

Address: 236016, Russia,
Kaliningrad, Klinicheskaya 27
E-mail: ipprvs@gmail.com
Web-page: www.ipprvs.org
Tel.: +7-(911)-475-23-91

INSTITUTE OF
SPATIAL PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND
FOREIGN RELATIONS

NON-PROFIT PARTNERSHIP



ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER
REGIONS



AEBR - AGEG - ARFE

Revision of 72-hour visa-free regulation for Russian and European travelers

In April 2015 members of NP "IPPRVS", together with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), organized and conducted a survey on the subject of 72-hour visa-free regime for Russian and foreign citizens traveling to EU countries and Russia. The survey was the continuation of the joint research started in April 2014 related to the study of issues of awareness of partners from the EU on the various forms of non-visa regime operating in the Russian Federation. Comparison of respondents allowed assessing the dynamics of positions on several key issues.

Survey involved 21 respondents from Member of AEBR from among the representatives of local, regional, national authorities, Euroregions from EU countries and international associations.

It should be noted overall positive character of respondent's answers, testifying to the fact that the theme of visa-free relations for EU and Russia is estimated by European partners positive and are considered as a promising. Despite the general anti-Russian information background, prevalent in the European media, the questionnaire shows that at the level of representatives of regional authorities interested in the development of various forms of cooperation with Russia is not lost and is about at the pre-crisis level. This fact shows that part of European politicians and representatives of Euro-regions, still tend to a pragmatic approach to building relationships with the Russian Federation.

Result of Respondents answers are presented in Appendix. Overall questionnaire includes eight questions on topics of awareness of existing initiatives of the simplified visa-free forms of cooperation, their assessment as well as the long as proposition of equal conditions for Russian citizens traveling to EU countries.

Materials for questionnaire made in 2014 available on NP IPPRVS web-page in the "Materials" chapter in Russian and English language: http://www.ipprvs.org/?page_id=10

General analysis of the responses shows the positive dynamics on the following issues:

1. Awareness of the visa-free regime operating in Russian: "Yes, I know" - increase on 13%, "I don't know" - a decrease of 15%
2. Assessment of the prospects of introducing various forms of simplified visa control between Russia and the EU: "Positive" - no change, but at a fairly high level of 65%, a "neutral" - an increase of 12%
3. Evaluation of the lack of information about the visa-free regime: deficit fell by 8%
4. Awareness of the new initiatives of the Russian Federation in the field of simplification of visa regime: the answer "unknown" has decreased by 13%.

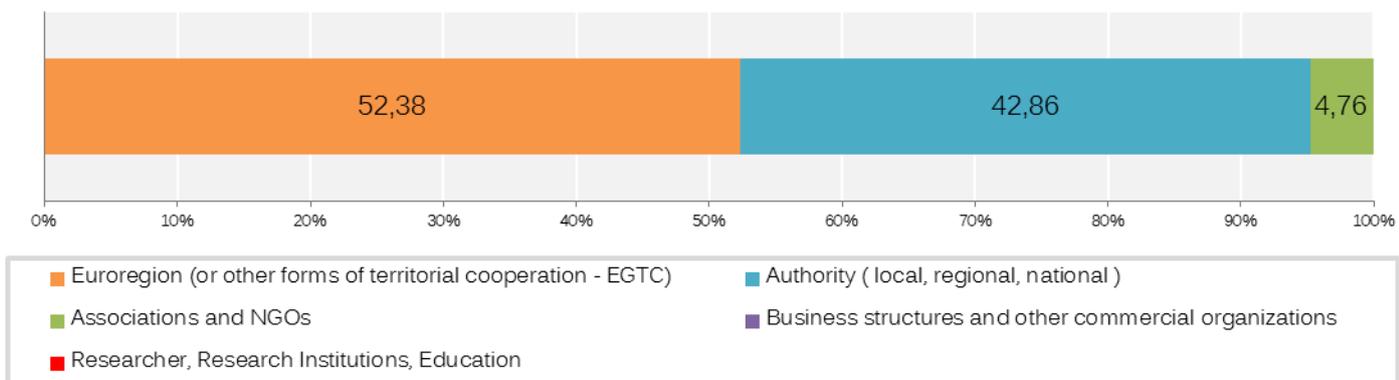
In general, given survey results indicate that since 2014, there has been a positive trend in awareness of European partners on a visa-free regulation between Russian Federation and the EU, increased level of confidence for the prospects of gradual transition to visa issue between EU and Russia. This indicates that in general information of this theme begins to interest European in a positive way.

