

Kaliningrad Residents Protest Ban on Lithuanian Dairy Products

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Residents of the Kaliningrad region have launched protests against the Russian ban on Lithuanian dairy products as the escalating trade war between the two countries jeopardizes close economic ties between the exclave and the Baltic country.

The Kaliningrad region, which is separated from the rest of Russia by European Union territory and is heavily dependent on European economies, has seen large-scale protests against the Kremlin's policy in recent years. In the wake of some of the largest rallies, Kaliningrad region's then-governor, Georgy Boos, stepped down in 2010.

The current protests started when social network users in Kaliningrad replaced their avatars with pictures of Lithuanian yogurts and cheeses earlier this week to protest against the Russian ban, Newsru.com reported Wednesday, citing local politician and blogger Roman Yukhnovets.

He also said he had filed a petition for a rally against the ban Oct. 19.

"Something incredible is happening on Kaliningrad-based Facebook accounts. All of my news feed, which includes nearly 2,000 people, has turned into a gallery of Lithuanian dairy products." Yukhnovets said on his LiveJournal blog.

Kaliningrad journalist Oksana Maitakova said the issues at stake were far more serious than Lithuanian milk for residents of the exclave, which shares a border with the Baltic country.

"Internet users are displeased with the policies of the Kremlin, which is waging trade wars with Lithuania while forgetting that the Kaliningrad region is suffering from this blockade," she said, as cited by Newsru.com.

"There are those who cannot see beyond cottage cheese," she wrote. "When you are left without pay when your factory goes idle because it has not received supplies from [the Lithuanian seaport of] Klaipeda, you will not find it so funny anymore."

Russia suspended all Lithuanian dairy imports Monday after having hindered Lithuanian supplies since September by holding up trucks and shipments on the border for weeks.

Amid the trade dispute, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said his country could "theoretically" block Russia's road and rail access to Kaliningrad.

Russia's Federal Customs Service will ease customs checks on the border with Lithuania on Oct. 10, the agency said Wednesday, Vedomosti reported. The custom service cited an instruction by President Vladimir Putin.

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