



# Asia Central

## En el marco de la Unión Económica Euroasiática

Arturo Oropeza García  
Nikolay Shkolyar  
(Coordinadores)

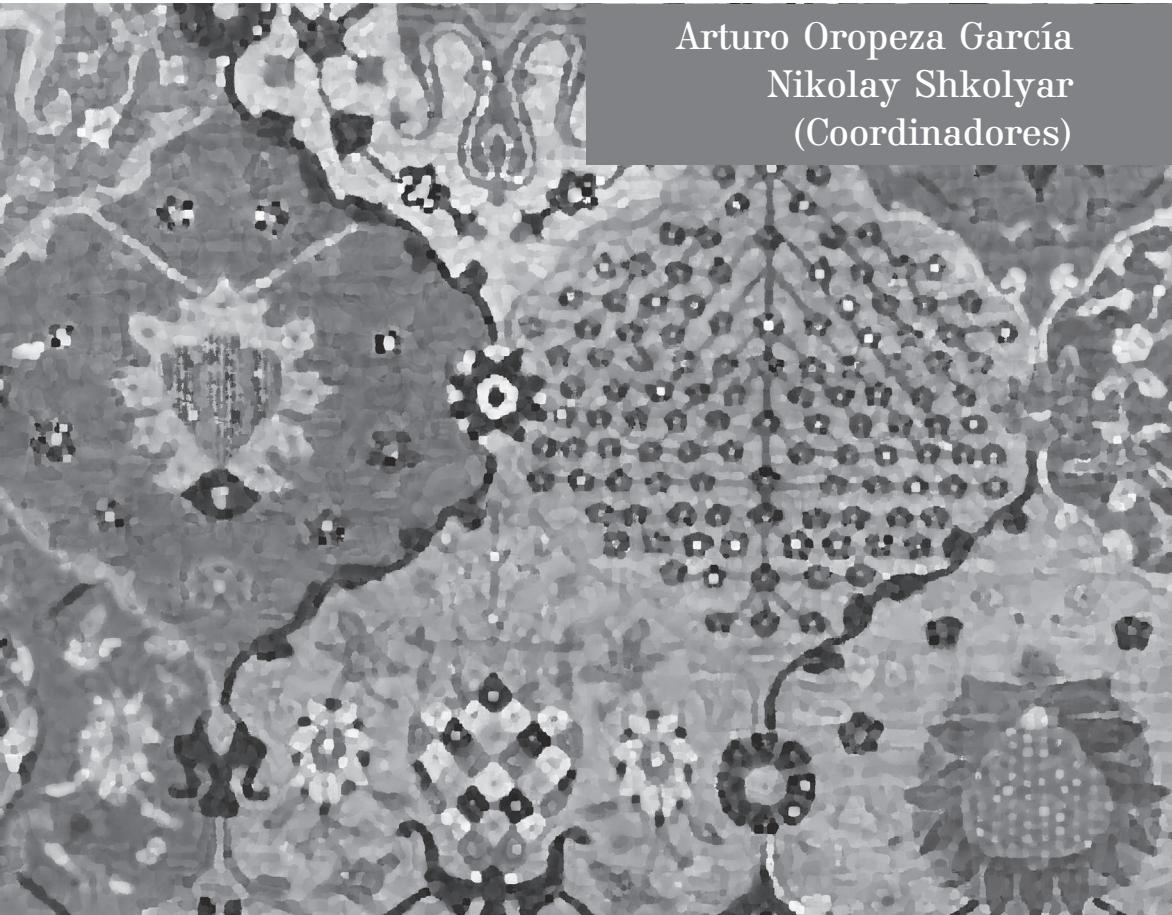




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(Coordinadores)

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTÓNOMA DE MÉXICO**  
**INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES JURÍDICAS**



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Arturo Oropeza García, Nikolay Shkolyar, (Coordinadores)  
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*Académico del Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, UNAM,  
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*Quien controla el pasado controla el futuro.  
Quien controla el presente controla el pasado.*

**GEORGE ORWELL**  
1984.

*Lo que pasó, está pasando todavía*

**OCTAVIO PAZ**

# Introducción

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## I.

Asia Central, desde el origen de la humanidad, ha jugado un papel trascendente tanto en la construcción de imperios como en la comunicación de dos de los continentes más relevantes en la historia, que han sido el Europeo y el Asiático.

Por sus condiciones geográficas, Asia Central ha tenido como destino ser la parte más sensible de un puente de comunicación euroasiático, que muchas veces representó un obstáculo para la circulación de ideas, dogmas, mercancías, conocimientos, etc., y su control significó también la posibilidad de incrementar este intercambio en beneficio de un mayor flujo civilizatorio, pero también de una acumulación de poder que en no pocas ocasiones desembocó en una ampliación y fortalecimiento del imperio en turno.

Desde la parte meridional de Asia Central, el imperio persa busca sin éxito el control euroasiático de su tiempo, al fallar en sus intentos de conquista de las naciones griegas al Oeste del mar Egeo. Alejandro el Magno conquista el primer imperio euroasiático venciendo al que fuera el gran imperio persa; llevando por primera vez el poder occidental hasta el nucleo de Asia Central, y a través de su dominio, arribar más tarde a las orillas del Indo, buscando crear la primera *nación euroasiática*, la cual sucumbiría ante su repentino fallecimiento. Los romanos intentaron dominar el puente euroasiático, pero en su mejor momento fracasaron los esfuerzos de lograrlo. El imperio árabe se conformaría con el dominio de sus valles centrales y la riqueza de su conocimiento. El imperio mongol lograría dominarlo a plenitud y *dueño* del centro asiático, expande su poder a sus cuatro puntos cardinales conquistando a China, Rusia, India; a Irak e Irán y la Europa del Este. El imperio otomano no pretendería más allá del mar Caspio; y las diferentes dinastías chinas desde la Han hasta la Qing, buscarían en todo momento el control de una región que desde siempre supieron de su valor estratégico. A partir del siglo XVII, Asia Central fue un gran campo de batalla entre los

intereses rusos y chinos, los cuales mostrarián en el primer tercio del siglo XX una clara definición hacia la Moscovia.

12 La historia de los imperios más significativos de la humanidad ha sido parte de Asia Central. “El Gran Juego” del poder (Kipling) al que se alude en el siglo XIX, para las hegemónías de Rusia y Gran Bretaña, es un *eco* que nace desde los campos de Maratón y las Termópilas; Issos y Gaugamela; y que se expande por Bactria y Samarcanda y se empodera en Kashgaria, que ha sido la *gran puerta* de la comunicación euroasiática.

El nacimiento de un imperio transeuroasiático en el siglo XX y hasta hoy: Estados Unidos, aparece como una excepción histórica que vino a romper la relatoría de una geopolítica determinada por el Gran Juego Euroasiático. La derrota de los últimos imperios orientales de China y Japón a mediados del siglo XIX, también contribuyeron a crear la idea de una supremacía occidental que se olvidó de la historia.

Ahora, ante el fuerte crecimiento de una era del Pacífico encabezada por China, así como por las diversas naciones de Asia Oriental y el Sudeste Asiático, que ya detentan juntas el mayor PIB económico mundial (28%); después de un breve paréntesis en el horizonte histórico, la geopolítica requiere de recuperar no solo la memoria de la importancia estratégica de Asia Central, sino de la *Gran Visión* de una historia mundial que los últimos años se escribió solo por Occidente.

## II.

El nacimiento del esquema 4+1 (80s), integrado por China, Rusia, Kazajistán, Turkmenistán y Kirguistán; de la Comunidad de Estados Independientes (1991), formado con la composición de Rusia y diez de las Ex Repúblicas Soviéticas; del Grupo de Shanghai (1996), con la asociación de China, Rusia, Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán ; de la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai (2001), ampliada con la integración de Uzbequistán en 2001, e India y Pakistán en 2016, y de la Unión Económica Euroasiática en 2015 (Armenia, Bielorrusia, Kazajistán, Kirguistán, y Rusia), es parte de una recomposición regional asiática que obedece a un nuevo punto de partida de Rusia, después de su disolución como Unión Soviética en 1991, lo cual representó para la Moscovia un quiebre geopolítico después de un largo periodo de hegemonía que bajo diferentes esquemas políticos pudo detentar de manera progresiva desde el siglo XVII.

De igual modo este proceso de recomposición regional forma parte de una nueva alianza geopolítica entre Rusia y China, al iniciar esta última en 1978 el relanzamiento de un proyecto económico y político global, después de los grandes déficits económicos y sociales del cierre de su periodo maoista de 1949-1976.

Junto a los esquemas de integración antes señalados, en 2009 aparece una propuesta informal de asociación, los BRIC, donde participan de manera central tres de las civilizaciones asiáticas más destacadas que son Rusia, China e India. En 2013, desde la Universidad de Nazarbayev en Astana, Kazajistán; núcleo de Asia Central, China lanza su invitación a los 49 países asiáticos, además de otros países europeos, africanos y latinoamericanos, de unirse a un desbordante esquema de asociación conocido como el Nuevo Camino de la Seda, donde a través de políticas públicas comerciales, educativas, financieras, digitales, etc., China les propone trabajar juntos en un nuevo anhelo de paz y de estabilidad, “en la búsqueda de un desarrollo común y el sueño compartido de una vida mejor”.

En noviembre de 2020, China junto a las 10 naciones de ASEAN, más la aceptación de Japón, Corea, Australia y Nueva Zelanda, deciden integrar el Tratado de Libre Comercio más grande del mundo, La Asociación Económica Integral Regional o RCEP (Por sus siglas en inglés), que representa el 30 % del PIB mundial y el 28% del comercio global.

La nueva geografía política que día a día se reconstruye en Asia, de manera especial, de Asia Central al Pacífico, nos confirma del traslado de una era del Atlántico a una era del Pacífico, que nos emplaza a replantear lo antes conocido. Un orden brettoniano que ya no responde a los fines planteados; como la exigencia asiática de reconsiderar un orden civilizatorio donde queden incluidos sus visiones y sus intereses, son temas de una agenda global no resuelta, pero que sin embargo se mueve a través de sus propias inercias.

Como dice Octavio Paz, “lo que pasó, está pasando todavía”, y Asia en General y Asia Central y Oriental en particular, llaman a un redescubrimiento de su importancia geopolítica y geoeconómica.

### III.

El Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (IIJ-UNAM) y el Instituto para el Desarrollo Industrial y Crecimiento Económico (IDIC), en coordinación con el Instituto de América Latina de la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia, conscientes de la importancia de los nuevos esquemas de integración que se vienen construyendo de Asia Central al Pacífico, en el marco de la relación histórica sino-rusa; y de manera especial, del importante papel de la Unión Económica Euroasiática (UEE) en esta nueva política en gestación de Asia Central, decidieron integrar un equipo académico de trabajo, a fin de analizar este proceso desde sus múltiples facetas, con el objetivo de sumar a un conocimiento integral interdisciplinario del tema que sirva a la academia y a la docencia de México y de América Latina.

Los coordinadores de este grupo de trabajo, el Dr. Arturo Oropeza García, Investigador del Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM y el

Dr. Nikolay Shkolyar, Investigador del Instituto de América Latina de la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia, agradecen a los institutos convocantes su importante apoyo para la realización de este proyecto.

