

Does history work? Euregio Karelia on the EU-Russia border

Gleb Yarovoy
Ph.D. candidate
Petrozavodsk State University
Russia

Abstract

The main idea of the presentation is to present common historical and cultural heritage as the basis for further co-operation development in an institutionalized entity (Euregio Karelia) as one of the perspective types of sub-national integration. The first task is to describe historical (and cultural) background of the institutionalization of Karelian-Finnish cross-border co-operation in the form of Euregio Karelia (e.g. common history (including the Soviet era co-operation), cultural background (e.g. Kalevala), interface minorities with their common traditions, language, religion etc.). Then I turn to the political forecast of the institutional development of Euregio Karelia on the basis of the main integration theories' (transactionalism, functionalism and neofunctionalism) adaptation to the sub-national level. The core (hypo)thesis is that Euregio Karelia was created as a "security community" (Deutsch), but should turn to the functional (Mitrany/Haas) model of trans-frontier regional integration (as it occurred in many cases in Western and Eastern Europe) by means of the potentials of the above-mentioned common historical and cultural background.

Introduction

Euroregions are integrated sub-national cross-border structures with a political decision-making tier, based on some type of legal arrangement, having a common permanent secretariat, and commanding their own resources. The co-operation is based on a long-term development strategy and is pursued in all 'realms of life'.¹

In this respect it is essential to mention that euroregions (also called 'euregios', e.g. Euregio 'Karelia' or 'regional councils', e.g. the North Calotte Council) constitute a special type of cross-border co-operation (CBC), which differs from other types of CBC (e.g. 'working commu-

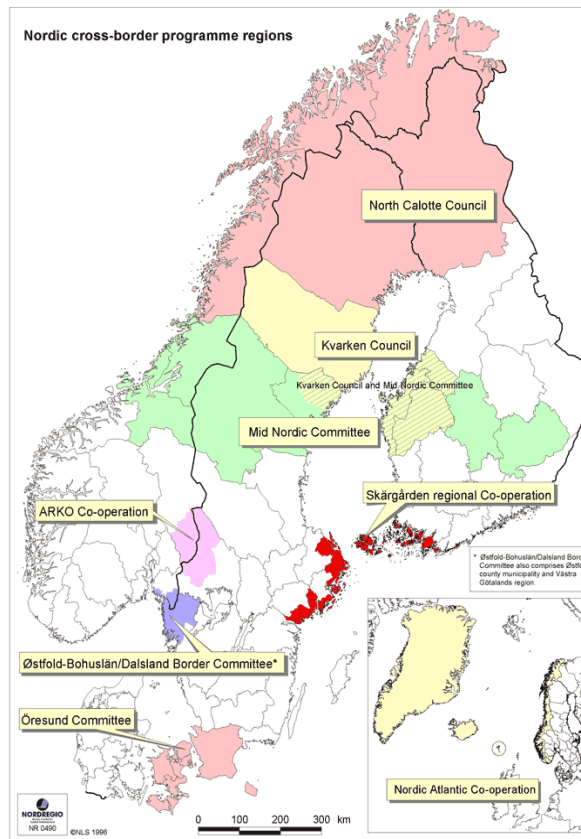
nities', loosely integrated 'cross-border regions') by a higher level of integration in different spheres, ranging from economic to political. As mentioned above, euroregions have rather developed institutional structure, not only a common permanent secretariat, but other decision making and executive bodies, such as Executive Committee, joint Working Groups, in some cases even Parliamentary Assembly etc. In most cases euroregions consist of subnational political-administrative units, such as regions and local communities. Different euroregions have different aims and objectives, yet the common feature is striving for raising the intensity of co-operation and widening and deepening the degree of integration.

The first Euroregion, the EUREGIO, was established in 1958 on the Dutch-German border, in the area of Enschede (NL) and Gronau (DE).² Since then, Euroregions and other forms of cross-border co-operation have emerged throughout Europe. At present more than one hundred cross-border regions exist in Europe, and no less than fifty per cent are euroregions of different kinds.