As in the study of 2014, a significant proportion of respondents noted a high level of lack of information on the subject of visa regulations, it should be noted almost 100-percent interest for placing such information on the national language in the national media in the EU.

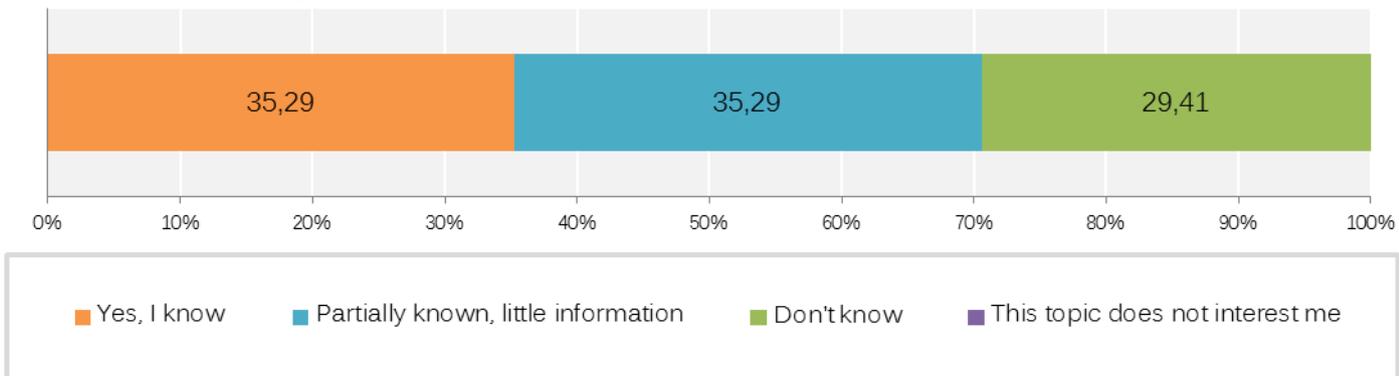
The overall positive picture changes substantially with position that current tensions between Russia and the EU are a complicating element in the development of visa-free initiatives. In this case, real progress on the local and regional level should not be expected as long as the relations between Russia and the EU getting any “warming”.

Analyzing the results of the survey as a whole, we can conclude that at present, despite the overall positive assessment of the development of cooperation between Russia and EU, there are still numerous obstacles in the process of rapprochement connected primarily with the tensions of relations at the level of national authorities. Opinions of regional politicians expressed on such issues, almost similar, and can be formulated as follow: personally - they always support such initiatives, but at the level of national authorities their views, unfortunately, is not always supported.

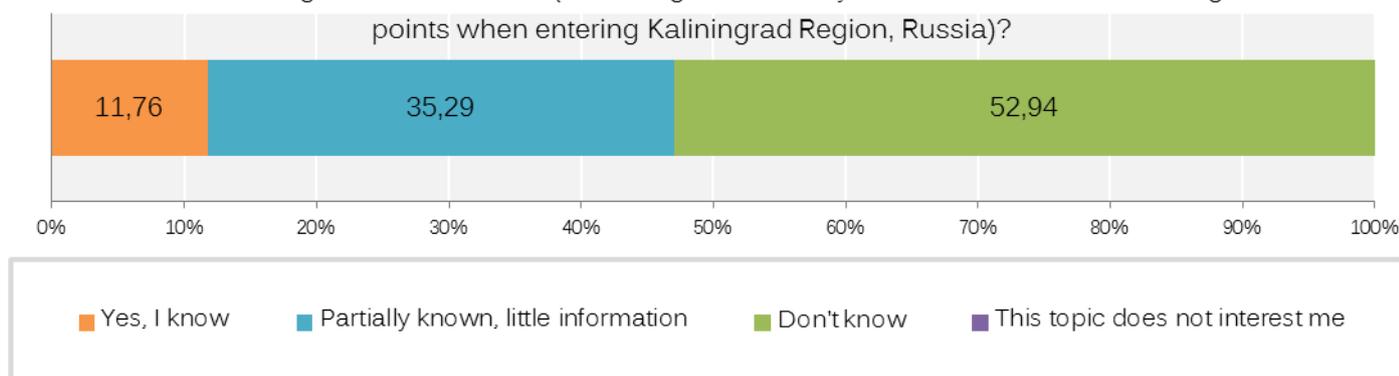
Which organization do you represent?



