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Mutual relations of Pskov region with foreign countries: sociological poll results in the region

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Аннотация

The aim of the study is to identify the views of Pskov region residents, which is the only region in the European part of Russia, bordering with three countries, about the region's international contacts with other states. The main attention in the article is given to identifying the current situation of relations between the Pskov region and foreign partners. Key information on the interaction assessment of the Pskov region with other countries was obtained during a sociological survey of the population. The survey was conducted at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. 150 respondents were interviewed in seven border regions of the Pskov region — Gdovskii (on the border with Estonia), Pechorskii (with Estonia and Latvia), Palkinskii, Pytalovskii, Krasnogorodskii (with Latvia), Sebezhskii (on the border with Latvia and the Republic of Belarus) and Nevelskii (with the Republic of Belarus). Features of identifying the main reasons for cooperation with the other countries were determined by constructing regression models of the relations between the cooperation factors of foreign countries and the Pskov region. As additional sources of information, publications of informational content about this region were used. Visualization of the results is based on standard type diagrams.

Certain directions have been established, within those, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation of the Pskov region with foreign states.

Ключевые слова: international contacts, areas of cooperation, socio-economic development, foreign partners

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¹ **Introduction.** International cooperation of regions with foreign countries belongs to important state tasks. The main reason is the possibility of speeding up the socioeconomic development as result of the growing cooperation with other states. The question of strengthening the intercommunications with foreign countries is still actual, especially for the Russian Federation. It is no coincidence that the emphasis is put on the Russian Federation. This is explained by a special historical development path of Russia in the end of the XX century. The political and economic organization of Russia changed totally in the beginning of the 1990s. Significant changes in the structure of the economics have happen. These changes were mostly negative in the beginning. The low populated regions of the Russian Federation were affected the most. As a result, many regions had to actively search for foreign partners to improve the economic situation by investments attraction. Many researchers distinguish two waves of searching for investors: the first one lasted from the beginning of the 1990s until 1998 and the second one lasted from the 2000s and is characterized by more successful investors attraction. It is considered that a definite base of rethinking and reparation for a new economic regime was being formed during the first wave. Thanks to the prepared legislative base, investors attraction with the help of cooperation with foreign countries became a more realizable task. Thus, it is interesting to explore (also by the included observation method) what relations do Russian regions (e.g. Pskov Oblast) have with foreign countries in 2020.

² **The research problem.** The human society perception is formed during adolescence [6]. Individuals are significantly influenced by external patterns while forming personal perception of the environment. State of country's development at the moment of an individual's socialization and a relatively common opinion of social surroundings on various subjects are factors that influence these patterns. Therefore, it is important to emphasize why different generations have different opinions. E. g. older people often estimate foreign countries in a negative or neutral way, because patriotism was common among young people in the USSR. Their attitude to other countries has not

changed much. From the other side, the youngest generation (among the age intervals considered in this research) estimates the cooperation with foreign countries more loyally. The reason is that their adolescence period has matched the beginning of the digital epoch.

³ Human values are at the base of all different opinions. The values are determined by external factors, such as environment and economic and political situation in the country. The values are the primary intention that forms a stable opinion about various aspects of individuals' lives. Many authors have done research on how the values impact the individuals' behavior and perception of the environment. It is necessary to name the founders of theoretical and methodological aspects of values.

⁴ V. Dilthey was one of the first authors who studied the nature of human values [2]. He suggested that a value is inseparable from forming the sense of satisfaction. M. Weber interprets values like a basic foundation that motivates human actions [1]. Sh. Schwartz is one of the first researchers who studied the interpretation of values understanding [13]. R. Inglehart laid the foundation for studying values from the position of cultural aspect. He emphasized that changing population values directly impacts the economic and social situation in a country. Besides, he neared the Sh. Schwartz's ideas about values understanding and their influence on forming the individuals' behavior [11]. P. Sorokin argued that values contribute to society development on the whole [7]. E. Durkheim noted that values exist around us and compose a background that influences forming the judgement about the surrounding environment [3]. W. Thomas and F. Znanetsky suggested that the value emphases were created in the process of the individuals' interaction [8]. T. Parsons emphasized that values have a unique capacity to both unite and separate people communities [5].

⁵ Nowadays many authors study values as patterns influencing various aspects of life activity, e. g. V. Magun and M. Rudnev [4], E. Greene [10], E. D. Lowe [12], M. Secombe [14], V. Bengstone [9], J. Scott and M. Braun [15] and others.

