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The Russian Federation in European Union Programmes

ABSTRACT

Since the early 1990s, the European Union has been supporting socio-economic transformations in the former Soviet Union states, including the Russian Federation. Initially, this assistance was provided in the framework of the TACIS Programme, offering long-term, non-repayable aid. In 1991–2006, Russia received EUR 2.7 billion for the restructuring of the state enterprise sector, establishment of private companies, state administration reform, telecommunications, nuclear safety and security, and environmental protection. Despite severe criticism directed at the implemented programme, emphasising its unclear objectives, lack of awareness of the conditions in which the projects were executed, prolonged completion periods for some projects and lack of evaluation, the European Union continued its financial assistance to Russia since 2007 as part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. The funds available for the programme were earmarked to support political, economic and social reforms, and regional and local development through programmes implemented in two time perspectives: 2007–2013 and 2014–2020. Evaluation of the programmes implemented in 2007–2013 revealed numerous shortcomings in project execution. For example, projects implemented as part of the Arctic Circle – Russia Programme were criticised for weak objectives and only partial completion of some undertakings. Another programme – Karelia–Russia failed to create a joint vision of the region and develop joint investment plans. The issues indicated as barriers to cooperation between the Russian Federation and Finland included: complicated administrative procedures in Russia and poor command of the English language on the Russian side. No evaluation report was prepared on completion of the South-East Finland–Russia Programme and Lithuania–Poland–Russia Programme. Furthermore, the objectives of the Estonia–Latvia–Russia Programme were not accomplished. Nevertheless, the European Union decided to continue the assistance to the Russian Federation in 2014–2020 as part of the following programmes: Arctic Circle–Russia, Karelia–Russia and South-East Finland–Russia and to launch four new programmes: Estonia–Russia, Latvia–Russia, Poland–Russia and Lithuania–Russia.

Key words: the Russian Federation, the European Union, TACIS, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, European Union Programmes

INTRODUCTION

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation became an important political and economic partner of the European Union. This is evidenced by the jointly undertaken political activities and increasing trade exchange. Russia has long been Europe's main supplier of petroleum and gas and the continent's energy security has largely depended on this country. That is why many European Union countries strive to maintain a good relationship with the Russian Federation. One of the aspects of the Russian–European cooperation was the financial aid to the former Soviet Republics via the TACIS Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States Programme in 1992–2006 and then with the use of the funds available in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument in 2007–2013 and in the 2004–2020 time perspective. The aim of this article is to analyse and compare the programmes with Russian Federation participation and European Union financing in the period between 1992 and 2016. The hypothesis of the study is as follows: The European Union has been supporting financially the socio-economic transformation in the Russian Federation, paying little attention to the effects of the projects implemented. To verify this hypothesis, the author framed the following research questions: 1/ Which European Union programmes provided financial resources to the Russian Federation?; 2/ Which sectors were supported under the TACIS programme?; 3/ Which programmes were implemented in the 2007–2013 time perspective, and which in 2014–2020?; 4/ Which sectors of the economy were supported as part of the programmes implemented in the time perspective 2007–2013?; 5/ What were the results of the evaluation of the effects of the programmes completed?

The following research methods were used in this article: decision-making, deductive and statistical. The author used the sparse specialist literature available, the contents of the programmes participated by the Russian Federation and evaluation reports.

THE TACIS PROGRAMME AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Since the early 1990s, the European Union supported the political, economic and social changes occurring in the independent states of the post-Soviet territory and made efforts to intensify contacts with the fifteen new partners on many fronts. The post-Soviet republics received additional financial support from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development [Энтин, Энтина 2017: 26; *Rosja chce pozwać EBOiR*].

The European Union prepared a special technical aid programme for the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was the first offer of long-term and non-repayable assistance extended to the Russian Federation territory by the European Communities. The programme known as TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) was intended to support democratic and pro-market reforms in

the countries of East Europe and Central Asia [Raszkowski 2011: 437; Калиниченко 2011: 146–147]. The programme was launched in 1991 and by 2006 it had the following participants: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Кыргызстан, Moldova, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The main beneficiaries of the programme were the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which received more than half of the funds available [TACIS]. In 1991–1999, the Russian Federation received a total of EUR 1.3046 billion. In the next distribution for 2000–2006 Russia received EUR 1.3954 billion of the total EUR 3.1380 billion; thus, a total of EUR 2.7 billion was allocated to the Russian Federation alone [EU Assistance to Russia; *Новый проект программы ТАСИС в России*]. The programme was implemented on the basis of plans that were prepared annually. The main sectors supported by TACIS funds are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The main sectors supported in the Russian Federation in 1991–1999, EUR million