Needless to say in different parts of Europe the euroregional networks developed and are still developing with varied speed and success. In general, Southern Europe is less 'euroregionalised' than Western, Central and Eastern Europe, which have shown a higher level of euroregional density along state borders in recent years. At the same time, the system of CBC in the Nordic Countries is even more developed and institutionalised due to the long cooperation traditions.

Euroregions in the Northern Europe.

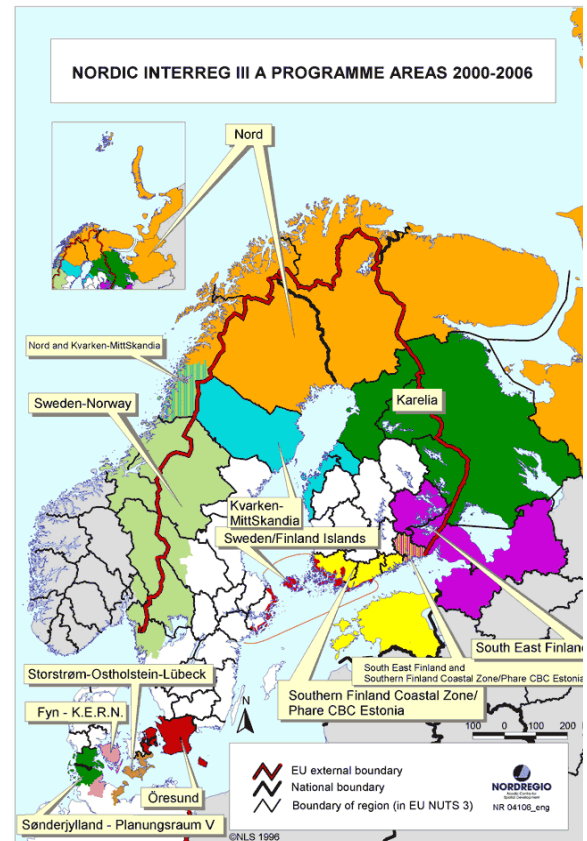
The modern history of CBC in the European North is rather long; it dates back to the late 1950's in the Nordic countries and between Nordic and Western European



Map 1. Traditional Nordic CBRs.*

countries. The first official cross-border contacts were established in the late 1950's in the Öresund region (DK/SE), but the first institutionalized cross-border region (CBR) was the North Calotte (FI/NO/SE), established in 1967. The system of CBC in Norden was finally formed in the early 1980's. Thus, in 1981 the last Nordic CBR, the West Nordic Region (Faroe/Iceland/Greenland) was established. And then, until the end of the Cold War, this system remained stable (it consists of eight regions, namely Öresund, North Calotte, Kvarken, Mid Nordic, ARKO, Archipelago, Østfold – Bohuslän, West Nordic Region). This system could be called 'a traditional system of trans-frontier cooperation in the Nordic countries'. This system was rather unique, developing independently from Western European regionalisation processes in the framework of Nordic co-operation and integration. All of the above mentioned euroregions became institutional, as well as obtained limited financial support from the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, but the initiative to co-operate and dimensions of co-operation and integrations belonged to subnational authorities/administrations.

After the 1995 EU enlargement to Sweden and Finland, some new CBR's appeared, acting under the *Community Initiative Interreg*, aiming at the promotion of cross-border, inter-regional and trans-national co-operation in Europe. The existing 'traditional' system was changed



Map 2. Changes in the 'traditional' system.*

by including some new CBR and re-organizing the old ones. These new CBR's, some of which are as highly integrated as traditional euroregions, are substantially dependent on the EU financial support, thus, losing their ability to self-define the objectives and strategy of co-operation. This led some students of the Nordic CBC to the conclusion that the EU activities in this field have more destructive than positive consequences for the development of CBC network.⁴

On map 2 several 'external' CBR's are depicted. By 'external' euroregions I mean those created along the external border of the EU/NC, i.e. on the Finnish-Russian state border mostly, with the possible participation of subnational units from other Nordic countries. After the end of the Cold War, several 'external' cross-border regions were created. The first one was the BEAR (the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, referred to as 'Nord' on the map), established in 1992; Euregio "Baltic" (not on the map) was formed in 1995; then a CBR between Finland and the Leningrad region ('South-East Finland' on the map) followed; and finally **Euregio "Karelia"** ('Karelia' on a map) was created in the year 2000. The latter is the area formed by three Regional councils of Finland - Kainuu, Northern Karelia and Northern Ostrobothnia, and the Republic of Karelia of the Russian Federation.