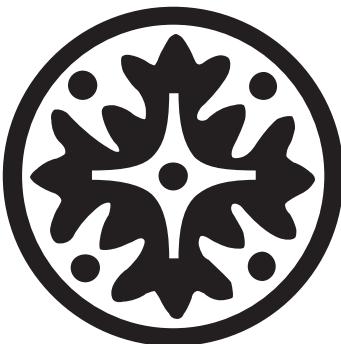
De igual modo, los académicos expresan su mayor gratitud a los especialistas de la Federación Rusa: Andrey Pantelev, Elena Kuzmina, Andrey N. Spartak, Tatyana Flegontova, Olga Ponomareva, Timur Aliev, Yuliana Latypova, Zalina Enikeeva, Anastasiia Khazhgerieva, Beniamin A. Shakhnazarov, Mark Entin, Ekaterina Entina, Inna V. Ershova, Anatoly Kapustin; así como a los especialistas de México: Ana Teresa Gutiérrez del Cid, Eduardo Tzili-Apango y Eduardo Palacio-Cabrera, por su valioso compromiso en la elaboración de cada una de las investigaciones que integran esta obra.

El marco de la pandemia de Covid-19 ha sido una realidad amarga que ha acompañado a cada uno de los investigadores e instituciones que han participado en este proyecto editorial. Sin embargo, la terminación de esta obra, bajo este esfuerzo colectivo, comprometido en aportar nuevos enfoques a los temas internacionales de actualidad, demuestra que la solidaridad académica e institucional de investigadores de diferentes países, en este caso de Rusia y México, pueden trascender más allá de la pandemia.

**ARTURO OROPEZA GARCÍA**

**NIKOLAY SHKOLYAR**

AGOSTO DE 2021



Asia Central y la Unión  
Económica Euroasiática.  
Una visión regional



# Las relaciones comerciales de la Unión Económica Euroasiática y América Latina y el Caribe

**SUMARIO:** I. Introducción II. UEEA en el comercio internacional III. ALC en el comercio internacional IV. ALC en el comercio exterior de UEEA V. Dinámica de comercio Rusia-ALC VI. Áreas prometedoras para el desarrollo de lazos económicos UEEA con ALC VII. Relaciones institucionales UEEA con ALC VIII. Bibliografía

## I. INTRODUCCIÓN

Una de las áreas más avanzadas de integración dentro de la Unión Económica Euroasiática (UEEA, The Eurasian Economic Union – EAEU) es la común política del comercio exterior y el uso de instrumentos únicos de regulación comercial en relación con terceros países.<sup>2</sup> En el marco de esta política, la Comisión Económica Euroasiática (CEE) en su actividad presta más atención al desarrollo de las relaciones con las organizaciones de integración de diferentes regiones, incluso de América Latina y el Caribe (ALC).

Para evaluar las relaciones comerciales de la UEEA con los países de ALC y determinar las perspectivas de su crecimiento elaboramos el siguiente modelo de análisis.

En primer lugar, analizamos el potencial de comercio exterior de la UEEA, descubrimos la posición de cada uno de estos Estados en el comercio internacional. Posterior a esto, resumimos la posición de los países de ALC en el comercio internacional. En tercer lugar comparamos la exportación e importación de cada uno de los cinco miembros de la UEEA con los países de ALC. Analizamos también el comercio y relaciones económicas de Rusia, como la potencia más importante de la UEEA, con ALC. De igual forma,

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<sup>1</sup> Investigador científico principal del Instituto de América Latina de la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia. Catedrático en economía internacional por la Universidad Rusa de la Amistad de los Pueblos (Moscú).

<sup>2</sup> Tratado de la Unión Económica Euroasiática (en ruso). Firmado en Astana el 29 de mayo de 2014. [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_163855/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855/)

determinamos los sectores que, a nuestro juicio, pueden ser más oportunos para el desarrollo de comercio de UEEA con ALC, y finalmente, revisamos la gestión y formalización de las relaciones institucionales de CEE con las organizaciones de integración de ALC.

## II. UEEA EN EL COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL

El análisis (basado en las estadísticas de la Comisión Económica Euroasiática) de la política comercial de UEEA, esta propuesto en el capítulo “EAEU trade policy towards third countries: priorities and mechanisms” de este mismo libro. Sin embargo, para evaluar el potencial de relaciones comerciales entre los países de UEEA y ALC matizamos (con base en estadísticas internacionales) algunos datos más importantes de su papel en el comercio internacional.

La dinámica de comercio exterior de bienes de los países integrantes de la UEEA con terceros países en el periodo desde su inicio de funcionamiento de 2015 hasta 2018 ascendió de 674,5 a 867,5 mil millones de dólares, incluso las exportaciones de bienes crecieron de 423,4 a 548,2 mil millones de dólares, importación -de 251,1 a 319,3 mil millones de dólares-. Sin embargo, esta tendencia de crecimiento no fue constante, en 2016 experimentó una disminución de volumen total de comercio, principalmente por la caída de las exportaciones de Rusia provocada por la política de las sanciones occidentales contra esta nación. El año 2018 con relación a 2017, representó un aumento de las importaciones en un 6,4%, las exportaciones aumentaron bruscamente en un 24,3%, debido a un aumento en los precios promedio de los bienes exportados y un aumento en el volumen físico. El superávit de comercio exterior en 2018 alcanzó los 228,9 mil millones. (Tabla 1).

**TABLA 1. COMERCIO DE PAÍSES DE UEEA CON EL MUNDO 2015-2018, (MIL MILLONES DE DÓLARES)**

PAÍS	OPERACIÓN / AÑO	2015	2016	2017	2018
ARMENIA	Exportación	1,5	1,8	2,1	2,4
	Importación	3,3	3,2	3,9	4,9
BIELORRUSIA	Exportación	26,7	23,5	29,3	33,7
	Importación	30,3	27,6	34,2	38,4
KAZAJISTÁN	Exportación	45,9	36,8	48,5	61,0
	Importación	30,6	25,2	29,6	32,5
KIRGIUSTÁN	Exportación	1,4	1,4	1,8	1,8
	Importación	4,1	3,8	4,5	5,3
RUSIA	Exportación	343,9	285,5	359,2	449,3
	Importación	182,8	182,3	228,2	238,2

<b>UEEA</b>	Exportación	423,4	349	440,9	548,2
	Importación	251,1	242,1	300,4	319,3
	Comercio total	674,5	591,1	741,3	867,5

**FUENTE:** Trade Map - Trade statistics for international business develop  
<https://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx> (дата обращения: 02.03.2020)

Para determinar los sectores del probable crecimiento de las ventas y compras de UEEA a ALC analizamos la estructura del comercio existente de este grupo de países. En 2018 la estructura de exportaciones de la UEEA fue compuesta por petróleo y gas - 67,2%, así como metales y productos derivados de ellos - 9,6%, productos químicos - 5,6%, productos alimenticios y materias primas agrícolas – 5,1%, maquinaria, equipos y vehículos - 3%, madera y productos de papel – 2,9%. La mayor participación en las importaciones totales está ocupada por maquinaria, equipos y vehículos - 44,5%, así como productos químicos – 18,3%, productos alimenticios y materias primas agrícolas – 11,6%, metales y productos metálicos – 6,9%, productos textiles y calzado – 6,7%.

La estructura geográfica de comercio de los países independientes que integran UEEA se ha formado principalmente por los países europeos y asiáticos. El principal comprador de bienes exportados por los Estados miembros de la UEEA es la Unión Europea – 50,5% (Países Bajos – 10,4%, Alemania – 7,4%, Italia – 5,8%, Polonia – 3,8%) y China - 12,8%, Estados Unidos representan el 2,8%, mientras que la República de Corea recibe el 4,2% de las exportaciones. Las importaciones totales de los Estados miembros de UEEA en un 43,2% provienen de países APEC (China – 24,1%, Estados Unidos – 5,5%, Japón - 3,7%, República de Corea – 3,1%) y 39,8 % de la Unión Europea (Alemania – 11,2%, Italia - 5%, Francia – 4,1%).<sup>3</sup>

Existe una gran diferencia en el tamaño de la contribución de cada Estado miembro de la UEEA a la facturación total del comercio exterior del grupo, reflejando la participación de cada uno de estos cinco países en las exportaciones e importaciones mundiales. El papel principal de Rusia es evidente, representando en el 2018 el 84,1% del comercio exterior de la UEEA, mientras que en las exportaciones mundiales representan 2,3% y su posición relativa es 14. Rusia representa 1,2% de las importaciones mundiales y su posición relativa en las importaciones mundiales es 22. La contribución de Bielorrusia y Kazajistán al saldo total del comercio exterior de la UEEA en 2018 fue del 4,7% y el 9,9%, respectivamente, mientras que cada uno de

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<sup>3</sup> Sobre los resultados del comercio exterior de bienes de la Unión Económica Euroasiática.(en ruso).  
[http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr\\_i\\_makroec/dep\\_stat/tradestat/analytics/Documents/2018/Analytics\\_E\\_201812\\_180.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr_i_makroec/dep_stat/tradestat/analytics/Documents/2018/Analytics_E_201812_180.pdf)

estos países en las exportaciones e importaciones mundiales no superó el 0,2%. La participación de Armenia y Kirguistán en el comercio exterior de UEEA fue del 0,7% y 0,6% respectivamente, representando cada uno 0% de las exportaciones e importaciones mundiales.

### III. ALC EN EL COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL

La región latinoamericana representa un gran mercado de 654 millones de consumidores, aportando anualmente al intercambio internacional de bienes exportados más de 1 billón de dólares, e importando bienes de otros países del mundo por 1,1 billones de dólares. El volumen de facturación del comercio exterior de ALC en 2008-2018 aumentó de 1,8 billones a 2,2 billones de dólares. Desde 2013 ha habido un déficit constante en la balanza comercial de ALC, cuyo tamaño en 2018 superó los 37 mil millones de dólares. La participación de ALC en las exportaciones mundiales en la década de 2000 aumentó al 6,1%, pero después de la crisis financiera y económica global en 2009 cayó al 5,6% y en 2018 no superó el 5,7%.

En la estructura de exportación de ALC en 2010-2018 se han producido cambios asociados con una la disminución de los suministros al mercado exterior de materias primas minerales, así como de metales y productos derivados (en un 13% y 5%, respectivamente) como resultado de la caída de los precios mundiales y una menor demanda en la UE, China y otros países de la región de Asia y el Pacífico. Al mismo tiempo, hubo un aumento en los ingresos por la exportación de productos alimenticios y materias primas agrícolas (en un 37,6%). En 2018 los países de ALC proporcionaron 14,5% de las exportaciones mundiales de alimentos 9,4% de las materias primas agrícolas, 11,3% de los minerales y metales, 5,9% de los combustibles. La participación de la región en el mercado mundial de maquinaria, equipos y vehículos es comparativamente pequeña y no supera el 4,3%.

En la estructura geográfica de las exportaciones latinoamericanas, a pesar de la alta tasa de crecimiento de las entregas a China, cuya participación en la exportación total de ALC de 2012 a 2018 aumentó de 8% a 12%, Estados Unidos continúa ocupando la posición de liderazgo, cuya participación durante este período aumentó de 36% a 42%. La proporción de países de la Unión Europea disminuyó del 12% al 10%.

TABLA 2. PRINCIPALES PAÍSES-EXPORTADORES DE ALC, 2018

PAÍS	EXPORTACIÓN M. MILLONES DE DÓLARES	PARTICIPACIÓN EN EXPORTACIÓN DE ALC, %	PARTICIPACIÓN EN EXPORTACIÓN MUNDIAL %
MÉXICO	451	41,5	2,32
BRASIL	240	22,1	1,23

<b>CHILE</b>	75	6,9	0,39
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	62	5,7	0,32
<b>PERÚ</b>	49	4,5	0,25
<b>OTROS DE ALC</b>	209	19,3	1,19
<b>ALC, TOTAL</b>	1086	100	5,7

**FUENTE:** UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, p.26-27  
[//https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2591](https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2591).

