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Boundarization and Frontierization of the East-West Border in Europe: the Case of Kaliningrad Oblast – the Russian Exclave in the EU.

The border of Europe with the Kaliningrad Oblast – a part of the Russian Federation sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania in the middle of the enlarged EU space – manifested for a long time the old legacies of separation, strengthened by the new external Schengen border regime after 2007. This border experienced changes much later than the other ones in the region, being a sort of “forgotten border,” with its own problems and limitations. The aim of this lecture is to test the dynamics of EU-Russian relations by using the case of Kaliningrad Oblast exclave of the Russian Federation. The conceptual framework of boundarization and frontierization will be used, as well as theoretical tools of European integration studies. It is claimed that the de-boundarization visible after 2012 is fueled by local motives of a neo-functional nature. This is sometimes in line, but sometimes collides, with the interests of supranational and national centers on this border, who use it instrumentally for achieving their own goals. At the same time, re-boundarization elements visible there result from neo-realistic tendencies in the geopolitical game of Russia and the West.