

Evolution of cross-border relations
Latvia – Lithuania



2nd BRIDGE meeting
23.03.2022





Evolution of cross-border relations: Latvia – Lithuania

How the relations between cross-border countries changed in the last few years, sharing of good practices

PEOPLE
SERVICES
TOURISM

LEGISLATION
TRADE
BUSINESS

MUNICIPALITIES
PUBLIC COOPERATION
CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS



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PEOPLE
SERVICES
TOURISM



Evolution of cross-border relations: Latvia – Lithuania from the point of view of the average citizen / traveler

- relations improved, new interesting tourism objects appeared

- more traveled directly to Lithuania and received services there, because travel to other countries was even more limited.

TOURISM

- Relations between Latvia and Lithuania have always been close and good, they have not changed in five years,

I always enjoyed traveling to Lithuania, because I felt like at home in this country, as well as I felt safe and comfortable here.

It was not possible to travel due to the pandemic, but it was the same in other countries.

Prior to the pandemic, residents of Daugavpils regularly **bought different goods in Lithuania due to lower prices and other assortment**, as well as **visited SPA and active recreation facilities** on weekends.

Urban and rural areas are tidy, tourist infrastructure is accessible and comfortable to visit, **national dishes are delicious**.

Lithuania has a very **convenient transport infrastructure**, before the pandemic we used it even when traveling within the country (Daugavpils - Liepāja), because there are high-speed highways and the quality of roads is better than in our country.

-people living on the Latvian-Lithuanian border are more and more often using the trade, entertainment, tourism, etc. services offered in the border municipalities of both countries. services, as the distance between some of all known, popular destinations is not very long and there is a free opportunity to visit them freely across the border.

-there have been **no special changes to be able to cross the border freely** and travel to the nearest tourist sites or to shop in the nearby shops, only **Covid's time introduced its adjustments** when it was no longer possible to cross the border freely (but it was for the short period of time). In addition, last summer, while traveling around **Latvia, I noticed an increase in the number of neighboring (Lithuanian and Estonian) tourists**, and at every tourist destination you could hear the language of the neighboring countries, which was definitely explained with restrictions to travel to other countries

LEGISLATION
TRADE
BUSINESS



Māris Grunskis



Evolution of cross-border relations: Latvia – Lithuania

from a legal point of view: procurement and other types of documents, from a business point of view

- Lithuanian companies have started in **municipal procurement** in Latvia, forming **joint ventures** with Latvian companies, for example, in the field of road and bridge construction. There were no problems.

- Lithuanian companies (including Estonian companies) start participating in public procurements organized by the municipality. Considering that the exclusion conditions provided for in the **Latvian and Lithuanian Public Procurement Law** and verification procedure are similar in Latvian and Lithuanian legislation, there are no problems when submitting documents issued by the competent Lithuanian authorities for verification of compliance with the exclusion conditions.

BUSINESS



**MUNICIPALITIES
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As a result of the project, two heritage objects will be improved, one tourist route developed and promoted. During the project Bastion 7 of the Daugavpils Fortress and entrance gate to the Fort 6 of the Kaunas Fortress will be restored. A new tourist route and loyalty program will be developed, virtual add-on using Google Maps, video, leaflets and maps for its promotion will be produced.

Cross-border Increase in Regional Cultural Heritage Tourism LLI – 326, CIRCUIT





Evolution of cross-border relations: Latvia – Lithuania from the point of view of the cross-border project manager

- **understanding of the conditions for implementing cross-border programs** did not change much , especially for private and municipal institutions, but municipalities have the most experience of course

CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS

- **Compared to other cross-border programs, it is easiest to work with Lithuanians.** Only the LT Secretariat, which managed the BY program, is too bureaucratic, there is no good cooperation, there is still no common circulation of e-documents, documentation is sent in paper format by post.

- Unfortunately, this was **negatively affected by the Covid crisis**, when border crossings were restricted, but I think that now that restrictions are shrinking, **people will continue to use cross-border services and visit at least popular tourist destinations in both countries**, especially for cross-border projects, **where EU-funded tourism and public infrastructure have been improved** - something new, yet to be visited and freely available to everyone on the border.



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Covid pandemic - Suspension of the Schengen Treaty - EU Digital Certificate

Euroscepticism - Trust in the European Institutions

VIDEO INTERVIEWS

DAUGAVPILS LATVIA

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BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
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Covid pandemic - Suspension of the Schengen Treaty - EU Digital Certificate
Euro-scepticism - Trust in the European Institutions

1. "Do you think the **EU measures** carried out **during the pandemic** contributed to increase the sense of **Euro-scepticism**? If yes, in which way?"

- Society was divided: some feel solidarity and understand necessity of restrictions
- Ok for restrictions to overcome the pandemic
- Negative attitude towards people who though travel for leisure during the pandemic
- Some people felt the lack of unified restrictions,
- Each country invented its way to control the pandemic
- Some people welcome possibility of appropriate measures for each country
- Pandemic lighted out the division of society
- Those who were sceptic become even more sceptic
- Restrictions increased the sense of Euro-scepticism

Society get divided.....

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2. "Do you think the **suspension of the Schengen Treaty** affected the **trust in the European Institutions**? If yes, in which way?"

- Travel restrictions were not to long, now we can travel again – trust is not lost
- Trust is not lost because most people understood the necessity of restrictions
- Opinion of people depends on their personal situation, how strong one was affected
- Some people put the restrictions as the way to protect their health over the right to travel
- People were locked at their homes for some time and it was no good for their attitude and ability to think adequate

Pandemic lighted out the tendencies that has already exited

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3. "In your opinion, the measures about the **EU Digital Certificate** (or green card/green pass) should have been the same in every Country or it was adequate to differentiate them from Country to Country?"

- Each country should decide about EU digital certificate individually
- Must be common EU opinion - version of digital certificate, with minor variations for countries with different situation
- Opinions are very different, the same as attitude to vaccination
- European countries should have common position/ unique solution
- Idea of unique Digital certificate is very attractive, but situation in different countries are diverse, so adjustments are needed
- EU citizens should be treated equally so there should not be differences

Unique EU digital Certificate would be good thing,
but is not possible without side effects

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4. "According to your idea, do you think that something will change in the **European Union after the end of the pandemic?**"

- We will become more digital, tele working/cultural consumption
- It is hard to predict when the pandemic ends, there may be new virus strain...
- The most dangerous thing is division of society, that we observe in the last years
- Pandemic should be taken as experience and chance to learn how to overcome different issues
- Some time should pass so that we could do conclusions
- Pandemic lighted out the tendencies that already existed
- Pandemic showed that we never could be certain of anything
- Pandemic shows that governments are not ready for problem situations
- After pandemic people would more rely on them selves

Everyone is hoping for the best future, but is not certain about it

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Covid-19 has changed our minds

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME !

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