Historical Background of Euregio 'Karelia'

Euregio 'Karelia' (EK) as a historical-geographical region is a large fragment of the historical area of Karelia/Kirjalaland,⁵ the place of residence and cultural activity of Karelian ethnos during the Middle Ages. Since the Karelian Isthmus, once an important part of the historical Karelia is nowadays a part of the Leningrad region and thus is not included into the EK, the latter can not be regarded as an integral historical area.

At the same time, trade contacts on the territory of the present-day EK had been actively developing long before Finland was ceded to the Russian Empire (1809). Karelian, Finnish and Russian (Pomor) people were engaged in trade over the whole distance from Ostrobothnia to Novgorod, and the peak of commercial relations was reached in the 17th – 18th centuries.⁶ This is the first historical precondition of further co-operation, which lead the Executive director of Regional Council of Northern Karelia T. Cronberg to a conclusion about institutionalisation of historical space through the creation of the euroregion.⁷

This euroregional space has its own political/military history, concerned with the centuries-old rivalry between Sweden and Russia for the possession of the territory of historical Karelia. After 1329 (the peace of Nöteborg) Karelia was divided several times, state affiliation was changing frequently, the ethnic mix of the border area population changed twice (in the 17th century orthodox Russians were replaced by Finns, and in 1940, after the repatriation of the Finnish population, Russians and Byelorussians were resettled). However it is hardly possible to associate the EK area with administrative system of Sweden or Russia until the beginning of the 19th century. After 1809, when Finland was ceded to Russia and became a Grand Duchy, the EK area became a part of Russian administrative-territorial system, which resulted in the intensification of trans-frontier relations between Finnish and Russian provinces. Some researchers maintain that trade contacts flourished until the end of the First World War, since the Grand Duchy was forced to increase its trade with the East as all the other land entries and gateways of Finland were closed.⁸

Russian market played an important part in the economic development of Finland since Russia held 30-50% of the Finnish trade turnovers.⁹ Common banking system, common transport communications and labour market, connecting Ladoga's Karelia with Saint-Petersburg, promoted the incorporation of the Grand Duchy to the structure of the Russian Empire, encouraged economic co-operation and supported peaceful co-existence of so-

cial and political systems of the autonomous Duchy and the empire until the 1880s, when the violent autocratic policy of russification caused a deep crisis of Finnish-Russian relations.¹⁰ In the 20th century this policy turns into the escalation of mutual territorial claims, wars and interventions, repatriation of population. The border became a wide zone of alienation of states and nations.

The same policy fostered anti-russian attitudes in the community and the authorities of the independent Finland, which lead to the policy of strengthening the Finnish identity in the border areas.¹¹ Later, the difference in social order (Finland was a capitalist country, the Soviet Union was a communist state) provoked several armed conflicts which resulted in the Winter War and the Continuation War, when Finland participated in the second World War on nationalist Germany's side against the Soviet Union. Nationalistic views on eastern (Russian) Karelians, who dominated the Finnish society, represented the former as a part of the Finnish nation, and induced the government to the military seizure of Russian Karelia¹² (in Soviet historiography this military expedition is known under the title "Karelian venture"). On the other hand, the Soviet government intended to attach violently the whole Finland to the USSR; in 1940 the 'puppet government abroad' was set up with this intent kept in view. Thus, the EK area was of a great geopolitical importance for both countries.

