category of passengers does not need visas to use the cruise.

The policy of local visa-free traffic will not greatly affect the situation on border crossings. The border control will be slightly simplified yet difficulties and restrictions of the border control will not change. It should also be emphasized that without changing ships operating on the shipping connection, the monotony and the length of the journey will not change, and they are one of the most discouraging factors of all.

Long tourist trips will still prefer hiring a coach because it is a more comfortable solution. It is much easier to organise such a trip and it is possible to collect more passengers on the route between Gdynia and Kaliningrad. Nadal dla dłuższych wycieczek turystycznych wygodniejszym rozwiązaniem transportowym będzie wynajęty autobus.

A car will remain the most convenient means of transport for people running business activities in border cooperation.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that introducing local visa-free traffic may bring about the increase of passenger transport on the shipping connection between Gdynia and Baltiysk; however it will be the increase which is difficult to estimate. On account of limiting factors mentioned above it does not appear in the short-term perspective that the increase can be higher than just over 10%.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As it was mentioned in paragraph 2 of the study, introducing local visa-free traffic will not bring about the significant increase of passenger transport on the shipping connection between Gdynia – Baltiysk. It seems that better results could be achieved by general 72-hour tourist traffic in the border region. Introducing such a solution on the border between Russia and Finland caused over 50% increase in tourist transport to St. Petersburg.

The significant increase of passenger transport on the considered shipping connection can be expected only under one basic condition, namely the total abolition of visas between Poland and Russia. The journeys to and from Kaliningrad Oblast will become much more popular among all groups of people mentioned in point 1.4. It is estimated that visa-free traffic will affect positively the tourist group which, at present, is really small.

Certainly, the abolition of duty of obtaining visas in passenger transport between Poland and Russia will not take place quickly. This possibility can be assumed however, as the realisation of the Eastern partnership idea will proceed. The progress in this field is connected with stabilization and development of democracy in Russia, and with reducing often exaggerated prejudices towards our eastern neighbour which exist in Poland.

The development of passenger transport to and from Kaliningrad Oblast, including the passenger shipping route between Gdynia and Baltiysk, would be more dynamic if restrictive customs rules were limited. There is no point in fighting border trade among citizens who live in neighbouring areas. Large-scale smuggling, which affects national economy, should be fought with all operational means. Individual shopping done abroad and using price differences exist all around the world, even in much richer countries than Russia and Poland. In most cases there are no exaggerated restrictions. The activity of these so called ‘ants’ often reduces social tensions and attenuates unemployment in border areas.

Another significant factor which could intensify passenger transport on the route between Gdynia – Baltiysk is the change of ships that operate on the line. It would be necessary to introduce smaller shipping units, which would be, at the same time, faster and more modern. Such ships should be able to carry 100 to 150 passengers and go 22-25 knots, which could

shorten the length of the journey to about 3 hours. The ship should also provide some possibilities to make the journey more varied and not so monotonous, for example, there could be a small cinema room, a place to dance, electronic games room, etc. It is absolutely necessary to introduce facilities for the disabled.

The higher frequency of cruises and moderate prices (similar to the present ones) are also extremely important.

Since established contacts are crucial in relationships with the Russians, the concept of introducing a new carrier should be considered really carefully. Every change is treated suspiciously. The contacts which are maintained and the experience of Żegluga Gdańska in operating on the shipping connection between Gdynia and Baltiysk are of great importance.

Developing the offer of tourist products and more dynamic promotional and informational activities are next conditions of achieving success. The offer of travel agencies and information availability are adequate for current conditions of demand. In the future, if all conditions mentioned above are fulfilled, the offer should be expanded and new products should be introduced. Promotional and informational activities must be broadened as well. It is particularly important to use the Internet which is the basic source of information for young people. Both travel agencies and the carrier could take on such a task. Local communities could help and inspire such projects.

The development of economic, cultural and sports contacts, as well as scientific and technical cooperation between Pomeranian region and Kaliningrad Oblast will foster the increase in passenger transport, too. However, it requires time and consequent activity.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the growth of passenger transport will also improve provided that the citizens of both countries become wealthier. Experience shows that it always leads to opening to the world and tourism development.

In the long-term perspective some other concepts, such as, e.g. creating the centre of passenger coastal shipping in the region of President's Dock are worth considering. It could provide services for the port traffic of the 'White Fleet', short cruises and sea buses in the region of Gdańsk Bay, from Sobieszewo through Gdańsk and Sopot to Gdynia, as well as shipping connections with Hel Peninsula, cruises to Kaliningrad, Klaipeda or Bornholm, etc.

It is known however, that complying with all the above-mentioned conditions requires a substantial period of time. In the short-term perspective (in 1 or 2 years' time) the rapid increase of passenger traffic on the passenger shipping connection between Gdynia and Baltiysk should not be expected.