⁶ **Data preparation.** The survey was conducted in the period from 18th November 2019 to 19th January 2020. 150 respondents were interviewed in seven border regions of the Pskov Oblast — Gdovskii (on the border with Estonia), Pechorskii (with Estonia and Latvia), Palkinskii, Pytalovskii, Krasnogorodskii (with Latvia), Sebezhsckii (on the border with Latvia and the Republic of Belarus) and Nevelskii (with the Republic of Belarus).

⁷ These regions were chosen in order to cover regions situated on the borders with Estonia, Latvia and the Republic of Belarus. Because of the small size of the sample, we focused on the Pechorskii region as mostly connected to the European Union countries because of more frequent border crossings. The Pechorskii region is the only region of the Pskov Oblast that has checkpoints with both Estonia and Latvia. The Pechorskii region is also not far from Pskov.

⁸ The Gdovskii region has no land border with the EU countries; the border with Estonia lies on Lake Peipus. The Pytalovskii, Krasnogorodskii and Sebezhsckii regions have checkpoints with Latvia, but they are less popular than in the Pechorskii region. The high frequency of border crossings in the Sebezhsckii region is related to the transit through the Pskov Oblast by the Moscow-Riga route.

9 The Nevelskii and Usvyatskii regions are less interesting because they have no borders with the EU countries and all the border crossings are oriented towards Belarus (and the high cross-border traffic is observed in the Nevelskii region only).

10 Because of the small size of the sample, we decided to focus on the most mobile part of the population — on the youth and people of the middle age. During the survey in the Sebezhsckii region it was determined that a lot of employable men belong to special contingents, first of all, employers of the Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN). They are not able to cross borders. This is the reason for almost twofold advantage of the middle-aged men population among the region inhabitants. Because of it, youth and middle-aged women (often wives of men belonging to special contingents) are more interesting for the survey. An opposite situation was observed in the Pechorskii region where both women and men are actively involved in border contacts with the EU countries.

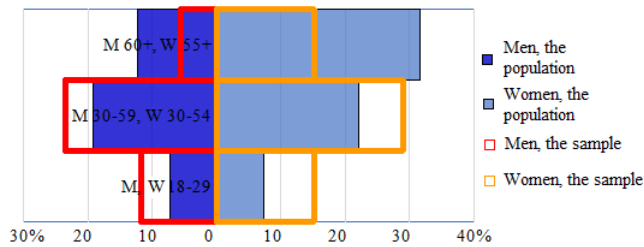
11 The geographical distribution of the respondents in the population (the over 18 years old respondents) and in the sample is presented in the table 1.

12 *Table 1* The geographical distribution of the respondents in the population and in the sample

The population		
<i>Regions</i>	<i>Inhabitants, people</i>	<i>%</i>
Pechorskii	15571	26.90
Krasnogorodskii	5604	9.68
Gdovskii	10084	17.42
Palkinskii	6052	10.46
Sebezhsckii (the special contingents excluded)	11 629	20.09
Pytalovskii	8 937	15.44
Total	57877	100.00
The sample		
<i>Regions</i>	<i>Respondents, people</i>	<i>%</i>
Pechorskii	62	42.76
Krasnogorodskii	12	8.28
Gdovskii	16	11.03
Palkinskii	12	8.28
Sebezhsckii	28	19.31
Pytalovskii	15	10.34
Total, the sample	145	100.00
Nevelskii (the control group)	5	X
Total, the respondents	150	X

13 Let us consider the distribution by the age and sex groups in the population and in the sample.

14



Picture 1. The age and sex distribution in the population (the special contingents of the Sebezhsckii region excluded) and in the sample, %

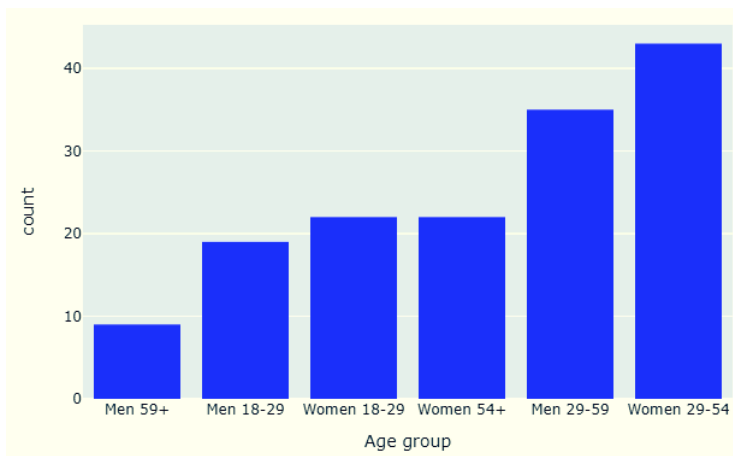
15

The sex distribution in the sample is 58 % of women and 42 % of men. The sex distribution in the population is 56 % of women and 44 % of men excluding the special contingents and 53 % of women and 47 % of men including the special contingents.