National programmes	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Nuclear safety and security and environmental protection	13	0	0	0	0	6	5	10	8	42
Restructuring and development of the private enterprise sector	27	30	55	43	31	41	29	32	18	306
State administration reform	47	25	44	19	53	34	27	33	20	302
Agriculture	51	21	13	16	17	11	13	9	5	156
Energy	42	16	21	20	18	12	13	9	4	155
Transport	33	15	14	14	13	9	7	8	5	118
Healthcare and education	0	0	0	19	0	26	31	28	23	127
Telecommunication	0	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	2	31
Other	0	0	10	15	15	3	4	10	8	65
Total	213	112	162	150	162	135	133	142	93	1,302

Source: own elaboration based on *An evaluation of the TACIS Country Programme in Russia. Financial synthesis report*, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports/tacis/951500_synth_en.pdf (access: 15.09.2016).

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the most financial resources in 1991–1999 were earmarked for the restructuring of the state enterprise sector and establishment of private enterprises, and also the reform of state administration. The sectors of telecommunications, nuclear safety and security and environmental protection received the lowest share of the funds. The table does not include the funds granted to the Russian Federation within other programmes: regional, nuclear safety and security, coordination and programme implementation support. The TACIS programme carried out in Russia can be divided into: 1/ general programmes: BISTRO – small investments, “TACIS” Twin Cities Programme, Civic Society Programme, Partnership and Coordination Programme, Promoting Democracy Programme, Mercury Programme; 2/ Science and education programmes: TEMPUS/

TACIS, Entrepreneurship Programme, International Banking and Finance School, Economic Cooperation Programme, Economy, Administration and Management courses; 3/ Business assistance programme: TACIS businesses cooperation centres, SME development agencies, programmes of assistance for Russian companies operating on the European market and the European service network. The aforementioned programmes were implemented according to the priorities established annually in the recipient country. The projects were divided into large and small [Nikitina 2013: 329–330; Пашковская 2007: 32].

In January 2000, the Council adopted a new Regulation concerning the TACIS Programme for 2000–2006. The Russian Federation was awarded a total of EUR 1.07650 billion. The culmination of the support was in 2004–2006, when Russia received far more funds than originally planned – EUR 392 million in total. EUR 122 million was spent on the support for institutional and administrative reforms, EUR 120 million – on the private sector; a total of EUR 125 million – on the reform of the social sector, health, education and municipal services, whereas a special programme for Kaliningrad Oblast received EUR 25 million [National Indicative Programme].

The effects of the TACIS Programme received a critical rating from the Court of Auditors in 2006. The programme objectives were considered too vague; the auditors emphasised the insufficient knowledge of the conditions in which the Russian projects were implemented, prolonged periods for completion and lack of evaluation of many projects. Summing up, the Court of Auditors stated that the TACIS Programme funds had been utilised inefficiently, while the project objectives had not always been observed or accomplished [Szmidt 2008: 24]. The auditors stressed that the principles of granting financial assistance had not taken into account the specificity of the former Soviet republics, including Russia.

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE PROGRAMMES OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT

EU expansion to include ten new states in 2004 made it necessary to redefine the Union's policy towards its new eastern neighbours: Ukraine and Belarus. On 1 July 2003, the European Commission issued a document titled “Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument”, informing about the launch of the Neighbourhood Programmes. The funds were earmarked solely for EU countries, for projects on which they worked together with the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine [Трещенков 2011].

On 1 January 2007, under the European Neighbourhood Policy, the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument was introduced [Regulation (EC) No. 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council; Громько 2013: 27]. It aimed to support: 1/ political reforms: the rule of law, respecting human rights, civil society commitment to the inter-cultural dialogue, combating fraud, corruption,

organised crime, and terrorism; 2/ economic reforms: market economy, approximation of the commercial law to the EU law, progress in integration; 3/ social reforms: employment, discrimination against women, combating poverty; 4/ regional and local development, and participation in the programmes and activities of European Union institutions [Борко 2012: 47–49]. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument provided assistance to election, disaster and catastrophe observer missions. It was assumed that the instrument objectives would be implemented through: 1/ national and international programmes applying to each partner state; 2/ programmes of cross-border cooperation between the partners and the neighbouring member states on land and sea. Multi-national and national programmes for 2007–2013 received a total of EUR 10.621 million, and the cross-border cooperation programmes – EUR 1.118 million [*Cross Border Cooperation; Программы приграничного сотрудничества Россия – ЕС 2007–2013 гг.*]. The cross-border cooperation programmes were to implement measures with respect to: promotion of administrative reforms and investment project implementation, supporting and promoting tertiary education and interregional dialogue. This cooperation, realised in the form of programmes, included the Russian Federation [Энтин, Энтина 2015: 149; Стрежнева 2010: 51–52]. Table 2 shows the programmes with the participation of Russia in two time perspectives.

