

Online-survey
72-hour visa-free regulation for Russian and foreign citizens
2014

NON-PROFIT PARTNERSHIP

“INSTITUTE OF SPATIAL PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS”

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In February 2014 Non-profit partnership «Institute of Spatial Planning, Development and Foreign Relations» (Kaliningrad, Russia) as a member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) organized an online-survey on the subject of 72-hour visa-free regulation for Russian and foreign citizens.

The main objective of the study was to assess the awareness of the European partners on existing in Russian Federation visa-free regulations and legislative initiatives, as well as prospects the possibility for the introduction of parity regimes for Russian citizens traveling to the EU, as part of tour groups. The study involved 36 respondents from the EU Member States, including representatives from: 36.11% - Euroregions (or other forms of territorial cooperation - EGTC), 47.22% - Authority (local, regional, national), 2.78% - Business structures and other commercial organizations, 13.89% - Associations and NGOs.

Short summary of the survey. Question: "Are you aware of existing (from the 2000s) visa-free regulation for foreign citizens traveling for tourist purposes in the Russian Federation?"- 45.71% of respondents answered - "Don't know", 31.43% - "Partially known, little information", 22.86% - "Yes, I know". It should be emphasized the interest of the respondents in thematic of 72 - hour visa-free regulation (answer: "This topic does not interest me" – wasn't mentioned among respondents).

Question: "Are you aware of initiatives to enhance the action of the Russian Federation of the 72 hour visa-free regulation for small vessels and tourists arriving through airports?"- 65.71% answered - "Don't know", 20 % - "Yes, I know", 14.29% - "Partially known, little information" (though the answer: "This topic does not interest me" - as well never used by the respondents).

Simple analysis of the results allows us to conclude: Thematic of Russian Federation visa initiatives are interesting to European colleagues, but simultaneously - informational field on these regulations is mostly absent. Majority of respondents noted that the level of awareness in visa regulation is insufficient for effective usage of these tools. This fact can create a terms for passive position of European partners in the promotion of visa-free initiatives for Russian citizens. False impression can be created in this regards that the Russian Federation imposes or even require a visa-free regime without any response, which of course, does not correspond to reality. In this regard, we see the appropriate organization of work in two directions:

- Information on existing in Russian Federation visa-free regulation for foreign citizens;
- Promoting the idea of introducing parity initiatives by the EU for Russian travelers.

Confirmation of this conclusion follows from the answer to the question: "Do you think that there is a lack of information (for example in English) on thematic of such initiatives?"- 90.91% of respondents said - "Yes", and only 9.09% - "No".

Very important element of the study was to estimate the position of the European partners to Russian visa-free initiatives. Question: "How do you assess these initiatives?" , the majority of respondents, 65.71% answered - "Positive", 20% - "More positive than negative", 11.43% - "Neutral", 2.86% -"More negative than positive", respond "Negative"- 0%.

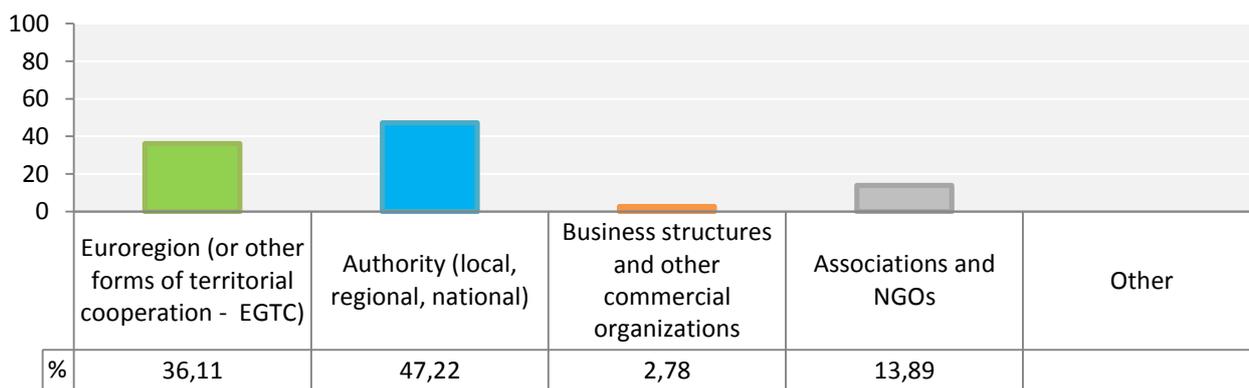
It should be noted that as the primary user of 72-hour visa-free regime in the EU, respondents noted: 54.55% - Government and authorities, 27.27% - Travel organization (business), 18.18% - Citizens. Thus, it can be assumed that responses indicate the real picture of the adoption of legislative initiatives in the EU. It is noted that the role of decision maker is mainly shared within authorities and the business community. Logically, promotion of parity 72-hour visa-free initiatives for Russian citizens should be covered by two lines: authorities and business community, for example association of travel companies and etc.