After the second World War and the Paris Treaty of 1947 (the treaty gave to the Soviet Union most of the Karelian Isthmus, the Petsamo region and the right to 50-year exploitation of the Porkkala base; it also reaffirmed the demilitarization of the Åland Islands and the limits on the Finnish military set in the armistice¹³) the Soviet government forced Finland to sign the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The subsequent Finnish diplomacy ('Paasikivi-Kekkonen tack') towards the Soviet Union during the Cold War era got the title 'finlandisation'. Historians debate on the context, substance and consequences of this policy. In order to avoid in-depth examination of the subject it is important to note that to the end of the Cold War Finland became a prosperous country, a welfare state.

The next stage of bilateral relations started after the collapse of the Soviet Union. For Finland this had a twofold effect. On the one hand, Finnish economy suffered from a deep crisis, caused by the drastic reduction in trade relations and turnover with the Soviet Union/Russian Federation. On the other, a new format of co-operation was established. An important part of this was the 'Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Finland on co-operation in the Murmansk region, the Republic of Karelia, the Saint-Petersburg

and Leningrad region' signed in Helsinki in the very beginning of the year 1992. The agreement is aimed at the development of cross-border regional co-operation alongside the Finnish-Russian state border; in its preamble the two sides agreed that "the tradition of good neighbourhood and confidence between the two nations" exists. The Group on co-operation development in neighbouring regions was created. An important impetus for the promotion of CBC was the rather high level of the independence of Russian regions vis-à-vis the central government during the 1990s. As a consequence, as mentioned above, several CBRs were created during the last decade of the 20th century.

In 1995 Finland joined the European Union, which meant new possibilities of CBC development with the help of the instruments of the Commission, i.e. the Community Initiative Interreg, Tacis CBC program etc. In many respects Finland launched the Northern Dimension (ND) initiative in the late 1990s in order to use these opportunities. One of the main aims was to promote and develop the cross-border and inter-regional co-operation in Northern Europe from Iceland to the North-West of Russia. Since the idea of the ND was rather loose, it was essential to fill it with concrete content. Creation of the EK in the year 2000 served as one of the components of the realisation of the ND Action Plan.

Euregio 'Karelia' as a Security Community.

It is important to note that there are two main preconditions for the creation of the EK. The first one is 'panto-historical', i.e. the long history of (all types of) relations between Finland and the Russian Empire/the USSR/the Russian Federation. The second is 'concrete historical', i.e. the state of Finnish-Russian co-operation on the sub-national level in the context of the multilevel co-operation in the North at the end of the 20th century (e.g. the ND initiative). The first factor supposes taking into consideration the whole range of complex relations in the course of history when defining the framework and priorities of co-operation while the second one calls upon use of the (financial) possibilities of the EU to improve the functional co-operation. In practice the latter constitutes the shape of the EK while the former is charged with content. It means that the EK was created in order to build, according to Karl Deutsch, a (pluralistic) *security community* (SC), which is characterised by the absence of expectations of warfare or any serious tension,¹⁴ and on the contrary, by growing societal transactions. Deutsch's theory of transactionalism referred to the restoration of confidence between the two nations as the main requirement for further successful co-op-

eration in economic and political spheres.¹⁵ The similar aims are set forth clearly not only in the official agreement on the Euroregion,¹⁶ but also in the speeches of regional politicians¹⁷ and academic articles¹⁸ as well.

Why is the EK able to be a SC? On one hand, the negative factors such as the legacy of wars, including the Cold War, exist in the common 'euroregional' history. On the other, there are many positive factors such as a good will to stand against the legacy of misunderstandings, using the heritage of common history and common culture as well.

Here, a presence of interface minority(ies) should be taken into consideration. A considerable part of the population of Russian Karelia is of Finno-Ugric origin, such as Karelians (10% of population), Finns (2,3% of population) and Vepps (0,8% of the population).¹⁹ A diaspora of Russian Finns (Ingrians) dwells in Southern and Eastern Finland. Ethnic Finns from the former Soviet Union now constitute the greatest part of Finland's foreign population.²⁰ Moreover the number of Russian-speaking emigrants to Finland is rising permanently and could reach the figure of 50 000 – 135 000 up to the year 2013.²¹

Consequently there is a common ground, such as language question. Keeping in mind the perspectives of cross-border co-operation between Finland and Karelia, one can observe that language could be an impetus to co-operation. At least, there is a need to support the language(s) of the title nation of Karelia, Karelian and Finnish, as well as Vepps. It is especially important on the account of the role of worldwide well-known Finnish and Karelian Epos "Kalevala", which is an integral part of the common cultural heritage. One can mention other issues that are essential for mutual understanding and co-operation and creation of the euroregion in the form of security community, such as similar environmental conditions.