Table 2. ENPI programmes with the participation of the Russian Federation in 2007–2013 and 2014–2020

Programme name	2007–2013	2014–2020
Arctic Circle–Russia	x	x
Karelia–Russia	x	x
South-East Finland–Russia	x	x
Estonia–Latvia–Russia	x	
Estonia–Russia		x
Latvia–Russia		x
Lithuania–Poland–Russia	x	
Poland–Russia		x
Lithuania–Russia		x

Source: own elaboration based on: *Cross border cooperation*, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/cross-border-cooperation/index_en.htm (access: 16.09.2016).

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that Russia participated in nine ENPI programmes. Five programmes were conducted in the period 2007–2013: Arctic Circle–Russia, Karelia–Russia, South-East Finland–Russia, Estonia–Latvia–Russia and Lithuania–Poland–Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast). Three of them: Arctic Circle–Russia, Karelia–Russia and South-East Finland–Russia were extended to the period 2014–2020. In the same time perspective, it was decided to implement four new programmes: Estonia–Russia, Latvia–Russia, Poland–Russia and Lithuania–Russia.

The Arctic Circle–Russia (Kolarctic) Programme conducted in 2007–2013 covered a territory with a total area of 700 km²: Lapland in Finland, Norrbotten in Swe-

den, Finnmark, Troms and Nordland in Norway, and Murmansk and Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Arkhangelsk Oblast in Russia. The objective of the programme was to reduce the peripherality of this area. Its priorities included: 1/ economic and social development of the area attained by the fulfilment of operational objectives: development of trade relations between the partners, cross-border transport cooperation, logistics, better utilisation of energy from renewable sources, movement of labour, cooperation in services and cooperation between local government units; 2/ ensuring security with respect to health, reducing environmental threats, counteracting climate change, cooperation in the approximation of environmental protection standards, simplification of border-crossing procedures; 3/ strengthening people-to-people contacts and development of civil society. An amount of EUR 28.241 million was earmarked for programme implementation in 2007–2013 [*The Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme 2007–2013*]. The evaluation report emphasised that 29 projects out of 51 had been completed by late 2015. The authors of the evaluation pointed out that the objectives had been weak and some projects had been only partially completed [Kahila, et al. 2016; Стрежнева 2007: 488–489].

The programme for 2014–2020 provided for continuation and enhancement of the cooperation between the countries in the region, realised via two priorities: 1/ life in the Arctic environment, economic development and environmental protection, 2/ mobility of people, goods and knowledge. The following three strategic objectives were formulated: a/ support for economic development on both sides of the border; b/ joint activities in the field of the environmental protection, health and protection; c/ promotion and facilitation of people, capital and knowledge mobility. The following areas were indicated as crucial for the Russian Federation: 1/ foreign trade cooperation; 2/ undertaking joint investment projects; 3/ transport, logistics and communications cooperation; 4/ sustainable use of natural resources and environmental protection; 5/ cooperation in creating new legislation in the Arctic area; 6/ adopting joint regulations concerning migration and the labour market; 7/ cooperation in the field of science, research and people-to-people contacts. It was also assumed that the fulfilment of the priority axes would contribute to the accomplishment of ENPI objectives with respect to SME development, environmental protection, climate change prevention, improvement of accessibility of the individual regions by building communications networks, better border security and migration management. The European Union's planned contribution was EUR 24,718,090 [Акульшина, Беленов, Шилова 2017: 22].