16

The sample structure by sex is presented in the picture 2.

17

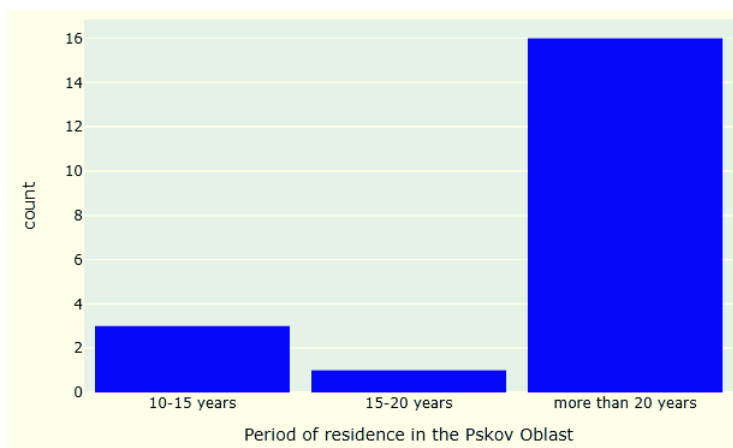


Picture 2. The sample structure by sex and age groups, people

18

The people born in the Pskov Oblast are the most frequent respondents (86 %), 14 % are born in other regions of Russia and in the near abroad.

19



Picture 3. The sample structure by period of residence in the Pskov Oblast, people

20

Most respondents from other regions moved to the Pskov Oblast more than 20 years ago. 5 % moved 15–20 years ago and 15 % moved 10–15 years ago.

21

The research goal is finding out how the Pskov Oblast inhabitants estimate the collaboration of the region with other countries.

22

The source of the information are the data obtained by the survey and the information publications about the region. The diagrams used for the visualization are standard.

23 The results of the research are presented in the following sections.

24 *The analysis of the socioeconomic politics of the Pskov Oblast.* The respondents estimate negatively the development perspectives of all the socioeconomic tasks suggested in the survey (table 2).

25 *Table 2* Development perspectives of different socioeconomic tasks in the Pskov Oblast

26

Task_Sex	1	2	3	4	5	99	-	+	Diff.
Providing the region with food_M	3.17	4.76	66.67	12.7	6.35	6.35	7.93	19.05	11.12
Providing the region with food_W	1.15	14.94	50.57	17.24	14.94	1.15	16.09	32.18	16.09
Providing the region with electric power and gas_M	17.46	12.7	53.97	9.52	3.17	3.17	30.16	12.69	-17.47
Providing the region with electric power and gas_W	14.94	24.14	37.93	17.24	5.75	null	39.08	22.99	-16.09
Incomes increase_M	25.4	28.57	4.76	6.35	31.75	3.17	53.97	38.1	-15.87
Incomes increase_W	37.93	28.74	10.34	9.2	13.79	null	66.67	22.99	-43.68
Attracting investments to the region_M	9.52	42.86	11.11	20.63	14.29	1.59	52.38	34.92	-17.46
Attracting investments to the region_W	18.39	19.54	17.24	32.18	8.05	4.6	37.93	40.23	2.3
Increasing the birth rate_M	11.11	14.29	28.57	34.92	7.94	3.17	25.4	42.86	17.46
Increasing the birth rate_W	10.34	14.94	35.63	31.03	6.9	1.15	25.28	37.93	12.65
Regulating the influx of migrants from Asia_M	31.75	23.81	9.52	3.17	30.16	1.59	55.56	33.33	-22.23
Regulating the influx of migrants from Asia_W	28.74	32.18	17.24	11.49	9.2	1.15	60.92	20.69	-40.23
Supporting the poor layers of the population_M	12.7	46.03	17.46	9.52	11.11	3.17	58.73	20.63	-38.1
Supporting the poor layers of the population_W	25.29	21.84	33.33	9.2	9.2	1.15	47.13	18.4	-28.73

27 The positive estimations dominate on providing the region with the food and increasing the birth rate only. Even for these tasks the positive estimations are not better than neutral. The respondents treat the socioeconomic politics of the region not indifferently: the answer “not able to choose” is rare among both women and men. The gender differences are observed in the estimations of incomes increase and attracting investments to the region (men estimate them more negatively) and regulating the influx of migrants from Asia (estimated more negatively by women).