Then, the question arises as to whether security community type is sufficient for the development of dynamic co-operation between Russian Karelia and Finland? My answer to that is negative: SC-type is not sufficient.

Future of the EK: Something More than a SC.

Why should the co-operation in the EK be more intensive than the one within a security community? Let us review different theories of integration, e.g. transactionalism, functionalism and neofunctionalism. In Deutsch's theory of transactionalism the ultimate goal of integration is not a SC (the same is true for Mitrany's

functionalism). Security community can only be the first step towards further development of co-operation into integration.

Thus, the next stage in our case should be something that one calls institutionalisation of the EK meaning, that in the Development strategy for the EK more attention should be paid to functional co-operation. According to David Mitrany, social trust (Deutsch's security community in a narrow sense) in the region is the first step towards functional co-operation and then to functional integration.²² Basing upon the theory of functionalism, neofunctionalists Ernst Haas and Leon Lindberg stated that economic and political integration follows functional co-operation²³

Extending the core ideas of the above mentioned theories of integration to the case of the EK and its main goals – to bring the conditions of life and economic development of Russian Karelia closer to the Finnish (European) standards, to promote regional competency in the era of globalization – it is logical to think about the creation of a politically institutionalised and economically integrated euroregion. For this type of relations I use the notion of *trans-frontier regional integration*.

There are two main differences between cross-border co-operation and trans-frontier regional integration. The first one refers to the notion of border/frontier. The term *border* as used here can be defined as a more or less neutral phenomenon, as a result of political processes, based on the national interest, and, thus, artificial. *Frontier* in its turn could be defined through the concept of frontier space, which affects everything that penetrates it. It concerns the interpenetration of the interests of different actors and their mutual influence.

The second difference concerns the terms co-operation and integration. Here I refer to the term integration as the one denoting a greater degree of interaction than co-operation. It is reasonable to use here the typology of stages in transfrontier relations, proposed by one of the main European institutions promoting trans-frontier co-operation, i.e. the Council of Europe (CoE). In its *Handbook on trans-frontier co-operation* the five stages are mentioned: 1) total lack of relations, 2) the information exchange stage, 3) co-operation, 4) harmonisation, and 5) integration.²⁴ In this handbook the term “to cooperate” means to find *joint solutions* that “are the only effective response when communities and populations on each side of a frontier are facing similar problems”. The stage of harmonisation refers to “a whole fabric of mutual understanding”, which should become a real nexus of the future integration in the sphere of CBC. The last stage, integration, means the existence and implementation of the integrated regional development programmes, thus it is the “ultimate stage of transfrontier socio-economic co-operation”. According to the CoE, the last two stages have not been reached by European cross-border regions. One can hardly agree with the last statement, which is very disputable in the case of the ‘internal’ (situated alongside the borders of the EU member-states) euroregions, which are the agents of the EU regional policy, especially in the context of Interreg programmes.²⁵ However it is true for the ‘external’ euroregions: there are many problems not only with the integration of development programmes at local or regional levels, or with the harmonization of policies with cross-border effect, but also with co-operation in finding joint solutions for a trans-frontier problem/issue. In the case of the EU-Russian euroregions it is especially true since the last decade saw little progress in harmonising policies at national/supranational level and finding

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Instrument of CBC</i>	<i>Effect on CBC</i>
<i>the EU</i>	Regional Policy European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Neighbourhood Programs	Funding, de- & re-territorialisation
<i>Russia</i>	CBC Concept and Federal Laws	Securing, re-territorialisation²⁷
<i>Finland</i>	Strategy for Cooperation in the Neighbouring Areas	Funding, de- & re-territorialisation
<i>the Republic of Karelia Finnish Regional Administrations</i>	Programme ‘Our Common Border’ Neighbourhood Programme ‘Euroregio Karelia’	Co-operation, de-territorialisation, <u>Harmonisation/Integration ?</u>