Additionally, some projects were to be co-financed by Norway with the amount of EUR 10,355,241, whereas the Russian Federation was obliged to provide co-financing of the projects in the amount of EUR 10,355,241 [*The Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme 2014–2020*; Громыко 2014: 59]

The next Karelia–Russia Programme for 2007–2013 was implemented in sparsely populated, forested regions, in an area of 250,000 km². The Karelia ENPI CBC programming area included the following regions; North Karelia and the Oulu region in

Finland, Republic of Karelia in Russia, regions of Lapland and Pohjois-Savo, the city of St. Petersburg and regions of Leningrad, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. There are three border crossing points in the Finnish–Russian border area: Kuusamo–Suoperä, Vartius–Majka and Niirala–Värtsilä. The main objective of the programme is to foster cooperation via two priorities: 1/ stimulating economic development beyond the borders in the field of tourism, environmental protection, new energy sources, culture and health; 2/ improvement of the quality of life of the local population. The EU provided EUR 32.2 million for the implementation of these objectives; additionally, some undertakings were financed by Russia and Finland [*The Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme 2014–2020*]. The areas that received the most favourable rating in the evaluation report were information exchange, knowledge transfer and trust development. The programme failed to create a joint vision of the region and develop joint investment plans. The issues indicated as barriers to cooperation between the Russian Federation and Finland included: complicated administrative procedures in Russia and poor command of the English language on the Russian side [*Ex post evaluation of the Karelia ENPI CBC Programme 2007–2013*].

The Karelia–Russia Programme for 2014–2020 was assigned new priorities. They included: 1/ cross-border business development with emphasis on the high potential of both partners in the field of forestry, wood economy, tourism increasing bio-energy production on the basis of the experience of the Finnish partner; 2/ attractive cultural environment highlighted by the promotion of local culture, preservation of historic heritage and the assumption that cultural cooperation can increase the knowledge and awareness of the neighbours and provide foundations for wider cooperation between the nations; 3/ resident-friendly region – this priority assumed cooperation with a view to improving water purification technology and increasing the population density on both sides of the border; 4/ efficient border crossing points. The programme proposed to improve border management and security. It provided for investment and “soft” projects. The overall financial support from the EU for 2014–2020 was planned at the level of EUR 21.5 million [*Karelia CBC, Joint Operational Programme 2014–2020*].

The next South-East Finland–Russia ENPI CSB Programme 2007–2013 extended over the following areas: South Karelia, Kymenlaakso and part of Savo, the neighbouring regions of Uusimaa (Itä-Uusimaa), Päijät-Häme and Northern Savo (Pohjois-Savo); on the Russian side – St. Petersburg and Leningrad region. The overall area covered by the project was 117,538 km². The following priorities were envisaged in the project: 1/ support for economic development and partner cooperation in SME development; promotion of trade and investments; development of transport, logistics and innovative technologies; cooperation of the energy and tourism industries, and rural development; 2/ common challenges: border crossing and the environment. The priority was to be achieved by a/ efficient and secure borders, b/ natural environment protection, important in the context of cross-border rivers, lakes and atmosphere; 3/ undertaking efforts with a view to developing

a civic society and cooperation at different levels in the field of culture, cultural heritage conservation and administrative reform in the Russian Federation. The overall amount allocated by the European Union was EUR 36.125 million [*South-East Finland–Russia ENPI CSB Programme 2007–2013; Программа сотрудничества Россия–Финляндия*]. It is impossible to assess the completed programme in detail due to the absence of an evaluation report. Nevertheless, on 15 December 2015, the European Commission decided to continue the programme in the next time perspective – 2014–2020. The process of proposal acceptance conducted by the Joint Monitoring Committee and Managing Authority began in the first quarter of 2016. However, the negotiations and financial agreement between the European Commission and participant states are planned to be concluded by the end of 2016. The programme envisaged the following four priorities: 1/ development of SMEs; 2/ support for education and innovation research; 3/ environmental protection and disaster prevention; 4/ promotion of secure border management. It was assumed that the overall cost of programme implementation would be EUR 72.3 million, 50% of which would be contributed by the European Union and the other 50% – by both partners [*South-East Finland–Russia CSB Programme 2014–2020*].

The Estonia–Latvia–Russia Programme was limited to the period 2007–2013. Its scope covered an area of 213,752 km²: Latgale, Vidzeme; adjoining areas: Riga and Pieriga in Latvia; Kirde-Eesti, Lõuna-Eesti, Kesk-Eesti; the Estonian region Põhja-Eesti, the Russian regions of Leningrad, Pskov and the city of St. Petersburg. Implementation of the programme was based on three priorities: 1/ socio-economic development and providing favourable conditions for the competitiveness of the cross-border region with respect to entrepreneurship, transport, logistics and tourism; 2/ common challenges in the resolution of issues on both sides of the border with respect to heritage preservation, energy efficiency improvement and renewable energy promotion; 3/ promotion of cross-border cooperation through the development of local initiatives, increasing the administrative capacity of authorities and cooperation in the areas of education, sport and health. The total amount utilised by the programme was EUR 65.319 million, of which EUR 47.774 million was contributed by the European Union and the remainder by the individual partners. The Russian contribution was EUR 15.909 million. The programme encompassed investment projects and small grants [*Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Cross-Border Cooperation Programme within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007–2013*]. The observation made in the project evaluation report was that its objectives had been highly ambitious and could not have been achieved within a short period.