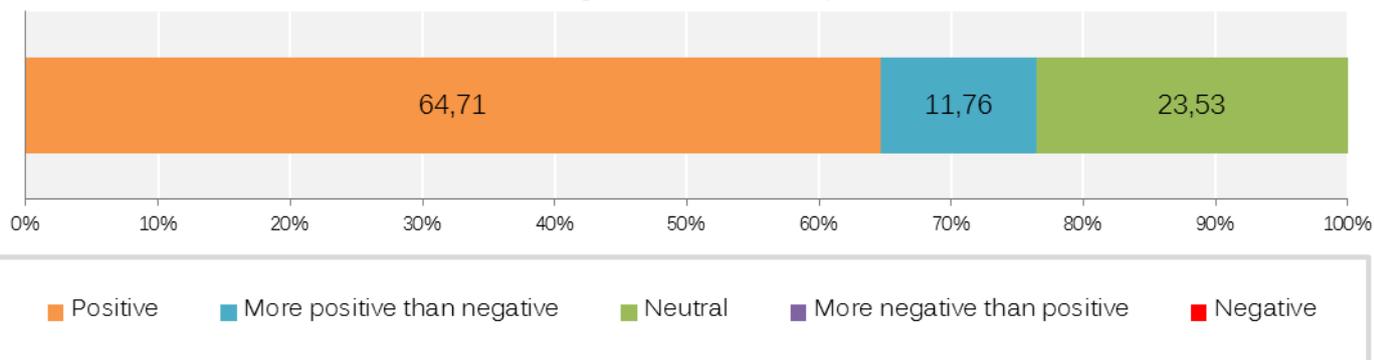
Are you aware of existing (from the 2000s) simplified and visa-free and regulation for foreign citizens traveling for tourist purposes in the Russian Federation ?



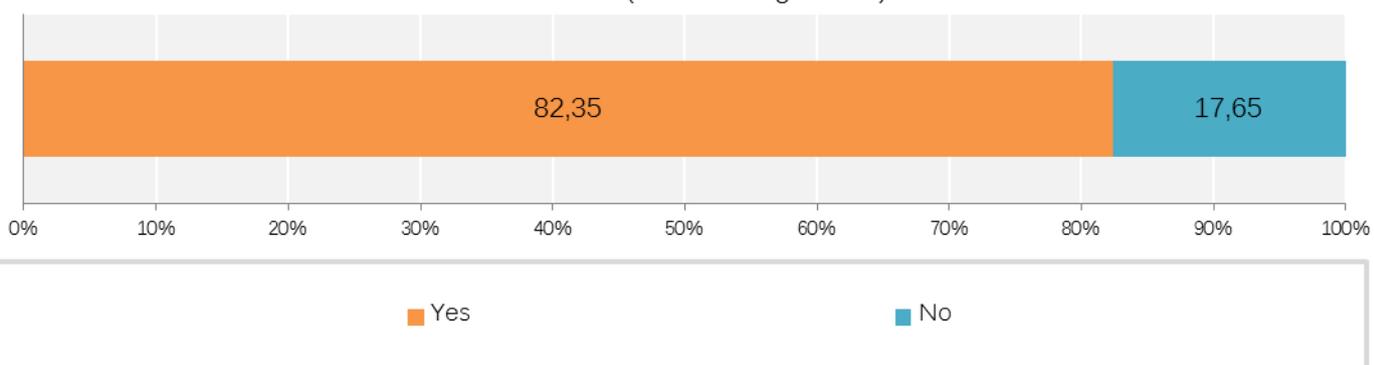
Are you aware of new Russian Federation's initiatives in field of to simplification and visa-free regulation since 2009 (Receiving of short-stay visa on state border-crossing points when entering Kaliningrad Region, Russia)?