Table. 1. Different actors' strategies

the common denominator in the field of cross-border co-operation. At the same time there is understanding and even consensus concerning future development of CBC and a need for promoting the trans-frontier harmonisation/integration. Using the concept of Finnish researcher A. Paasi, regional authorities vote for *de-territorialisation*²⁶ of the Finnish-Russian border, but their national/supranational colleagues usually make little effort to help them. For this article it is sufficient to mention some instruments and to summarise the CBC strategies of different actors in a table in a sketchy way.

Conclusion

As shown above, there is a dissonance in CBC strategies across the Finnish-Russian border. Nevertheless Euregio 'Karelia' has a potential to make a step forward in cross-border co-operation. Even today one can consider the EK as a security community with a rather high level of institutionalisation of relations. At the same time, especially if some visible efforts are made to promote CBC at Russian national level, 'Karelia' will evolve into a 'functional' euroregion, so that the relations will rise up to the level of trans-frontier regional integration. This does not mean total integration in the terminology of the CoE handbook, but rather that in different branches of regional economy many cross-border solutions can be found in order to integrate them into joint development strategies. In the case of Euregio 'Karelia' these could be, at least, the following ones, which are

mentioned in different joint development programmes and projects: forestry, timber processing industry, woodworking industry, stone-working industry, tourism, and, as V. Shlyaminac* mentioned, transport infrastructure (see Map 3).²⁸

Notes

- 1 Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) (1998). Institutional Aspects of Cross-border Co-operation. Gronau: AEBR. p. 14.
- 2 Perkman M. (1999). *The rise of the Euroregion. A bird's eye perspective on European cross-border co-operation*. At: <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Perkman-Rise-of-Euroregion.pdf>
- 3 See for example a map of euroregions, published by the AEBR at: www.aebr.net
- 4 See: Mariussen Å. (2002). "Sustainable fragmentation: regional organizations in the North". In: *The NEBI Yearbook 2001-2002: North European and Baltic Sea Integration*. Ed. by Hedegaard L., Lindström B. Berlin – Heidelberg, 2002. p. 213-230.
- * Both maps' source: www.nordregio.se
- 5 N. Korablev et al. (2001). *History of Karelia since Ancient Times to Our Time*. [Istoria Karelii s drevneishih vremen do nashih dnei]. Petrozavodsk: Petrus. P. 62.
- 6 Heininen L., Cronberg T. (2001). *Europe Making in Action. Euregio Karelia and the Construction of EU-Russian Partnership*. At: <http://students.soros.karelia.ru:82/~goloubev/enorth/tarja.htm>
- 7 Cronberg T. (2003). "Euregio Karelia: In search of a relevant space for action". In: *The NEBI Yearbook 2003. North European and Baltic Sea Integration*. Ed. by Hedegaard L., Lindström B. Berlin: Springer-VerlagVela. p. 226.
- 8 Bazegski D.(1999). *Historical contacts between Finland and the Karelian Republic from past to present // Crossing Borders in the Northern Dimension*. Oulu, 1999.
- 9 Finland [Finlyandiya](1973). In: *The Soviet Historical Encyclopedia [Sovetskaya istoricheskaya entsyclopediya]*. Vol. 14. Moscow, 1973. p. 165.
- 10 See: Suni L.V. (1982). *Autocracy and social and political development of Finland in 80's – 90's of the 19th century [Samoderzhavie i obschestvenno-politicheskoe razvitie Finlyandii v 80-90-e gody XIX veka]*. Leningrad: Nauka.