No less interesting are the results of assessments of prospects for the introduction of a parity visa-free regulations: "Is it reasonable to introduce a parity regulation for Russian citizens (traveling for tourist purposes) in the EU, or some regions (e.g. - Baltic Sea Region), or individual regions (eg , the Baltic Sea Region)?" .60.61% - "It is reasonable for the whole territory of the EU", 30.30% -"It is reasonable for the individual regions of the EU", 9.09% -"It is not reasonable". In comments to the question, respondents noted that more detailed discussion of this issue is required. Thus, the results once again confirm the previously hypothesis concerning the interest of European partners in an open dialogue on visa-free initiatives.

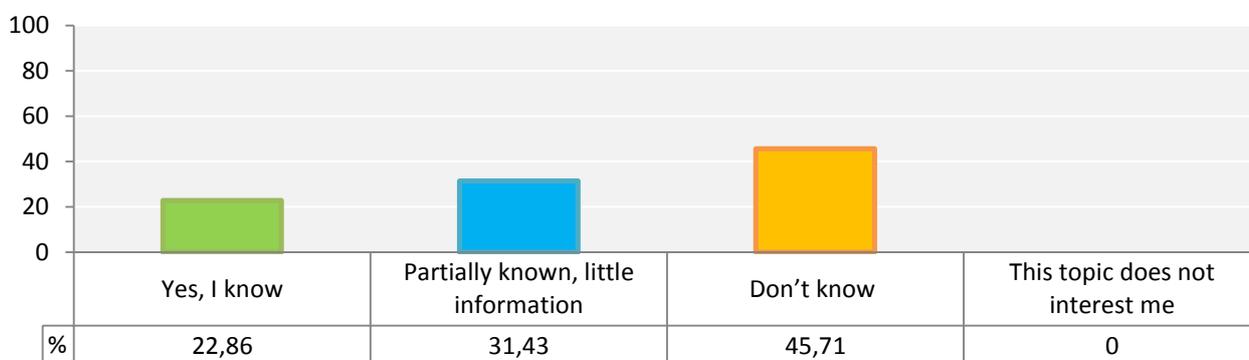
For clarity, the results of the survey are presented in the form of diagrams:

Non-profit partnership «Institute of Spatial Planning, Development and Foreign Relations» (Kaliningrad, Russia) expresses appreciation to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and personally to the Secretary General - Martín Guillermo Ramírez, and Project Officer - Marie-Lou Perou, for assistance and support in organization of survey.

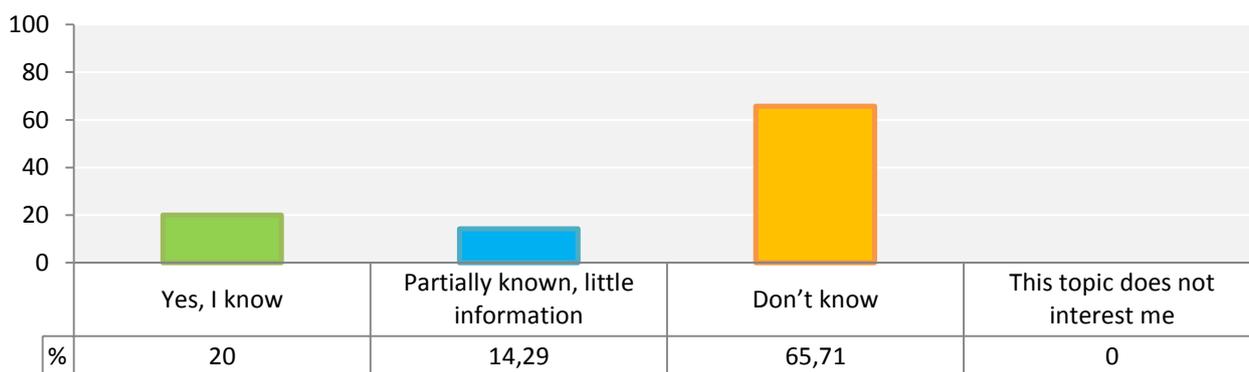
Which organization do you represent?