The Estonia–Latvia–Russia Programme was implemented in the same period: 2007–2013. The area qualified for the programme included: the Lithuanian counties of Klaipėda, Marijampolė and Tauragė and the adjacent Alytus, Kaunas, Telšiai and Šiauliai counties, Kaliningrad Oblast in the Russian Federation and the Polish sub-regions of Gdańsk–Gdynia–Sopot, Gdańsk, Elbląg, Olsztyn, Ełk, Białystok–Suwałki and the adjacent sub-regions of Słupsk, Bydgoszcz, Toruń–Włocławek, Łomża, Ciech-

anów–Płock and Ostrołęka–Siedlce. The total area covered by the programme was 156,100 km². The priorities of the programme included: 1/ undertaking joint activities for the protection of the environment and improving its accessibility; 2/ supporting social, economic and spatial development via tourism, improving educational opportunities and living conditions of the local population; 3/ promoting people-to-people contacts. The value of the funds used for the implementation of the projects was EUR 134.2 million, of which Russia contributed EUR 21.648 million in that time perspective [Revised Annex 3 to the Lithuania–Poland–Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013]. The programme included investment projects and small grants, so-called micro-projects [*Lithuania–Poland–Russia Programme 2007–2013*; Revised Annex 3 to the Lithuania–Poland–Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013]. In 2016, a competitive bid for the evaluation of the completed project was announced [*Lithuania–Poland–Russia Programme 2007–2013*].

In the 2014–2020 time perspective, the Estonia–Latvia–Russia Programme was replaced with two programmes: Estonia–Russia and Latvia–Russia. The former, Estonia–Russia Programme, was developed on the basis of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014. It covers the following areas: Kirde-Eesti, Lõuna-Eesti, Kesk-Eesti in Estonia, and St. Petersburg and the regions of Leningrad and Pskov in Russia. The aggregate area within the scope of the projects is 174,945 km². The following priorities were identified in the programme: 1/ SME development; 2/ improving border, mobility and migration management; 3/ environmental protection, counteracting climate change, reduction of water consumption; 4/ good practices in local administration. The programme allowed the participation of partners from Latvia and Finland in some projects. The planned value of the programme totalled EUR 16.807 million. Additionally, it was assumed that the programme would receive EUR 1.826 million in support from the European Regional Development Fund in 2018–2020. The financial contribution from Russia was not specified [*Joint Operational Programme of Estonia–Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020*; The Partner Search Forum within Estonia–Russia CBC Programme was held on 7–8 September 2016 in St. Petersburg].

The progress of the Latvia–Russia Programme implementation is even slower. The Programme covers the areas of Vidzeme, Letgalii, Peringa, Zemgale in Latvia and the region of Leningrad and Pskov on the Russian side, with the total area of 193,613 km² [*Latvia–Russia Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020*]. The following priorities were adopted in the programme: 1/ promotion of and support for entrepreneurship through: infrastructural development, reinforcing the business environment, developing skills and entrepreneurship, to be achieved by the cooperation of educational institutions supporting entrepreneurship; b/ promotion of new products based on local resources realised through the development of cross-border tourism and crafts; 2/ environmental protection and mitigation of climate change to be achieved through: a/ establishing new protected areas, promoting tourist services and redevelopment of brownfield sites; b/ undertaking joint environmental management

activities and application of good practices used by local governments; c/ supporting sustainable waste and sewage management; 3/ secure border, mobility and migration management realised through: a/ increasing the cross-border traffic, expansion of border-crossing points, improvement of access roads, providing appropriate equipment for border guards and improving the working conditions of border services. The overall indicative budget was planned at the level of EUR 15.875 million provided by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument [*Latvia–Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020*]. By mid-2016, the programme still had not been launched even though it had been approved. This was due to the lack of agreement as to the co-financing of the project by the individual partners.