La lista de los principales países exportadores de ALC está encabezada por México, que representa el 41,5% de las exportaciones regionales y el 2,32% de las exportaciones mundiales de bienes. Esto es el resultado de la política exterior de México, su carácter abierto, y la liberalización de la actividad económica exterior a través de la formación de condiciones de libre comercio con sus principales socios. Fue el uso de Tratados de Libre Comercio (TLC) lo que permitió a México convertirse en uno de los países con las economías más abiertas. En 2018 México tenía 13 TLC con 55 Estados, y con base a estos acuerdos, más del 90% de sus operaciones de exportación e importación se llevan a cabo.<sup>4</sup>

Entre los socios de comercio exterior de México, Estados Unidos juega el papel más importante respecto al mayor volumen de exportaciones mexicanas (alrededor del 80%) que se envían a este país vecino. China ocupó el segundo lugar en términos de comercio y Alemania quedó en tercer lugar. Durante el período de 2009 a 2018 aumentaron significativamente las exportaciones a Rusia (más de 8 veces), a la República de Corea (más de 4,5 veces), China (más de 3 veces) y más de 2 veces a Alemania y Japón. En 2018 las exportaciones mexicanas ascendieron a 451 mil millones de dólares, con posiciones de liderazgo en maquinaria, equipos y vehículos, petróleo crudo, teléfonos, alimentos y productos agrícolas.

A pesar de que la política económica exterior de Brasil activa los mecanismos de crear condiciones favorables para el crecimiento de las exportaciones de bienes y servicios, este país con 22%, ocupa el segundo lugar entre los exportadores de ALC (Tabla 2). En 2018, el volumen de las exportaciones brasileñas aumentó un 14,3%, mientras que los suministros a China crecieron un 35,2%, superando los 64,2 mil millones de dólares. La participación de China en las exportaciones brasileñas aumentó del 21,8% en 2017 hasta 26,8% en 2018. La participación de los países de la UE en las exportaciones de Brasil ascendieron a 17,6%, EU – 12,1%, ALC – 18,8%.<sup>5</sup>

**4** Shkolyar N.A., Pivikova E.K. Estrategia de entrada al mercado de México (en ruso). M., Ves mir. 2019. P.32-36.

**5** Brasil: un cambio de prioridades en el nuevo ciclo político (en ruso). M., ILA RAN, 2019, 144 p.

TABLA 3. PRINCIPALES PAÍSES IMPORTADORES DE ALC, 2018

PAÍS	IMPORTACIONES M.MILLONES DE DÓLARES	PARTICIPACIÓN EN IMPORTACIONES DE ALC %	PARTICIPACIÓN EN LAS IMPORTACIONES MUNDIALES, %
México	477	45,5	2,41
Brasil	189	16,8	0,95
Chile	75	6,9	0,38
Argentina	65	6,7	0,33
Colombia	51	4,5	0,26
Otros de ALC	266	19,6	1,34
ALC, total	1123	100,0	5,67

**FUENTE:** UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2019, p.26-27  
[/https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2591.](https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2591)

La base de la estructura de las importaciones latinoamericanas son maquinaria, equipo y vehículos (42% en 2018), combustible mineral (13%) y productos químicos, incluidos fertilizantes (17,2%). La participación de los principales socios importadores de ALC entre 2012 y 2018 ha cambiado: subió el papel de compras en EU del 31% al 32% y China del 15% al 18%, por su parte, ha disminuido la participación de la UE del 14% al 13%.

México lidera en la lista de los principales importadores de ALC por un amplio margen de 45,5% en la región. Las importaciones de México de 2009 a 2018 casi se duplicaron: de 234,4 mil millones de dólares a 477 mil millones de dólares. El mayor crecimiento de las importaciones para este período se observó de China (más de 2,5 veces), Colombia (más de 2 veces), Rusia (más de 4 veces). La estructura de importación se basaba en maquinaria y equipo, vehículos, combustibles minerales, así como en circuitos integrados, componentes de equipos y aparatos telefónicos. Los principales socios importadores de México en 2018 fueron: EU – 46,8%, China - 18%, Japón – 3,9%, República de Corea – 3,6%, Alemania – 3,8%, Canadá – 2,3%.

A pesar de que la economía de Brasil lidere en la región latinoamericana, este país sigue a México con 16,8% en las importaciones de ALC en 2018 (Tabla 3). Esto se explica por un alto grado de proteccionismo brasileño en el mercado interno. Este país es uno de los veinte en el mundo con los aranceles de importación más altos. El indicador promedio de los derechos de aduana aplicados a los bienes importados en 2017 fue del 11,5%.<sup>6</sup> Brasil también aplica los métodos estándar de regulación aduanera; los bienes importados están sujetos a numerosos impuestos y aranceles federales y locales, que en total pueden aumentar el precio de los bienes varias veces. En

<sup>6</sup> Global Competitiveness Report 2018 // <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2018/> (accessed 22.02.2020).

2018 la participación de China en las importaciones de Brasil fue del 19,2%, los países de la UE - 21,9%, EU - 16,2%, ALC - 19,4%. La participación de los productos industriales en la estructura de las importaciones brasileñas fue del 85%.

De esta forma, México y Brasil en conjunto dominan el 63,6% de las exportaciones y el 62,3% de las importaciones en la región. Por esta razón, consideramos que los miembros de UEEA pueden obtener notables resultados de comercio con estos dos países en comparación con otros Estados de ALC.

#### IV. ALC EN EL COMERCIO EXTERIOR DE UEEA

Tomando en cuenta la comparación de papeles de países de UEEA y ALC en el comercio internacional, estructurado en los apartados anteriores, y analizando estadísticas internacionales sobre volúmenes de comercio de los miembros de UEEA con los principales países de ALC (Tabla 4) llegamos a la conclusión de un bajo nivel de las relaciones comerciales entre ellos. En 2018 las ventas de bienes de UEEA a ALC acumularon 8519 millones de dólares que representa 3,3% de todas las exportaciones de UEEA. Es evidente el aporte dominante de Rusia (2018 – 89%) al volumen de exportaciones de UEEA a los países de ALC que representa más de la participación de Rusia en todas las ventas de bienes de UEEA al mundo (81,9%).

Al mismo tiempo el volumen de las importaciones de países de ALC a los de UEEA fue 9100 millones de dólares que equivalen al 2,9% de las compras de UEEA en el mundo. La participación de Rusia en las importaciones de UEEA al mundo en 2018 fue 74,6%, mientras que a los países de ALC - 91%. Esto hace evidenciar que Rusia juega el papel dominante en las relaciones comerciales de UEEA con ALC y que en estas relaciones su predominio es más profundo que en todas relaciones económicas de UEEA con el mundo.

El segundo lugar entre países UEEA respecto a las relaciones comerciales con ALC lo ocupa Bielorrusia con 9,9% de participación en exportaciones y 4,3% - en importaciones. El tercer país de análisis Kazajistán, en sus importaciones de ALC tiene cerca de 3% de UEEA. Los volúmenes de comercio de otros miembros de UEEA con países de ALC no tienen un significado considerable y no muestran la experiencia de relaciones entre países de las dos regiones.

Al respecto de las relaciones bilaterales entre los países euroasiáticos y latinoamericanos se pueden anotar algunos ejemplos. Armenia durante los últimos años importa de Brasil carne, tabaco y azúcar, de Ecuador frutas y cacao, de México; óptica, vehículos y equipos. Bielorrusia mantiene comercio con muchos países de ALC, pero según el volumen de exportaciones, resalta su atención en ventas anuales de bienes a Brasil, 97% son fertilizantes de producción bielorrusa.

**TABLA 4. COMERCIO DE INTEGRANTES DE UEEA CON AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE EN 2018  
(MILLONES DE DÓLARES)**

PAÍS	ARMENIA	BIELORRUSIA	KAZAJISTÁN	KIRGUISTÁN	RUSIA
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE</b>	0,2	848,8	65,4	0,04	7 604,6
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE</b>	102,3	394,4	268,9	14,9	8319,3
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A ARGENTINA</b>	-	31,1	4,2	0,01	394,7
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE ARGENTINA</b>	9,3	101,3	22,1	0,4	851,3
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A BRASIL</b>	0,08	585,3	50,1	-	2584,4
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE BRASIL</b>	61,7	20,9	102,3	5,2	2470
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A MÉXICO</b>	0,03	20,1	3,2	0,03	2004,2
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE MÉXICO</b>	7,9	36,7	76,5	4,5	938,3
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A COLOMBIA</b>	-	57,1	0,2	-	273,7
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE COLOMBIA</b>	1,2	23,6	3,9	0,01	139,6
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A PARAGUAY</b>	-	13,3	-	-	14,9
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE PARAGUAY</b>	0,09	2,0	5,6	-	871,2
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A ECUADOR</b>	-	37,9	1,7	0,01	356,5
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE ECUADOR</b>	14,8	155,4	30,3	3,8	1289,5
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A CHILE</b>	-	2,9	0,05	-	124,5
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE CHILE</b>	2	22,1	8,2	0,1	1056,2
<b>EXPORTACIÓN A CUBA</b>	-	13,7	-	-	372,7
<b>IMPORTACIÓN DESDE CUBA</b>	0,2	1,5	12,4	0,01	15,2

**FUENTE:** Trade Map — Trade statistics for international business development.

Available at: <https://www.trademap.org/> (accessed 20.02.2020).

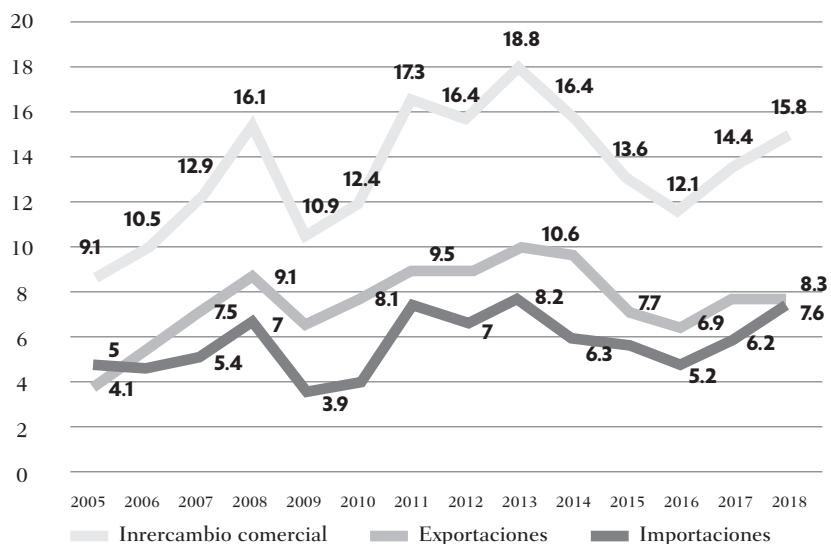
Vale la pena mencionar que Bielorrusia importa de Argentina materia prima para la industria de alimentación y por su parte, frutas de Ecuador. Kazajistán desarrolla lazos comerciales con ALC a través de sus misiones diplomáticas, sin embargo, los volúmenes de intercambios bilaterales todavía son similares. Solo se puede mencionar que Kazajistán compra a Brasil azúcar y componentes de aviación en los montos considerables.