28 Analyzing the table 2, we can conclude that the most disturbing problems are the questions of the food security, industry development, small and medium business development, supporting the poor layers of the population and regulating the influx of migrants from Asia.

29 ***Estimation of the Pskov Oblast relationships with foreign states.*** According to the respondents’ opinion, the region’s collaboration with Estonia, Germany and Belarus has the highest priority. Collaboration with India, Kazakhstan and Ukraine has the lowest priority. Noticeable gender differences (approximately 20 %) are observed in the priority estimation of relationships with Germany, Poland and Finland (men estimate the priority of relationships with these countries higher).

30 The respondents point to a higher importance of collaboration with other Baltic and Scandinavian countries geographically near to the Pskov Oblast: Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden (table 3).

31 We considered the respondents’ attitude toward foreign states by age groups. Belarus, Estonia, Sweden and Japan got the most positive estimations among all age groups (the difference between positive and negative grades was higher than 70 % in some age groups). It is also worth mentioning that the attitude toward such Western European countries as France, Italy and Spain is mostly positive among all age groups.

32 The most negative attitude among the respondents aged 18–29 was observed toward China and India, among the respondents older than 30 years toward the USA. The age distribution in the whole shows that young people aged 18–29 tend to have more positive attitude toward many countries, while aged people much more often have negative attitudes or are not able to answer.

33 The attitude toward other countries is distributed more uniformly. More than 40% of respondents in all age groups have a positive attitude toward Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The attitude toward near Baltic and Scandinavian countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Finland) is mostly positive (table 4).

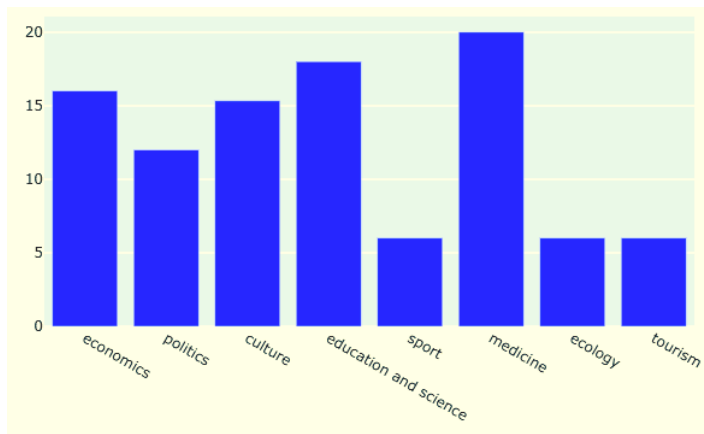
34 On the respondents’ opinion, it is most important to develop collaboration with other countries in the sphere of medicine. The next most important spheres are education, science and economics (picture 4).

35 *Table 3* Importance of the Pskov Oblast collaboration with foreign countries (1 — “not important at all”, 5 — “very important”), %.