Map 3. Euregio 'Karelia' as a part of the Northern East-West Freight Corridor.*

- 11 Cronberg, 2003: 225.
- 12 See: Khesin S.S. (1949). *Defeat of the White-Finns' Venture in Karelia in 1921-1922*. [Razgrom belofinskoi aventyury v Karelii v 1921-1922 godah]. Moscow: Nauka.
- 13 Allison R. (1985). *Finland's Relations with the Soviet Union, 1944-84*. New York: St Martin's. p. 14-15.
- 14 Deutsch K.W. et al. (1957). *Political Community and the North-Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University. p. 5.
- 15 See: Deutsch K.W. (1979). "Toward Western European integration: an interim assessment in 1962". In: *Deutsch K.W. Tides among nations*. New York: The Free Press. pp. 234-248.
- 16 Euregio Karelia (2000). See the preamble of The Agreement concerning the creation of Euregio "Karelia" (in Russian) at: http://euregio.karelia.ru/file/1/agreement1_ru.rtf
- 17 Euregio Karelia (2001). *Euregio Karelia as a tool for civil society*. At: http://euregio.karelia.ru/file/47/bulletin_e.rtf H. Kempainen, Chairman of the Regional Council of Kainuu, Co-chairman of the Administrative Committee of EK: «Removal of barriers preventing cooperation between territories is also one of our objectives. First of all, development of communication between people from border areas seems to be significant».
- 18 See: Cronberg, 2003.
- 19 *The Republic of Karelia - brief economic-geographical information*. At: http://www.gov.karelia.ru/Different/karelia_e.html
- 20 Sorainen O. (2001). *Finland. OECD Sopemi. Trends in international migration*. Finland: Ministry of Labour. At: www.mol.fi/migration/finrep2001.pdf
- 21 See: *Questions of Russian-speaking population of Finland 2002*. At: http://www.rusin.fi/venajankieliset%5F2002/Suomen_venajankielisen_vaeston_kysymyksia_RU.pdf
- 22 Mitrany D. (1975). "A war-time submission (1941). Territorial, ideological, or functional international or-ganization?" In: Mitrany D. *The Functional Theory of Politics*. London: Martin Robinson. p. 120.
- 23 See: Lindberg L.N. (1963) *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 24 Council of Europe (2000). *Handbook on transfrontier co-operation for local and regional authorities in Europe*. – Strasbourg: Council of Europe publishing. p. 33.
- 25 See: Perkmann M. (2003). "Cross-border regions in Europe. Significance and drivers of regional cross-border co-operation". *European Urban and Regional Studies*. Vol. 10. № 2. p. 153–171.
- 26 Shortly saying, *de-territorialisation* means a border becomes softer, loses its barrier functions and turns into a frontier. See: Paasi A. (1999) *The Finnish-Russian Border in a World of De-territorialisation*. In: *The NEBI Yearbook 1999*. North European and Baltic Sea Integration. Ed. by Hedegaard L., Lindström B. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. p. 219.
- 27 Numerous facts speak in favour of this statement. Thus, one the most competent Russian scholars in the field of regionalism and regionalisation, Andrey Makarychev, while speaking of one of the Russian border regions, noted: «Limits of possible integration of the Kaliningrad region into the Baltic regional structures are defined in terms of "hard" (military and state-centered) security by the majority of Russian officials. It is indicative that the Interagency Committee on Kaliningrad region was created under the Security Council of Russia in 1999. The decision concerning the management of the Free Economic Zone was made in 2001 at the same level". See: Makarychev A. (2003). "Hard" and "Soft" Regionalism: the Kaliningrad outline (in Russian). At: <http://www.rami.ru/cosmopolis/archives/2/8.html>; see also: Makarychev A. (2002). *Ideas, Images and Their Producers: The Case of Region-making in Russia's North West Federal District*. Working Paper 24/2002. COPRI: Copenhagen Peace Research Institute.
- * Valery Shlyamin, the Head of the Trade Representation of the Russian Federation in Finland.
- 28 Shlyamin V. (2006). "Finland – Trade and Economic Partner of Russia". In: *Days of Russian Economy in Finland: forum's materials*. Helsinki 19-20.04.2006. [Dni Rossijskoi ekonomiki v Finlyandii: materialy foruma]. Petrozavodsk: Scandinavia. p. 120-121.
- * The map has been modified from Shlyamin, 2006: 126.