Dado que el principal socio de América Latina para los países de UEEA es la Federación de Rusia e intercambio comercial con Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Bielorrusia y Armenia es insignificante (Tabla 4.). Respecto a lo anterior, nuestro estudio privilegia principalmente su atención a las relaciones ruso-latinoamericanas.

## V. DINÁMICA DE COMERCIO RUSIA - ALC

En las últimas dos décadas, las relaciones económicas de Rusia con la mayoría de los países latinoamericanos se han desarrollado en la tendencia general del comercio exterior ruso. En el período de 2004 a 2008, el comercio entre Rusia y el mundo creció 2,9 veces y con América Latina aumentó 2,8 veces. Este crecimiento fue interrumpido por la crisis financiera y económica global, que en 2009 condujo a una fuerte reducción en el comercio exterior total de Rusia en un 36% y con los países latinoamericanos en un 32%.

**GRÁFICA 1. DINÁMICA DEL COMERCIO EXTERIOR DE RUSIA CON ALC, 2000-2018,  
(MILES DE MILLONES DE DÓLARES)**



**FUENTE:** Trade Map — Trade statistics for international business development.

Available at: <https://www.trademap.org/> (accessed 20.02.2020).

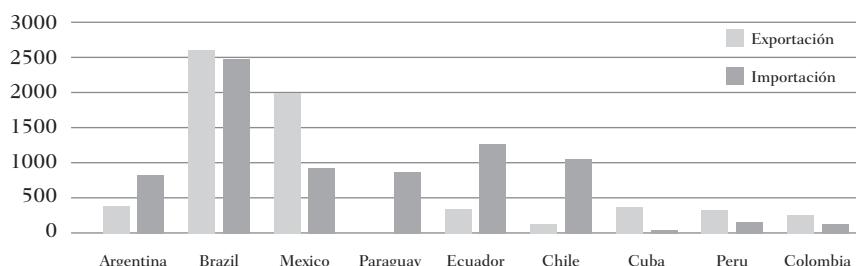
La recuperación del comercio exterior ruso posterior a la crisis se produjo en un corto período. En 2013 se registraron las tasas históricamente más altas de comercio ruso: con el mundo 841 mil millones de dólares y 18,8 mil millones de dólares con América Latina. Sin embargo, el año siguiente fue el comienzo de la introducción de sanciones económicas de los países occidentales contra Rusia y un período de una nueva disminución en su facturación del comercio exterior, que en 2016 disminuyó en un 44%, y con la región latinoamericana en un 36%. En los últimos años, ha habido una recuperación en el crecimiento del comercio total de Rusia, que se reflejó en el crecimiento del comercio con ALC.

La participación de ALC en el comercio exterior ruso es mayor que la de Rusia en el comercio exterior de la región latinoamericana. En 2018 del vo-

lumen total de las exportaciones latinoamericanas, Rusia representó solo el 0,75%, y de los productos importados por los latinos, solo el 0,68%. Al mismo tiempo, la participación de ALC en las importaciones rusas ascendió al 3,5%, y en las exportaciones, alrededor del 1,7%. En una serie de productos básicos, los mercados de los países latinoamericanos son esenciales para los exportadores rusos. Por ejemplo, en 2018 Brasil representó el 22,8% del valor de las exportaciones rusas de fertilizantes, el 26,6% de azufre, el 8,7% de los materiales de construcción ferroviarios, el 9,5% de los equipos para alumbrado eléctrico.<sup>7</sup>

La dinámica del comercio ruso con cada uno de los estados de esta región tiene un comportamiento diferente que refleja no solo los cambios en el volumen de operaciones bilaterales, sino también la influencia de la política de comercio exterior rusa y el interés de sus socios latinoamericanos en el desarrollo del comercio mutuo. Por lo tanto, el comercio de Brasil con Rusia está sujeto a las mayores fluctuaciones, de un máximo de 6,7 mil millones de dólares en 2008 a 4,6 mil millones de dólares en 2009 bajo la influencia de la crisis mundial, con una recuperación posterior a 6,5 mil millones de dólares en 2011 y una caída a 4,3 mil millones de dólares en 2016, como resultado del deterioro de la economía rusa por la influencia de las sanciones occidentales y la introducción de restricciones rusas a la importación de carne brasileña por razones fitosanitarias. Estas fluctuaciones en el comercio con Brasil se reflejaron en la dinámica general del comercio exterior de Rusia con toda la región de ALC.

**GRÁFICA 2. EXPORTACIONES E IMPORTACIONES DE RUSIA CON LOS PAÍSES DE AMÉRICA LATINA EN 2018,  
(MILLONES DE DÓLARES)**



**FUENTE:** Trade Map — Trade statistics for international business development.

Available at: <https://www.trademap.org/> (accessed 20.12.2019).

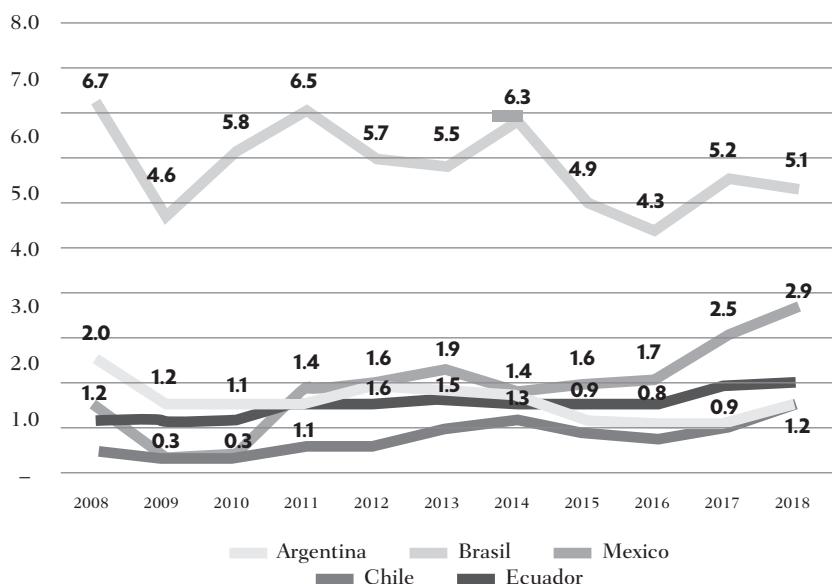
Durante un período de diez años se formaron características de comercio de Rusia con ciertos países de la región; una reducción en las exportaciones e importaciones desde Argentina, un ligero aumento en las exportaciones a

<sup>7</sup> ITC. International trade statistics 2001-2018. Bilateral trade between Russian Federation and Brazil. // <https://www.trademap.org/tradestat/> (accessed 14.12.2019).

Brasil y una disminución en las importaciones de este país, un aumento significativo en las exportaciones rusas a México y un ligero aumento en las importaciones desde allí, volúmenes significativos de importaciones anuales de Paraguay (carne) y Ecuador (bananas), así como el crecimiento dinámico de las importaciones de Chile, en condiciones de la balanza comercial negativa de Rusia con estos tres países.

En 2018 Rusia tuvo un superávit en el comercio con Brasil, México, Cuba, Perú, Colombia y un saldo negativo con Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador, Chile. De particular interés es el crecimiento de las exportaciones rusas a Ecuador de 2009 a 2018 en 15 veces, así como a México, que durante este período aumentó 6 veces.

**GRÁFICA 3. DINÁMICA COMERCIAL RUSA CON PAÍSES SELECCIONADOS DE AMÉRICA LATINA, 2008 - 2018,  
(MILES DE MILLONES DE DÓLARES)**



**FUENTE:** Trade Map — Trade statistics for international business development.

Available at: <https://www.trademap.org/> (accessed 20.02.2020).

Dada la estructura actual de importación de la mayoría de los países latinoamericanos, que está dominada por empresas multinacionales, proveedores estadounidenses y chinos, las perspectivas de un posible aumento significativo de las exportaciones rusas a esta región pueden estar vinculadas con la participación de empresas rusas con grandes proyectos en la economía nacional de estos países.

## VI. ÁREAS PROMETEDORAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LAZOS ECONÓMICOS UEEA CON ALC

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El área más destacada de cooperación entre UEEA y los países latinoamericanos es la energía. Las principales corporaciones rusas Rosneft y Gazprom realizan operaciones en Brasil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba y varios otros países. Lukoil comenzó sus actividades en México. En muchos países de la región, la compañía rusa Power Machines está bien establecida. En Brasil, por ejemplo, esta empresa de origen ruso, participó en la construcción de cinco centrales hidroeléctricas y actualmente planea fortalecer significativamente su presencia en el mercado brasileño, en particular, localizando la producción de equipos para hidroturbinas. Dada la experiencia de estas empresas en América Latina, otras empresas rusas y de otros países de UEEA tienen perspectivas de iniciar o ampliar aún más su presencia en esta región, participando en proyectos para generar electricidad, construir líneas eléctricas, y suministrar ciertos tipos de equipos.

Varios países latinoamericanos se encuentran entre los mayores productores de petróleo del mundo. Los cambios que tienen lugar en ellos (por ejemplo, la reforma energética en México<sup>8</sup>) abren oportunidades para la prestación de servicios y el suministro de equipos para la exploración de campos petroleros, la optimización de la producción y el procesamiento, el diseño y la construcción de instalaciones de almacenamiento de petróleo y gas, así como tuberías.

El desarrollo dinámico del mercado del transporte aéreo en América Latina indica las amplias oportunidades de cooperación en el sector de la aviación. Varias compañías latinoamericanas operan en el mercado de pasajeros y carga de los países de ALC. Por ejemplo, en México la compañía Interjet opera 22 aviones de fabricación rusa «Sukhoi Superjet 100». Las altas expectativas están asociadas con la promoción de productos y servicios de helicópteros rusos a los países latinoamericanos, en particular, la posibilidad de suministrar nuevos lotes de helicópteros rusos de marcas «Mi» y «Ansat». Para esto existen previsiones con base en experiencias de trabajo exitoso de más de 400 helicópteros «Mi-17» en Argentina, Brasil, Perú y otros países de ALC.<sup>9</sup>

Muchos hechos de los últimos años muestran que en el contexto general de la cooperación UEEA-ALC, existe un potencial considerable para aumentar las exportaciones de productos no primarios, incluidos productos de alta tecnología. Por ejemplo, en el periodo de 2014 a 2018 hubo un aumento de

<sup>8</sup> Razumovsky D.V. «El Estado y el potencial de la cooperación ruso-mexicana en el sector energético», México: Reforma del sector energético, editado por Davydova V.M. y Yakovleva P.P., M., ILA ACR, 2014, 132 p.

<sup>9</sup> El producto ruso con más éxito en América Latina es un helicóptero <https://alnavio.com/noticia/18510/delared/el-producto-ruso-con-mas-exito-en-america-latina-es-un-helicoptero.html>

las exportaciones de Rusia a Brasil, máquinas eléctricas (más de 5 veces), productos de química inorgánica (4 veces), instrumentos y dispositivos ópticos y médicos (2 veces) y medios de transporte terrestre (20 veces).

Otro ejemplo es la creación, con la ayuda de «Roscosmos», en Brasil de cuatro estaciones del sistema mundial de navegación GLONASS por satélite. Actualmente se están estudiando las posibilidades de lanzamientos conjuntos desde el puerto espacial brasileño y la producción de vehículos de lanzamiento de clase pequeña y mediana.

Dado el alto potencial de la industria minera en los países latinoamericanos y el escaso desarrollo de equipos para esta industria, las empresas rusas podrían suministrar una amplia gama de equipos (trituradoras, concentradores de gravedad, dispositivos de laboratorio, etc.) a este mercado. Hay perspectivas para los proveedores de países de UEEA de equipos de canteras móviles (camiones volquete, excavadoras, máquinas de perforación) en los mercados de los países de ALC.