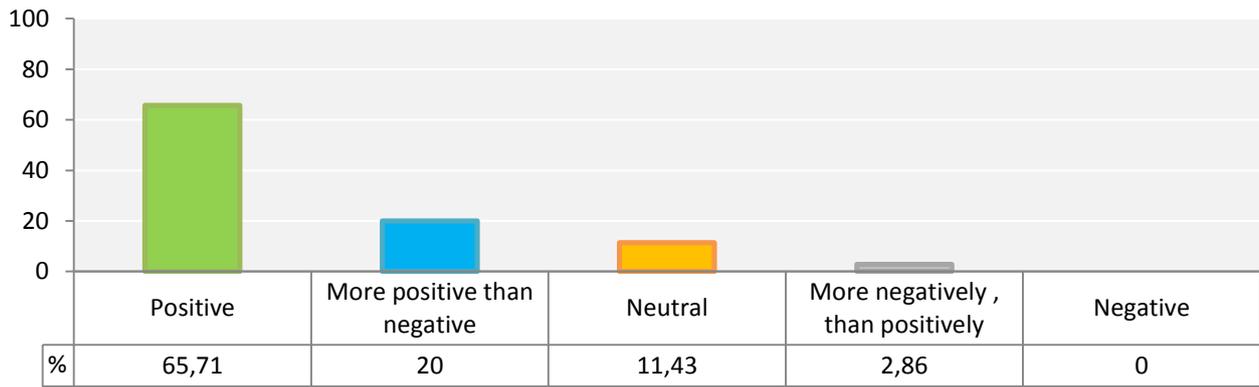
Are you aware of existing (from the 2000s) visa-free regulation for foreign citizens traveling for tourist purposes in the Russian Federation ?



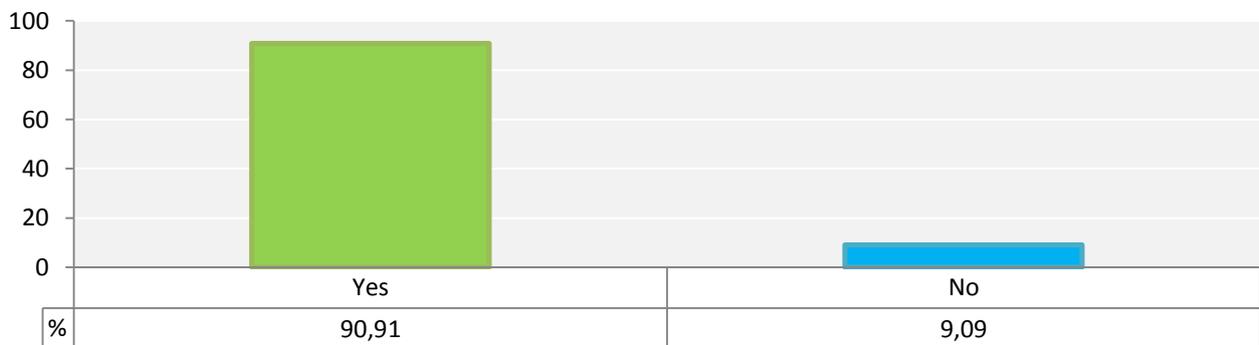
Are you aware of initiatives to enhance the action of the Russian Federation of the 72 hour visa-free regulation for small vessels and tourists arriving through airports?



How do you assess these initiatives?



Do you think that there is a lack of information (for example in English) on thematic of such initiatives?



Who, in your opinion, is the main stakeholder in the EU for such initiatives (visa-free regulation)?



Is it reasonable to introduce a parity regulation for Russian citizens (traveling for tourist purposes) in the EU, or some regions (e.g. - Baltic Sea Region)?