Country_Sex	1	2	3	4	5	44	99
Belarus_M	3.17	3.17	26.98	28.57	38.1	null	null
Belarus_W	null	6.9	13.79	27.59	51.72	null	null
Kazakhstan_M	15.87	41.27	17.46	15.87	4.76	null	4.76
Kazakhstan_W	32.18	25.29	13.79	20.69	6.9	null	1.15
Ukraine_M	52.38	22.22	9.52	6.35	4.76	null	4.76
Ukraine_W	39.08	29.89	5.75	20.69	3.45	null	1.15
Lithuania_M	31.75	3.17	11.11	12.7	39.68	null	1.59
Lithuania_W	16.09	4.6	13.79	20.69	43.68	null	1.15
Latvia_M	9.52	25.4	6.35	23.81	34.92	null	null
Latvia_W	11.49	5.75	9.2	25.29	48.28	null	null
Estonia_M	6.35	6.35	6.35	34.92	46.03	null	null
Estonia_W	4.6	3.45	6.9	31.03	54.02	null	null
Other former republics of the USSR_M	7.94	15.87	15.87	34.92	17.46	1.59	6.35
Other former republics of the USSR_W	4.6	13.79	25.29	41.38	9.2	null	5.75
Germany_M	4.76	1.59	12.7	22.22	55.56	null	3.17
Germany_W	1.15	13.79	18.39	31.03	32.18	null	3.45
Poland_M	9.52	6.35	7.94	14.29	52.38	null	9.52
Poland_W	8.05	11.49	24.14	17.24	33.33	null	5.75
Finland_M	6.35	6.35	17.46	15.87	53.97	null	null
Finland_W	10.34	4.6	16.09	32.18	32.18	null	4.6
Sweden_M	9.52	4.76	25.4	7.94	49.21	null	3.17
Sweden_W	5.75	4.6	18.39	21.84	42.53	null	6.9
Other European countries_M	9.52	12.7	7.94	33.33	34.92	null	1.59
Other European countries_W	3.45	10.34	24.14	32.18	22.99	null	6.9
the USA_M	20.63	19.05	6.35	11.11	39.68	null	3.17
the USA_W	21.84	18.39	14.94	8.05	31.03	null	5.75
China_M	14.29	22.22	23.81	20.63	17.46	null	1.59
China_W	11.49	13.79	17.24	29.89	26.44	null	1.15
India_M	17.46	42.86	25.4	6.35	4.76	null	3.17
India_W	32.18	35.63	12.64	10.34	3.45	null	5.75
Other countries_M	28.57	11.11	26.98	17.46	null	null	15.87
Other countries_W	22.99	16.09	35.63	13.79	1.15	null	10.34

Country_Age	-2	-1	0	1	2
Belarus_18_29	null	null	7.32	21.95	70.73
Belarus_30_59	null	null	1.14	27.27	71.59
Belarus_60	null	null	4.76	23.81	71.43
Ukraine_18_29	9.76	19.51	7.32	31.71	31.71
Ukraine_30_59	6.82	7.95	32.95	35.23	17.05
Ukraine_60	4.76	4.76	19.05	38.1	33.33
Kazakhstan_18_29	null	12.2	19.51	36.59	31.71
Kazakhstan_30_59	1.14	19.32	28.41	36.36	14.77
Kazakhstan_60	null	23.81	14.29	23.81	38.1
Germany_18_29	2.44	9.76	4.88	36.59	46.34
Germany_30_59	2.27	12.5	21.59	40.91	22.73
Germany_60	null	9.52	33.33	14.29	42.86
Poland_18_29	null	9.76	12.2	39.02	39.02
Poland_30_59	5.68	7.95	17.05	45.45	23.86
Poland_60	9.52	4.76	23.81	42.86	19.05
Lithuania_18_29	null	4.88	9.76	41.46	43.9
Lithuania_30_59	3.41	1.14	23.86	22.73	48.86
Lithuania_60	4.76	4.76	38.1	28.57	23.81
Latvia_18_29	null	4.88	9.76	26.83	58.54
Latvia_30_59	5.68	null	7.95	32.95	53.41
Latvia_60	4.76	4.76	14.29	33.33	42.86
Estonia_18_29	null	2.44	12.2	7.32	78.05
Estonia_30_59	3.41	1.14	10.23	17.05	68.18
Estonia_60	4.76	4.76	14.29	4.76	71.43
France_18_29	null	null	7.32	24.39	68.29
France_30_59	null	2.27	15.91	28.41	53.41
France_60	null	4.76	14.29	23.81	57.14
Italy_18_29	null	null	14.63	17.07	68.29
Italy_30_59	1.14	3.41	15.91	32.95	46.59
Italy_60	null	4.76	19.05	19.05	57.14
Spain_18_29	null	4.88	14.63	12.2	68.29
Spain_30_59	1.14	3.41	15.91	32.95	46.59
Spain_60	null	4.76	23.81	23.81	47.62
Sweden_18_29	null	null	14.63	4.88	80.49
Sweden_30_59	1.14	2.27	13.64	25	57.95
Sweden_60	null	9.52	19.05	14.29	57.14
Finland_18_29	null	9.76	9.76	19.51	60.98
Finland_30_59	null	6.82	12.5	46.59	34.09
Finland_60	null	9.52	14.29	38.1	33.33
the USA_18_29	14.63	7.32	9.76	31.71	36.59
the USA_30_59	12.5	15.91	20.45	17.05	34.09
the USA_60	28.57	19.05	4.76	4.76	42.86
Turkey_18_29	null	17.07	34.15	29.27	19.51
Turkey_30_59	2.27	7.95	43.18	15.91	30.68
Turkey_60	null	14.29	23.81	38.1	23.81
Greece_18_29	null	null	29.27	60.98	9.76
Greece_30_59	1.14	2.27	30.68	48.86	17.05
Greece_60	null	4.76	19.05	61.9	14.29
Egypt_18_29	14.63	7.32	24.39	34.15	19.51
Egypt_30_59	5.68	3.41	19.32	53.41	18.18
Egypt_60	4.76	28.57	14.29	47.62	4.76
China_18_29	21.95	7.32	2.44	26.83	41.46
China_30_59	4.55	6.82	17.05	37.5	34.09
China_60	9.52	null	23.81	42.86	23.81
India_18_29	21.95	26.83	14.63	24.39	12.2
India_30_59	4.55	22.73	28.41	20.45	23.86
India_60	9.52	42.86	23.81	9.52	14.29
Japan_18_29	null	null	4.88	19.51	75.61
Japan_30_59	2.27	1.14	10.23	26.14	60.23
Japan_60	null	9.52	9.52	19.05	61.9