El automóvil es el principal medio de transporte en América Latina. A pesar de que Brasil y México son los mayores fabricantes de automóviles del mundo, los nichos para el suministro de automóviles rusos permanecen en la región. Las entregas únicas de autobuses de marcas rusas "PAZ" a Nicaragua, autos "Lada" a Cuba, "UAZ" a México, son solo los ejemplos de las exportaciones del sector automotriz de UEEA a la región latinoamericana. En unos años, en uno de los países grandes de América Latina, (con una base desarrollada de distribución y componentes) se puede prever un centro industrial de autobuses, camiones y automóviles, motocicletas rusos para su entrega al mercado de ALC.

Un área prometedora para expandir las exportaciones de UEEA a algunos países de ALC podría ser el desarrollo de infraestructura, en particular el transporte ferroviario. Con este fin, se han iniciado negociaciones con Brasil para obtener una concesión para la construcción y operación del tramo ferroviario Norte-Sur. En 2018 el Centro de Ingeniería Ferroviaria comenzó a operar en Argentina con la asistencia de Russian Railways. La parte rusa ha confirmado su interés en la construcción prevista de un ferrocarril en este país.<sup>10</sup>

En las últimas décadas, algunos países latinoamericanos (Brasil, México, Ecuador, Paraguay, Chile) se han convertido en los mayores productores y exportadores de productos agrícolas y alimenticios. Países de UEEA, como parte de la diversificación de las importaciones de ciertos productos alimenticios, pueden ampliar la entrada de carne, frutas, bayas, especias y otros productos desde países latinoamericanos.

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**10** RIA Novosti. 2 de diciembre de 2018. // <https://ria.ru/20181202/1536975735.html>  
(accessed 28.02.2020)

Los productos agrícolas importados más buscados en muchos países de América Latina son los fertilizantes. Las empresas bielorrusas y rusas pueden aumentar su presencia en los mercados de países de ALC invirtiendo en la creación de producción de fertilizantes en uno de los países de la región. A pesar de la alta competencia en el mercado latinoamericano de maquinaria agrícola, la presencia de grandes actores internacionales que han trabajado durante muchos años en esta región, los equipos de fabricantes de UEEA pueden encontrar a sus clientes en algunos países de América Latina. Por ejemplo los tractores bielorusos "Belarus" que exitosamente trabajan en ocho países de ALC, incluso en México y Perú.

En general, hay grandes oportunidades para aumentar aún más el comercio entre UEEA y los países latinoamericanos. La posibilidad de un aumento significativo en el volumen de las operaciones de los dos grupos de países es posible mediante un ajuste significativo de la política económica exterior de los miembros de UEEA, basado en un enfoque científico, que refleje la estrategia de relaciones comerciales y económicas. El factor determinante en las futuras relaciones comerciales y económicas de UEEA con los países de ALC es el enfoque estratégico de diplomacia económica, organizaciones empresariales, administraciones regionales, todas estructuras que ayudan a las empresas a promover productos y servicios competitivos.

## VII. RELACIONES INSTITUCIONALES UEEA CON ALC

Para crear condiciones favorables del desarrollo de la cooperación entre la UEEA y otras asociaciones de integración económica, así como con países, la Comisión Económica Euroasiática (CEE) concluye memorándums de cooperación. La CEE ya ha concluido dichos memorándums con los gobiernos de varios países, en particular con Chile, Perú, Cuba, Ecuador.<sup>11</sup>

La CEE ha firmado diversos documentos con diferentes organizaciones de ALC. La Comunidad Andina, que incluye a Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador y Perú (creada en 1969), es la primera asociación económica de integración regional con la cual la Comisión Económica Euroasiática firmó un Memorándum de Entendimiento el 23 de marzo de 2017. Este documento crea la base para el intercambio de información y la celebración de eventos conjuntos: conferencias, foros, seminarios, mesas redondas con la participación de representantes de comunidades empresariales, círculos de expertos y autoridades de los países miembros de la UEEA y la Comunidad Andina.<sup>12</sup>

El 24 de mayo del 2018 la Secretaría Permanente del Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe (SELA) y el Ministerio de Integración y Macroconomía de la Unión Económica Euroasiática firmaron un memorán-

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<sup>11</sup> Rusia - Ecuador: apuesta por América Latina <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/20703>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/30-03-2017-4.aspx>

dum de entendimiento, con el fin de promover la cooperación interinstitucional entre ambas regiones.<sup>13</sup>

En el marco de la 53º Cumbre de los Jefes de Estados del MERCOSUR el 17 de diciembre de 2018 en Montevideo, los Cancilleres del bloque de Argentina, Brasil, Paraguay y Uruguay firmaron un Memorándum de Cooperación Económica y Comercial con la Unión Económica Euroasiática. La celebración de este Memorándum constituye el inicio de una relación que posibilitará una mejora en los términos de intercambio, una diversificación de mercados y productos de las exportaciones y un creciente espacio de oportunidades comerciales.<sup>14</sup>

La Declaración sobre la Asociación entre la Comisión Económica Euroasiática y la Alianza del Pacífico (Colombia, México, Perú, Chile), fue firmada el 5 de julio de 2019 durante la XIV Cumbre de la Alianza del Pacífico en Lima en la que expresa la decisión de ambas partes de explorar áreas de cooperación mutuamente beneficiosas. El diálogo entre la CEE y la Alianza del Pacífico corresponde a las tendencias actuales del desarrollo de la economía mundial y crea una buena infraestructura para los contactos entre los gobiernos y círculos empresariales de los Estados que integran ambas organizaciones<sup>15</sup>.

Por su parte, prácticamente todos los países latinoamericanos han expresado su interés por colaborar con la Unión Económica Euroasiática, aseguró la Ministra de Integración y Macroconomía de la Comisión Económica Euroasiática Tatiana Valovaya.<sup>16</sup> Los memorándums firmados por CEE prevén la creación de grupos de trabajo y consultas periódicas y eventos conjuntos entre los estados miembros de la UEEA y los estados socios u organizaciones contrapartes de ALC. El abanico de temas para la discusión es muy amplio: la regulación aduanera y arancelaria y no arancelaria, la regulación técnica, el comercio mutuo de servicios e inversiones, macroeconomía, transporte y logística, industria y agricultura, estadísticas, energía, política genética, tecnología de la información, el funcionamiento del mercado interno, migración laboral, propiedad intelectual, etc. La interacción en el formato de un memorándum crea las condiciones para mejorar los contactos directos entre los representantes comerciales de los Estados miembros de UEEA y las contrapartes de ALC.

**13** Unión Euroasiática y AL, por un modelo común, El Economista 15 de octubre 2019. <https://www.economista.com.mx/internacionales/Union-Euroasiatica-y-AL-por-un-modelo-comun-20191015-0112.html> y <http://www.sela.org/es/eventos/e/42270/union-euroasiatica-alc>

**14** MERCOSUR firmó Memorándum con Unión Económica Euroasiática. <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/es/actualidad/noticias/mercosur-firmo-memorandum-con-union-economica-euroasiatica>

**15** <https://alianzapacifico.net/en/download/declaracion-sobre-la-asociacion-entre-la-comision-economica-euroasiatica-y-los-estados-parte-del-acuerdo-marco-de-la-alianza-del-pacifico/>

**16** América Latina muestra interés por cooperar con la Unión Económica Euroasiática <https://mundo.sputniknews.com/politica/201812271084427903-cooperacion-de-america-latina-y-uee/>

Los principales esfuerzos relacionados con la implementación de la política de comercio exterior de la UEEA tienen como objetivo construir relaciones comerciales efectivas con socios externos, incluso de ALC, y proporcionar a los exportadores de la Unión, condiciones preferenciales para el acceso a los mercados de terceros países, principalmente en virtud de acuerdos de libre comercio y acuerdos de comercio y cooperación económica. En este trabajo, la UEEA se guía no solo por el principio del acceso directo a los mercados, sino también por el objetivo de otorgar a dichos acuerdos las funciones de un motor de cooperación para la inversión, cooperación industrial, y facilitar el comercio de servicios. En este sentido, las áreas más prometedoras son profundizar aún más la integración de la industria, optimizar la gestión y la estructura institucional de la UEEA, así como ampliar el alcance de los intereses geoeconómicos de la UEEA mediante la intensificación de las negociaciones sobre el establecimiento de una zona franca con terceros países.

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# BRI Initiative and Eurasian integration in the context of Russian realities

**SUMMARY:** I. Introduction II. Key historical junctures and the legal framework for conjugation of the EAEU and the OBOR III. Problems and challenges of regional development in the context of EAEU - OBOR conjugation IV. Prospects and potential effects of the EAEU - OBOR conjugation V. Conclusions VI. Bibliography

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the People's Republic of China (PRC, China) has launched the "One Belt, One Way" (OBOR), which provides for the development of "The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)" and "The 21st Century New Maritime Silk Road". The scale of the Chinese initiative is unique and implies the establishment of three trans-Eurasian economic corridors and two sea routes, covering most of Eurasia and connecting developed and developing countries. The OBOR area brings together the richest national and human resources (2/3 of the world's population).

More than 100 countries and international organizations have expressed the support for the initiative and readiness to join it; since 2013, China has signed the agreements with more than 40 of them (TASS, 2018).

So, it was not surprising that the main participants in such a large-scale integration project as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), created in 2014–2015 by Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, have fully realized the strategic importance of cooperation with PRC and conjugation of the EAEU and OBOR.

The idea of the multidimensional synergy of the EAEU and OBOR is determined by the participants of these initiatives through a deep philosophical

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<sup>1</sup> Head of Economic Policy Strategies Section at the Eurasian Economic Commission Macroeconomic Policy Department, Associate Professor at Financial Management Department, Russian Customs Academy. PhD in Economics/Finance.

understanding of “conjugation” as a close interconnection and merger of cooperation processes generating significant economic effects for all the parties.

Conjugation and mutual influence of the EAEU and OBOR initiatives have been in focus of a large number of research studies. A critical analysis of both general and specific areas of inter-project and intercountry development has been scrutinized in the papers by authors in CIS countries (Glinkina et al., 2018; Luzyanin, 2017; Lomanov, 2017; Ostrovsky, 2017; Skriba, 2016; Safonova, 2012), China (e.g., Liu Wei, Wang Wen, 2019), as well as by joint Russian-Chinese research collectives (see, for instance, Ryazanov et al., 2000; Glazyev et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, it is neither in theory, nor in practice, that a widely accepted definition of the notion “conjugation” has emerged; nor has been determined the nature of its processes and stages. At the same time, the urgency to define this phenomenon is becoming even more evident now in the face of intensifying external global challenges (such as the instability of the world monetary and financial system after the global financial crisis of 2008–2009, sanctions against the Russian Federation, trade wars, restrictions on economic interaction, racist sentiments against the PRC in the context of COVID-19, etc.) and EAEU Member States and China intraregional concerns (e.g., the problem of choosing a way to deepen integration in EAEU via launching joint economic projects).

The paragraphs to follow provide a comprehensive analysis of the current situation, problems and risks of the EAEU and OBOR conjugation, identify the priority areas of synergy and assess the prospects for their implementation.