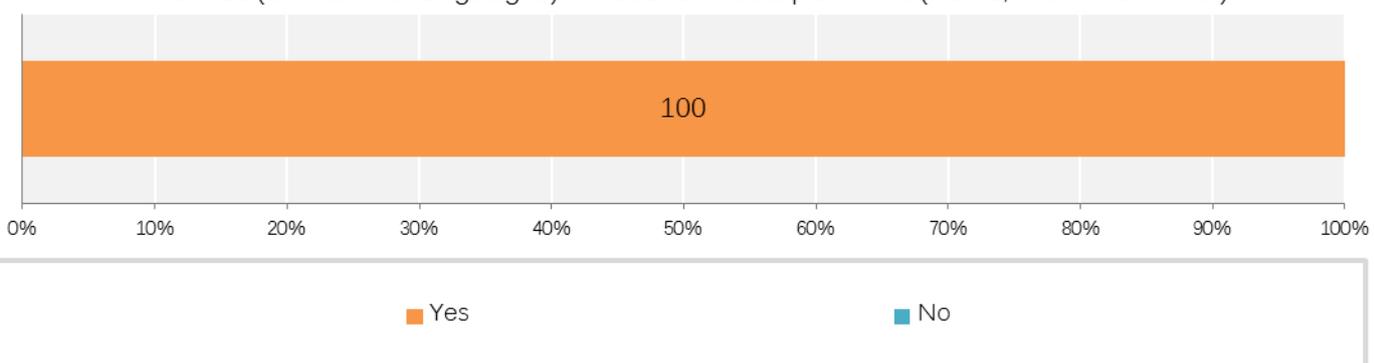
How do you assess these initiatives (72-hour visa-free regulation for Foreign citizens travelling to Russia and etc.)?



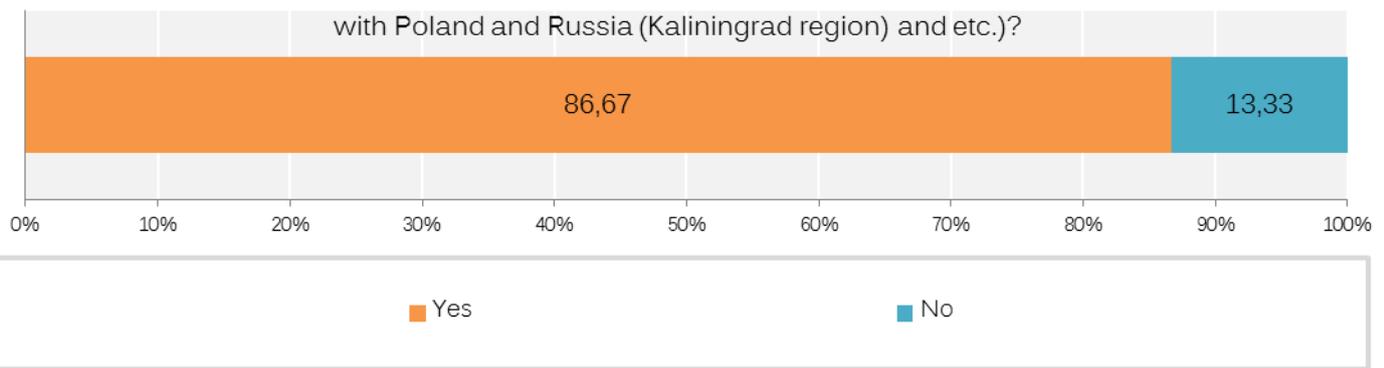
Do you think that there is a lack of information (for example in English) on thematic of such initiatives (visa-free regulation) ?



Do you think it is reasonable to publish information on simplification and visa-free initiatives (on national languages) in national Media platforms (News, Internet and etc.)?



Do you think it is reasonable to develop new forms of visa simplification regulations between Russia and EU (for example already operated Small Border Traffic regulation with Poland and Russia (Kaliningrad region) and etc.)?



Do you think that tension in relationship between Russian and EU affect the possibilities of implementation for simplified and visa-free regulation between this countries?