Table 4 The respondents' attitude toward foreign countries by age groups



Picture 4. The priority of the Pskov Oblast collaboration with other countries (% of the respondents who placed this sphere in the first place)

39 On the whole, it can be said that the collaboration with foreign partners in all spheres is important for the Pskov Oblast inhabitants.

40 The respondents were also asked about their position toward the embargo on some food and agricultural products from the EU introduced by the Russian Federation government in 2014. The oldest generation dominates among those who support the embargo (28.57 %). Most of the respondents younger than 60 years have a negative attitude toward the ban on importing food from the EU countries.

41

Age	-2	-1	0	1	2
18-29	34.15	9.76	24.39	29.27	2.44
30-59	32.95	19.32	28.41	9.09	10.23
60+	19.05	23.81	23.81	4.76	28.57

Table 5 The attitude of different age groups toward the embargo on some food and agricultural products from the EU

42 **The primary directions of the foreign collaboration development.** We constructed regression models with the dependent variable “Importance of the collaboration with a country” and different independent variables. The model with the highest capacity was obtained using the independent variables “Development of the collaboration in economics”, “Development of the collaboration in sport”. “Development of the collaboration in education and science”, “Development of the collaboration in medicine”.

43 The collaboration in economics, sport, science and medicine influence positively on the estimation of the necessity of collaboration with the countries. The importance of the collaboration is higher in the younger age groups. It can be explained by the fact that the young generation is better adapted to the market economy and completely realizes the profits of the relationships with foreign partners.

44 The positive attitude toward near Baltic and Scandinavian countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland) and also toward Germany and the Republic of Belarus fixed the highest priority for the collaboration development in science, sport and economics. The higher estimation was obtained by the former USSR countries and countries that traditionally have firmly established trade connections. E. g. Finland has

developed trade connections with Russia since the middle of the 20th century, while close collaboration with the Federal Republic of Germany began just in the beginning of the 21st century.

⁴⁵ **Conclusion.** The analysis of the estimation of the Pskov Oblast international relationships showed that the respondents have the most positive attitude toward former countries of the USSR and toward large trade partners. The younger respondents have the most positive attitude toward strengthening the socioeconomic contacts with foreign partners.

⁴⁶ There were also found out the primary directions of the international collaboration that should be developed first of all: sport, science and education, economics, medicine. The significant problems for the Pskov Oblast inhabitants are also questions of the food security, industry development, small and medium business and support of the poor layers of the population.

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Mutual relations of Pskov region with foreign countries: sociological poll results in the region

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to identify the views of Pskov region residents, which is the only region in the European part of Russia, bordering with three countries, about the region's international contacts with other states. The main attention in the article is given to identifying the current situation of relations between the Pskov region and foreign partners. Key information on the interaction assessment of the Pskov region with other countries was obtained during a sociological survey of the population. The survey was conducted at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. 150 respondents were interviewed in seven border regions of the Pskov region — Gdovskii (on the border with Estonia), Pechorskii (with Estonia and Latvia), Palkinskii, Pytalovskii, Krasnogorodskii (with Latvia), Sebezhsckii (on the border with Latvia and the Republic of Belarus) and Nevelskii (with the Republic of Belarus). Features of identifying the main reasons for cooperation with the other countries were determined by constructing regression models of the relations between the cooperation factors of foreign countries and the Pskov region. As additional sources of information, publications of informational content about this region were used. Visualization of the results is based on standard type diagrams. Certain directions have been established, within those, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation of the Pskov region with foreign states.

Keywords: international contacts, areas of cooperation, socio-economic development, foreign partners

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