## **II. KEY HISTORICAL JUNCTURES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONJUGATION OF THE EAEU AND THE OBOR**

The most complete definition of the EAEU-OBOR conjugation, in our opinion, was formulated by the famous theorist and practitioner of Eurasian integration, academician Sergey Y. Glazyev, who described it as “*activities to integrate the EAEU and the OBOR initiatives through the implementation of joint investment projects; expansion of mutual trade; connection of payment systems, transport, energy and information infrastructure; creation of the common market of goods and services by harmonizing its regulation; elimination of cross-border trade barriers and currency restrictions; development of industrial, scientific and technical cooperation, joint industrial projects, the organization of common institutions and development corridors*” respecting the international law, the sovereignty of each country and common interests of cooperation (Glazyev et al., 2019).

The legal basis for EAEU-OBOR conjugation has been laid in May 2015 when the *Joint Statement on Cooperation on the Construction of Joint Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Projects* (ADP, 2015) has been signed. The parties agreed to leverage the mutual expertise so that to intensify the dialogue and, as a result, establish a common economic space. At the same time, priority areas for the development of cooperation were identified, including:

- Expansion of trade and enhancement of its structure;
- Investment interaction and joint projects' launch;
- Creation of joint industrial parks and cross-border zones of economic cooperation;
- Strengthening the connectivity in the areas of logistics, transport infrastructure and intermodal transportation;
- Facilitating trade in the most prospective/promising areas;
- Creating an enabling environment for the economic growth of small and medium enterprises that play an important role in the development of the regional economy;
- Stimulating settlements in national currencies in the areas of trade, direct investment and lending;
- Deepening cooperation between various financial institutions, including the Silk Road Fund, the Asian Bank for Infrastructure Investments, the Inter-bank Association of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO);
- Promotion of multilateral regional and global formats of cooperation.

Since then, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the EAEU supranational regulatory body, EAEU Member States and Chinese authorized bodies started to develop a draft of agreement. In 2018, during the Astana Economic Forum, *the Agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and China* was signed (CDOH, 2018). This document has marked the commencement of multilateral collaboration between the PRC and the EAEU.

The agreement established the fundamental principles of trade in goods between the EAEU and China. Among the important points of this document in the context of creating new opportunities for enhancing the economic cooperation, the following can be noted:

- New formats of interaction on the industry agenda with launching of joint projects, for example, in the spheres of transport, energy, agriculture, etc.;
- Perspective areas and forms of industry cooperation between the EAEU and China (agriculture, energy, transport, technology and innovation, information and communication infrastructure, finance and the environment);
- A mechanism for early special notification on trade restrictive measures;

- Determination of the adaptation period between the adoption of technical regulations or conformity assessment procedures and their entry into force. In addition, it is possible to provide each other with draft regulatory documents to receive comments from authorized bodies within a period of at least 60 days;
- An obligation to provide to the importer or his representative a written explanation on the reasons for the detention of his goods at the border in case of detection of non-compliance with sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary requirements;
- Mechanisms for assisting the business community in mutual trade;
- The obligations of the parties to provide the access to the documents, which are necessary for the registration of an intellectual property object;
- Measures to prevent trade in counterfeit goods;
- Defining the mechanism of interaction between the parties in the form of a Joint Commission led by two co-chairs - one from the EAEU and Member States, represented at the level of a EEC Member of the Board – Minister in charge, the other - from the government of the PRC.

It is important, that the *Agreement is non-preferential and does not automatically reduce the existing trade barriers*. In general, the Agreement *draws up the framework and guidelines* for the upcoming deepening of EAEU-PRC cooperation, which will be filled during the development and implementation of other multilateral documents.

Notably, in the draft of the document on strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025, which is expected to be approved by the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in May 2020, the practical implementation of the Big Eurasian Partnership idea is considered among the priority tasks of international cooperation and further deepening interaction with China.

### **III. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF EAEU - OBOR CONJUGATION**

The literature and legislation review reveals that at present time, there is a rather vast number of internal (regional) problems, both within the framework of each of the EAEU and OBOR initiatives, and their conjugation. The present paragraph highlights the most important risks and challenges for the synergy of these initiatives.

First, some of the key points identified in the Joint Statement on Cooperation on the Construction of Joint Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Projects were not reflected in the text of the Agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and China. In particular, such

points include: development of the logistics system, stimulation the settlements in national currencies, support for the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises focused on international cooperation.

The lack of such important points in the Agreement, on the one hand, indicates that cooperation between China and the EAEU is at the *initial stage*. On the other hand, this may be a result of *differences in the visions* of the EAEU Member States and PRC on the content of the OBOR and the effects of its conjugation with the EAEU (Glazyev, 2019; Glazyev et al., 2019).

So, Armenia, which aims to revive its strategic importance within the new history of the Silk Road, is interested in implementing the North-South transport corridor<sup>2</sup> due to additional investments in updating its energy, transport and industrial infrastructure.

*Belarus* supports multi-level and multi-speed integration and aims to develop the infrastructure projects (including digital transport and logistics corridors in the West-East direction), strengthen its innovative and industrial potential through cooperation with the PRC and other OBOR participants. Besides, Belarus is interested in promoting its engineering, computer and other high-tech services to the Chinese market.

Realization of the transit potential of the territory is one of the key effects of the OBOR project for *Kazakhstan*. The conjugation of the two initiatives is considered by Kazakhstan in the context of the launching of the Western China-Western Europe transport corridor, as well as the development of railway infrastructure. According to estimates, Kazakhstan plans to receive \$ 5 billion annually from international transit.

China is a strategic trade and investment partner for *Kyrgyzstan*. There are more than 400 enterprises with Chinese capital in various industries, including the manufacturing and mining sectors. In the context of EAEU-OBOR conjugation, there is an interest of Kyrgyzstan in expanding cooperation and launching new projects with Chinese companies in the areas of services, agriculture, infrastructure, etc.

For *Russian Federation*, the agenda for EAEU-OBOR conjugation could be quite broad, going beyond the transport and infrastructure projects. Expected effects may also include mutual trade expansion, increase in the number of joint value added chains and cooperation projects with Chinese financing.

Finally, *China*, promoting the OBOR initiative, is interested in facilitation of trade procedures, including the development of cross-border electronic information exchange, accelerating the speed of goods' delivery to European countries, entering new markets (Iran, Turkey and Asian countries), as well as providing national energy security.

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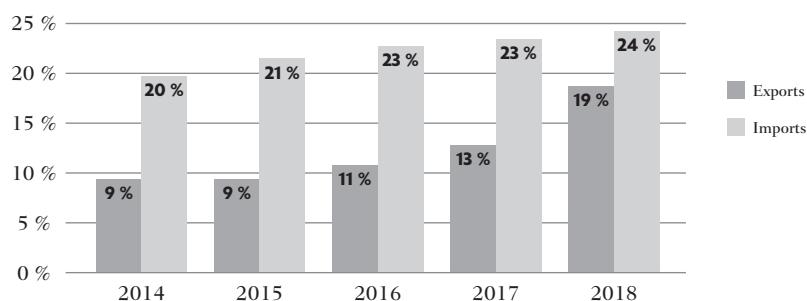
<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter, for countries, see in detail: EEC, 2018b.

Thus, for the effective launch and implementation of the conjugation of the EAEU and the OBOR initiative, the *coordination of the interests of all participants and stakeholders is required*, including an assessment of potential effects for each EAEU Member State.

To develop plans and roadmaps for EAEU – OBOR conjugation, the *issues of forecasting and evaluating the potential effects seems to be one of the most debated*. Moreover, the proportions of effects and their “duration” must be taken into account. For China, one of the global economic leaders, the collaboration with the smaller economies of the EAEU Member States, *at the first blush, may not lead to significant economic results*. So, that is the problem of *skepticism regarding the conjugation of the “big economy” with the relatively small*. On the contrary, the EAEU Member states are expecting substantial economic benefits based on the already existing trade and economic relations with China.

China is one of the key trade partners for all the EAEU Member States: for Russia and Kyrgyzstan – it is the major counterpart in terms of turnover, for Armenia - the second (after Russia), for Belarus - the third (after Russia and Ukraine), for Kazakhstan - the third (after Russia and Italy). In 2018, China's total trade turnover with the EAEU totaled to about \$ 126 billion. China's share in the external<sup>3</sup> exports of the EAEU Member States in the period 2014–2018 increased from 9% to 14%, in imports - from 20% to 24% (Pic. 1), in 2018 the share of PRC in the total EAEU foreign trade was about 17% (1st place among other countries). At the same time, the *EAEU is not a strategically important trading partner for China*. For comparison, in 2018, China's trade with ASEAN countries reached \$ 590 billion (ITC, 2019).

PIC. 1. PRC'S SHARE IN EAEU TRADE, %

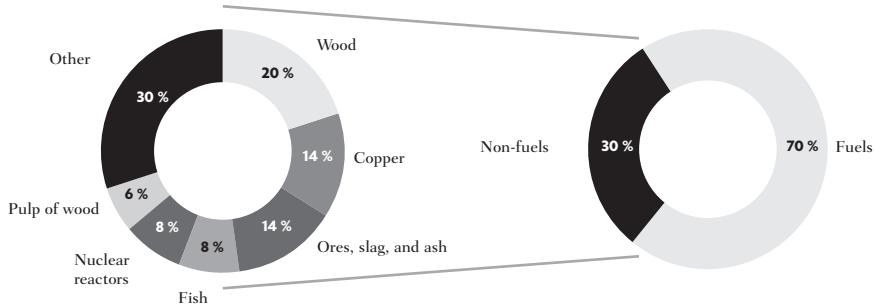


SOURCE: ITC, 2019

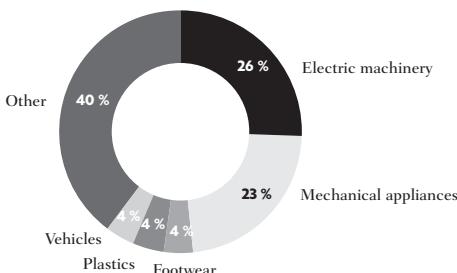
<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter, external EAEU trade is referred to as the sum of the EAEU Member States exports excluding those directed into the Union's counterparts.

It is noteworthy that the share of EAEU Member States in total trade with China is unequal: for example, Russia accounts for 84% of the trade. What is more, low-value goods are dominating in EAEU export structure: 70% thereof is constituted by mineral fuels; among non-energy exports, the shares of wood, copper, ore, slag and ash are comparably high (ITC, 2019, Pic. 2a). Imports from China are more diversified with domination of goods with a markedly higher added value: about half of the imports are accounted for by electrical and mechanical machines and equipment (see Pic. 2b).

PIC. 2A. STRUCTURE OF EAEU EXPORT TO CHINA, %



PIC. 2B. STRUCTURE OF EAEU IMPORTS FROM CHINA, %



SOURCE: ITC, 2019

It should be noted that the food export from EAEU to China is often constrained by “administrative” reasons. Thus, for EAEU companies it is much easier to export the industrial goods to China than agricultural ones due to the complexity and long duration of bureaucratic procedures. Each company, which is going to export the agricultural products to the PRC must receive a registration number and approval from the Main State Administration for Quality Control, Inspection and Quarantine.

Besides, if exporting company from the EAEU is not included on the special register of the PRC authorized body, the exporter should send a request to provide the Chinese side with the results of the assessment of possible

phytosanitary risks. In the aftermath, the additional verification by Chinese experts can follow, and only in the result, the permission to import of agricultural goods could be issued. The whole process may take more than a year.