The development work on the Poland–Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme was completed on 28 June 2016 and the draft programme was submitted to the European Commission. The negotiations were conducted with the participation of representatives of the Polish Ministry of Development, delegates of the Pomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podlaskie provinces, representatives of Kaliningrad Oblast and of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. The Ministry of Development with an office in Olsztyn will be responsible for the programme management [*Negocjacje Programu Polska–Rosja 2014–2020 zakończone sukcesem*]. The programme will not be participated by Lithuania due to the establishment of a separate Lithuania–Russia Programme to be implemented in 2014–2020.

The Poland–Russia Programme 2014–2020 covers the sub-regions of Suwałki, Gdańsk, Starogard Gdański, Tri-City, Elbląg, Ełk and Olsztyn, as well as two adjacent regions of Słupsk and Białystok, and on the Russian Side – Kaliningrad Oblast [*Poland–Russia Programme 2014–2020*]. The main objective of the programme is to promote Polish-Russian cooperation in its social, environmental, economic and institutional aspects and to “create a zone of stability, security and prosperity” [*Poland–Russia Programme 2014–2020*]. The following priority axes were identified in the document: 1/ cooperation to preserve the historic, natural and cultural heritage and promote the economic development of the border area; 2/ cooperation for clean environment; 3/ sustainable cross-border transport and communication; 4/ joint activities to enhance the border effectiveness and security [*Poland–Russia Programme 2014–2020*]. The budget allocated for priority fulfilment is EUR 61.9 million, of which EUR 41.3 million is provided from the European Union funds and EUR 20.6 million – from the budget of the Russian Federation. The programme provides for investment and “soft” projects.

In the last quarter of 2016, the European Commission published the fourth draft of the Lithuania–Russia Programme 2014–2020. By the end of August 2016, the parties had not entered into discussions and were still seeking partners for the programme. The total area covered by the programme is 55,587 km². It includes the Lithuanian counties of Klaipėda, Marijampolė, Tauragė, Alytus, Kaunas, Telšiai and Šiauliai, as well as Kaliningrad Oblast in the Russian Federation. The priorities identified in the fourth version of the programme are as follows: 1/ restoration of historic national

heritage, fostering cultural contacts and tourism; 2/ promotion of social integration in education and services; 3/ cooperation of local authorities; 4/ border security and management. The total indicative budget is EUR 30.428 million, of which the Russian Federation's contribution is planned at the level of EUR 9 million [*Russia–Lithuania Programme 2014–2020*].

CONCLUSIONS

Since the early 1990s, the European Union has been supporting socio-economic transformations in the former Soviet Union states, including the Russian Federation. Russia was the recipient of 40% of the funds allocated to the TACIS Programme, which were spent in the sectors of nuclear safety and security and environmental protection, business sector restructuring and development, state administration reform, agriculture, development of new energy sources, transport, healthcare, education and telecommunications. Despite serious criticism directed at the completed programme, emphasising the vagueness of the objectives of TACIS related to Russia, lack of awareness of the conditions in which the projects were executed, prolonged completion periods and lack of evaluation, the European Union continued its financial assistance to Russia. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, introduced as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy on 1 January 2007, aimed to support political, economic and social reforms, and regional and local development through programmes implemented in two time perspectives: 2007–2013 and 2014–2020. Five programmes were completed in the 2007–2013 time perspective. The evaluation reports prepared by the Court of Auditors highlighted numerous shortcomings and defects of the completed programmes. In the final evaluation, projects implemented as part of the Arctic Circle–Russia Programme were criticised for weak objectives and only partial completion of some undertakings. The report evaluating the Karelia–Russia Programme pointed out that the parties failed to create a joint vision of the region or implement joint investments. The barriers to cooperation between the Russian Federation and Finland included complicated administrative procedures in Russia and a poor command of the English language on the Russian side. The evaluation reports concerning the Estonia–Latvia–Russia and Lithuania–Poland–Russia Programmes stated that their objectives had been highly ambitious and could not have been achieved within a short period. By the end of September 2016, no evaluation results were published after the completion of the South-East Finland–Russia Programme. In spite of the errors and shortcomings indicated in the evaluation of programmes implemented with the participation of the Russian Federation, the European Commission decided to continue three programmes in the 2014–2020 time perspective: Arctic Circle–Russia, Karelia–Russia and South-East Finland–Russia and launch four new programmes: Estonia–Russia, Latvia–Russia, Poland–Russia and Lithuania–Russia. The hypothesis proposed in

this study: The European Union has been supporting financially the socio-economic transformation in the Russian Federation paying little attention to the effects of the projects implemented has, thus, been confirmed.

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