Differences in phytosanitary requirements in some cases become an insurmountable obstacle for the exporting company, despite the absence of formal prohibitions. One example of the consequences of this restriction is a significant decline in exports of honey from Russia to China: in 2015–2018 export decreased by 58.7%, while in the preceding period, it has rapidly grown. Moreover, Chinese consumers declared high quality of Russian product and its environmental friendliness (CL, 2017). The reason for this situation was tightening control by China authorities regarding for the content of certain prohibited substances (antibiotics) in honey (especially in 2017), which undermined the activity of Russian manufacturers in this trading segment due to the lack of laboratories in Russia, which could establish the compliance of export products with Chinese requirements<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, the negotiation process on the mutual opening of markets and facilitation of requirements is extremely difficult and long-term. So, negotiations on market access for poultry meat and dairy products from Russia to the Chinese market have taken 8 years.

Besides, there are legal problems for the practical implementation of EAEU-OBOR conjugation. In particular, the main *administrative and legal obstacle to increasing freight traffic between China, EAEU Member States and the EU are differences in the systems of transport legislation*. In EU, it based on the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF); in the CIS countries, the Baltic states, as well as in Albania, Iran, the PRC, the DPRK, Vietnam, Mongolia, Hungary and Slovakia - Treaty on international freight traffic. In this context, the realization of infrastructure projects is difficult, harmonization of transport legislation is required.

The current situation with a *slowdown in the coordination of EAEU-OBOR joint projects creates risks for changing the logistics routes for the delivery of Chinese goods to Europe in favor of certain EAEU Member States (Kazakhstan) and third countries (Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey)*.

The cooperation in the monetary and financial sphere plays an important role in the processes of effective EAEU-OBOR conjugation. The parties plan to increase the share of payments in national currencies within the mutual trade. Currently, the US dollar and euro continue to play a significant role (26%) in the mutual payments between EAEU Member States (EDB, 2018, p.6). The *weakness of using national currencies in mutual payments* is their low liquidity, and, consequently, the risk of exchange rate volatility. Under

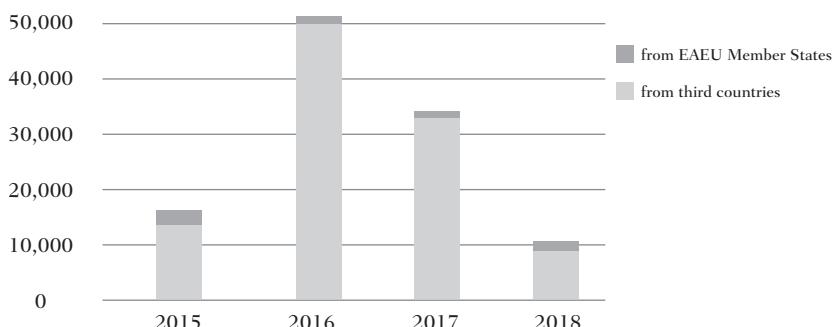
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**4** To date, such laboratories have been established and certified by the PRC, but trade volumes have not yet recovered.

the sanction pressure on Russia and the US-China trade war, the possibilities of attracting external financing are limited and the use of the third-country currencies in mutual payments may be economically expedient.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, an analysis of the current situation indicates *China's weak investment activity in the EAEU* - the PRC is not even among the top 15 investors (EEC, 2019a)<sup>5</sup>, despite high potential for cooperation (Pic. 3). At the same time, the main Chinese investment is directed to extractive industries of the EAEU Member States, which are already attractive for investors from other countries.

PIC 3. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN EAEU (\$ MLN)



SOURCE: EEC, 2019a

#### IV. PROSPECTS AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE EAEU - OBOR CONJUGATION

In the current paragraph the potential of EAEU - OBOR conjugation in the context with previously identified problem areas will be analyzed.

First of all, we should identify the prospects to diversify EAEU to China export so as to minimize its concentration on the “narrow” line (oil, gas and low value added products). In our opinion, food industry and agriculture products have a large export potential.

This output is due to the *characteristics of supply and demand in China*. With the gradual adaptation of Chinese consumers to the “European diet”, the demand for food products is expanding, and the quality requirements are increasing too. At the same time, local Chinese producers, due to the poor environmental conditions, are often not able to satisfy the rapidly changing preferences of their consumers<sup>6</sup>. According to opinion polls in China, over

**5** Estimated FDI (2018), excluding the Kyrgyz Republic due to lack of data.

**6** Note: this situation was especially acute in 2008 as a result of the “melamine scandal” when the traces of an industrial chemical were found in baby food and the most popular brand of Chinese sweets “White Rabbit”.

70% of respondents prefer to choose foreign-made products for their children (Nielsen, 2016), which contributes to expectations of increased demand for imported food products.

It should be noted that some food products, produced by manufacturers from the EAEU, have already become very popular among Chinese as environmentally friendly high-quality goods. For example, Chinese consumers do like the quality of dairy products from Belarus. If in 2016 the export of milk and cream from this country to China did not exceed \$ 1 million, then due to the PRC-Belarus agreement on the access of Belarusian enterprises to the PRC market by 2018, its volume increased to \$ 58.4 million (Sikorsky, 2017).

As a result of the opening of the Chinese plant oil market for Russia, export of oilseeds, predominantly soybeans (in 2018 compared to 2016, plus 2.1 times), rapeseed and rapeseed oil (plus 5 times) as well as soybean oil (+ 69%) have significantly increased. The export volumes of frozen fish and crustaceans, wheat, and sunflower oil from the EAEU to PRC are traditionally large (ITC, 2019).

The preferences of Chinese and EAEU Member States consumers are different. However, this factor is not an obstacle: our countries have a successful experience of adaptation to a new market. So, for example, the demand for Russian ice cream "33 Penguins" has increased due to sugar reduction and replacement of milk fat. Sweets "Korovka" produced by the Russian factory "Zeya" occupied a market niche after adding vitamins and calcium to this product (RBC, 2017; CL, 2018).

The given examples show that in case of eliminating trade barriers, the food products of the EAEU manufacturers are competitive in the Chinese market. Thus, the development of *trade cooperation between EAEU Member States and China is largely determined by identifying and removing trade barriers*.

Due to the trade war with the United States, *China temporarily needs a number of goods, which could be produced by manufacturers from the EAEU Member States*. According to expert forecasts, if Russian beef and pork get access to the Chinese market, it will increase its export by \$ 814 million (KPMG, 2019) and will provide about 18%<sup>7</sup> of China's total import demand for this product. But, because of epidemic of African swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease, export of beef and pork meat from Russia to the PRC has been prohibited.

The example above is of particular interest from the point of developing trade cooperation between the EAEU and China. One of the important exporters of pork to China is the United States (12.3% of imports in 2018), for

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<sup>7</sup> Including imports of chilled meat (HSEC EAEU 0202). Source: ITC, 2019.

which in 2018, as a result of a trade conflict, additional import duties of 35% were introduced. It caused an increase of pork prices in the domestic market of China. It turned out to be a good chance for exporters from the EAEU Member States to fill this product niche in the Chinese market.

The similar situation was in case of soybean trade: 18% of soybean imports to China are provided by US exporters who pay an import duty of 33%, while exports from EAEU countries are taxed of 3%. Nevertheless, despite the growth of soybean exports of 108% from the EAEU to China in 2016-2018, only less than 1% of the country's imports was provided by EAEU exporters. An additional production of soybeans would be guaranteed by demand from China, so it makes sense to invest in projects to increase sowing areas, including with the support of Eurasian financial funds (for example, Eurasian Development Bank).

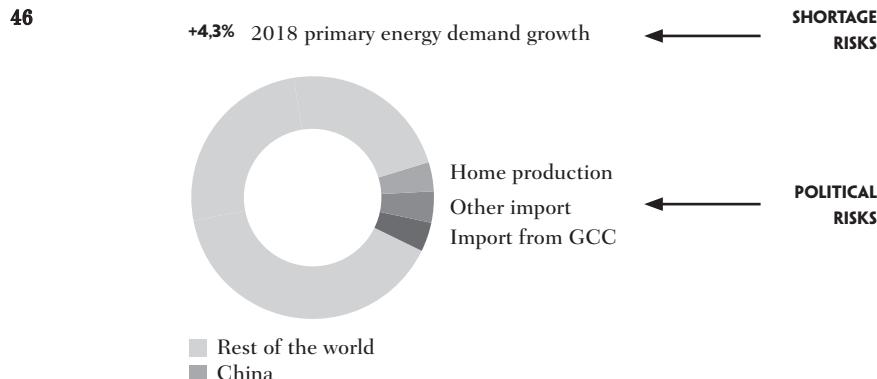
In view of the foregoing, the *EAEU Member States should take operative measures and negotiate with China the development of mutually beneficial solutions*. While the necessary progress in the trade of pork and soybeans was not achieved, in November 2019, China abolished the additional duties for American products, thus offsetting the potential competitive advantage of exporters from the EAEU.

*Diversification of energy supplies, including those from the EAEU Member States (primarily from Russia and Kazakhstan) can guarantee the PRC's national energy security.* Currently, China imports about half of the crude oil it needs. A substantial proportion of this volume is shipped from the Middle East by sea. Thus, there is a threat to the security and stability of shipping from a region with difficult geopolitical situation. Such risks can be escalated in case of China confrontation, for example, with the United States, which can block the delivery of hydrocarbons by sea, which entails effective diversification of the PRC's energy imports. In this situation, the potential of stable supply and demand will depend, inter alia, on the launch of the common crude oil, gas, oil products and electricity markets within the EAEU. *If fair and transparent rules will be developed and applied to resource pricing and transportation, China could strengthen its energy security, and the EAEU could weaken its dependence on the global resource price volatility and diversify its export destinations.*

Thus, at present time the development of the trade between the EAEU and China is constrained by the remaining barriers. However, further institutionalization of EAEU - PRC cooperation, the creation of mechanisms for the exchange of information and holding consultations will help to identify existing problems, emphasize the importance of resolving them for all stakeholders, and provide targeted support to businesses interested in development of mutual trade.

**PIC 4. RISKS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY OF CHINA**

The world's key energy and oil consumer, PRC is highly import-dependent:



The lacking volumes may be replenished by the EAEU supply:

+17% up to 2020

+30% up to 2030

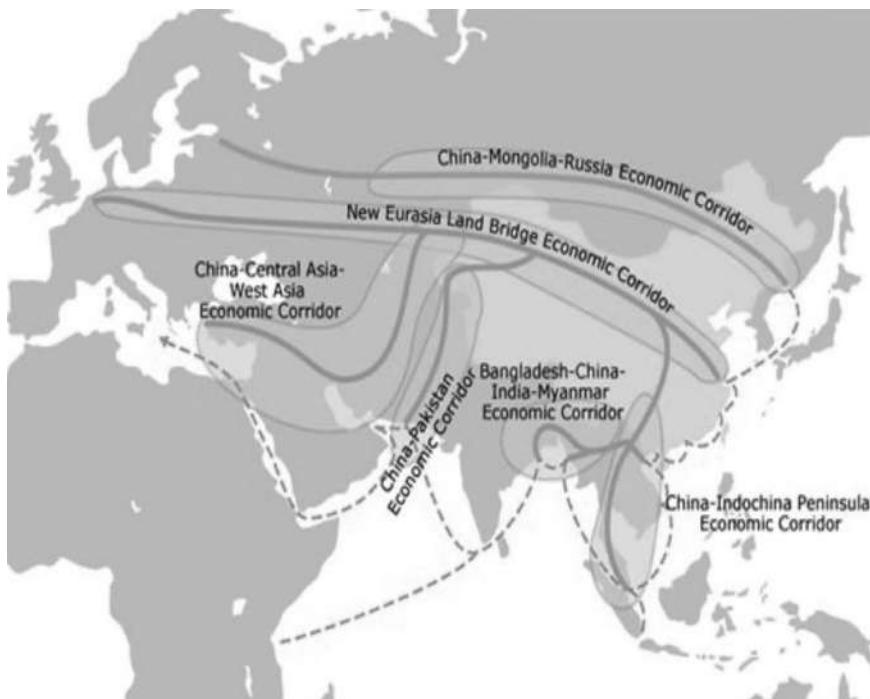
**SOURCE:** InTraCen, BP

The second potential effect of EAEU-China conjugation is an additional inflow of Chinese investment in the EAEU Member States. In situation of the sanctions regime against Russia, the transport and logistics spheres, as well as sectors in which European and American investors are traditionally present – consumer sector, catering, grocery chains, mobile and Internet communications – may be attractive for Chinese financing (Kuznetsov, 2017).

The specific emphasis should be placed on the effects of optimization of transport and logistics routes for the delivery of Chinese goods to EU markets through the EAEU territory. The heads of the EAEU Member States have noted the development of the transit as one of the key effects of EAEU-OBOR conjugation. During the IV Eastern Economic Forum, President of Russia V.V. Putin states that "in the next six years, the volume of transit container traffic by rail should increase 4 times, and the travel time from the Far East to the western border of Russia should be reduced to 7 days. The cargo flow by Northern Sea Route should grow to 80 million tons / year" (KP, 2018). President of Kazakhstan K.-J. Tokaev emphasized that due to EAEU-OBOR conjugation Kazakhstan strengthens its strategic position as a transit territory connecting the West and East, North and South of the Eurasian continent. "First of all, we are talking about the international transport corridor "Western Europe - Western China", the development of transit and logistics infrastructure, the modernization of air and sea ports, the creation of new production capacities. Eurasian high-speed railway may become a flagship project" (RG, 2019).

The Eurasian Economic Commission has already set up a working group to discuss the integration projects in the field of transport and infrastructure (EEC, 2018a), which made a list of such projects as part of the integration with international transport initiatives (EEC, 2019c, Pic. 5). Some projects are already running, but for most of them the investment is required. For flagship projects in the context EAEU-OBOR conjugation, such as Eurasia high-speed cargo-passenger transport corridor, the construction works were paused.

PIC. 5. MAIN ECONOMIC CORRIDORS OF SREB



SOURCE: HKTDC Research, 2019

To intensify the EAEU-OBOR conjugation in the monetary and financial spheres, the following options are considered:

1. *Development of alternative financial infrastructure*, including multilateral financial institutions, created / operating within the framework of:

- BRICS (New Development Bank based on a few reserve currencies);
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO Interbank Association, SCO Development Bank (in the planning stage) and the SCO International Center for Project Financing (in the planning stage));
- EAEU (Eurasian Development Bank).

The goal of these institutions is infrastructure and sustainable development projects financing in countries complementary to the existing western monetary and financial institutions.

2. *The development of EAEU - China common payment system.* At the present time, the integration of payment systems of EAEU Member States central (national) banks is being carried out. It is planned to create a single payment space within the EAEU based on blockchain technology. Besides, cooperation between the Member States is developing in a bilateral format. To illustrate, since 2017, it became possible to use Armenian payment cards 'Arka' in the Russian Federation and Russian cards 'MIR' in Armenia. What is more, a roadmap of integration between Kyrgyzstan national payment system 'Elcard' and Russian payment system 'MIR' has been signed. Bank of Russia has launched financial message transfer system for foreigners. It seems promising to assess the potential effects of a common EAEU-China payment space.

3. *Using cryptocurrencies in mutual settlements.* Cryptocurrencies may become one of the tools in reducing dependence EAEU and China economies on the US dollar and the euro. The weak point of this option is the volatility and insecurity of cryptocurrencies. However, these drawbacks can be overcome with the employment of stablecoins – cryptocurrencies the price of which depends on the price of gold or a basket of currencies. Moreover, China and Russia have large gold and foreign exchange reserves.

Cooperation in the sphere of cryptocurrencies and blockchain requires a legal basis. However, the situation with the national legislation in the EAEU Member States and PRC in this area is still heterogeneous. Since 2013, carrying out the operations with Bitcoin virtual currency, publishing quotes, or insuring the relevant financial products has been prohibited for Chinese financial companies. Since 2017, the Initial Coin Offering (ICO) has been prohibited as illegal activities related to financial crimes. Restrictions on the cooperation of credit organizations with companies engaged in ICOs have been introduced. In 2017, most cryptocurrency exchanges in China were closed.

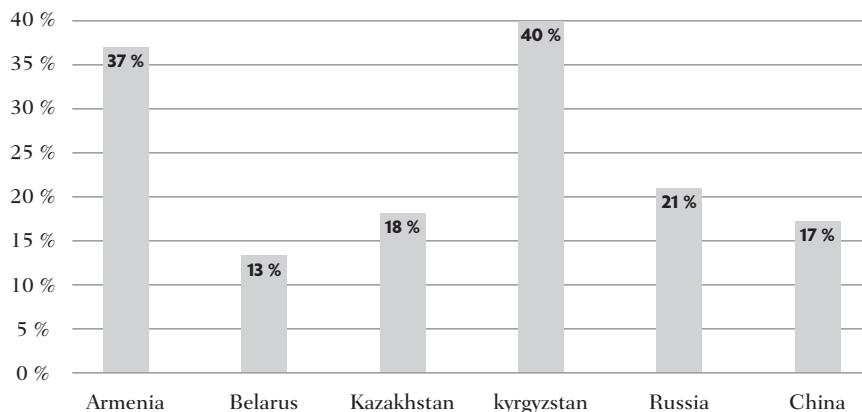
At the same time, the People's Bank of China has embarked on the elaboration of a national digital currency: in February 2017, its prototype was tested. What is more, blockchain technology support is included in the 13th five-year development plan of the country (2016-2020).

In the EAEU, common approaches to the core and regulation of cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology have not been developed yet, because of a number of so-called "forks" that complicate the search and choice for

optimal solutions and regulatory instruments. The legal regulation of cryptocurrencies is not introduced but in Belarus: the rights of individuals and legal entities in this area are defined, the main regulatory body is determined (the High-Tech Park). Encouragingly, Kazakhstan and Russia are also being under way of creating a “regulatory sandbox” with legal regime.

In addition, as in the EAEU Member States, so in China, there is a huge potential for the development of financial products and services for its population (Pic. 6).

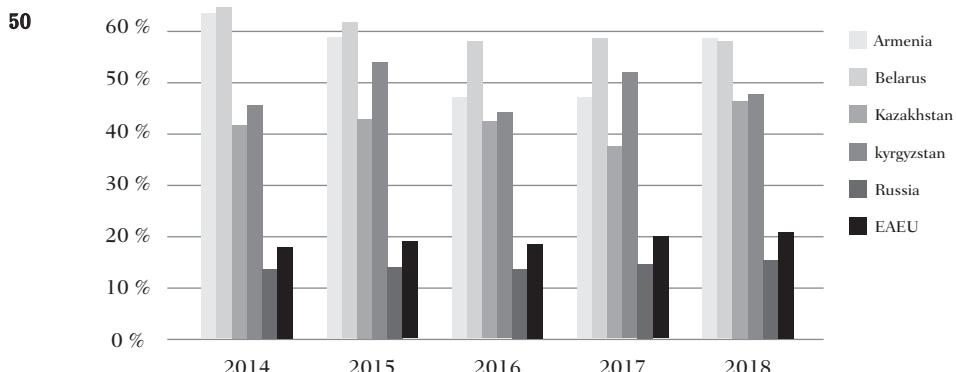
**PIC. 6. THE SHARE OF THE POPULATION THAT DOES NOT HAVE THE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES, 2018, % (WB, 2019)**



**SOURCE:** WB, 2019

According to statistics of banking sector (Pic. 7), the share of banks under foreign control in the total number of these financial organizations in the EAEU Member States (except Russia) in 2014–2018, exceeded 40% (for the Russian Federation and China, this figure is on average inferior to 20%). Moreover, there are about 37 representative offices of EAEU banks abroad in 2018, a significant share (nearly 65%) of which is Russian. According to expert data, the maximum number of operating branches of Russian banks at the beginning of the 2010s was opened in the CIS countries (33.8%), i.e. in countries with financial systems similar to Russian (Abalkina, 2016, p. 8). Considering that the banking model of financial systems has developed mainly in the Russian Federation and China (over 80% of financial sector assets are the assets of banking intermediaries), we may conclude that the structure and principles of their functioning are clear to all partners, and there is potential for deepening the EAEU-OBOR collaboration in the banking sector.

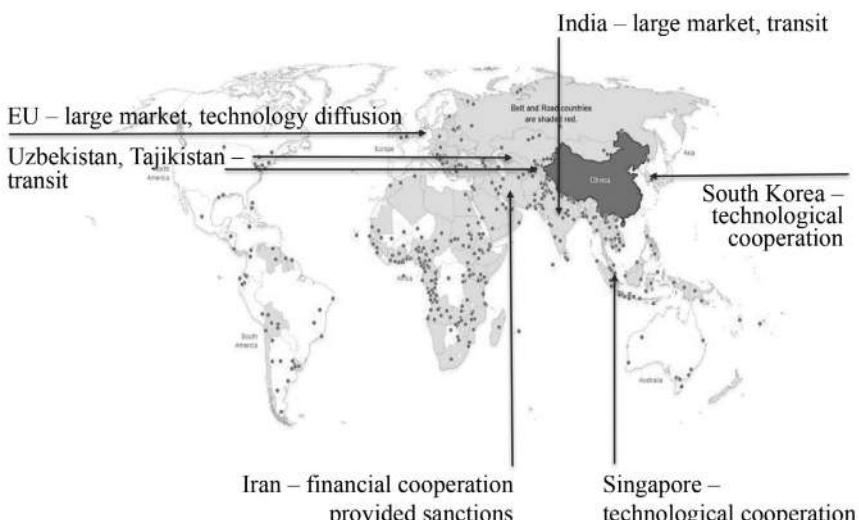
**PIC. 7. THE NUMBER OF BANKS UNDER FOREIGN CONTROL AT THE END OF THE YEAR  
(% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BANKS IN THE EAEU MEMBER STATE/EAEU)**



SOURCE:EEC, 2019a

The processes of regional integration are very dynamic. Effective collaboration helps countries to get over the current and future challenges. In this context, EAEU-OBOR conjugation is a logical step in the vector of the Big Eurasian Partnership (BEP) formation. In this vein, the conjugation could contribute to optimizing and systematizing the interaction between existing elements of the world economy. This is a kind of network of integration strategies and transcontinental projects between new type regional associations

**PIC. 8. THE POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENT OF EAEU-OBOR CONJUGATION  
DUE TO COLLABORATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**



SOURCE: composed by author

(blocks) with the maximum level of coordination. Such vision of BEP is implemented in text of the Declaration on the Further Development of Integration Processes within the EAEU (MEKR, 2018), signed by the Heads of the EAEU Member States. The practical success of this idea will largely depend on the willingness of regional integration associations (blocks) and the largest economies of the region, such as China, to have an open dialogue and find mutually beneficial solutions (Pic. 8).

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The process of EAEU-OBOR conjugation, launched in the mid-2010s, includes multi-sphere and wide-format activities. Its main engines are the countries of the regional "core" - Russia and China, which collaborate on the basis of both national interests and integration priorities complying with international law. The synergy of priorities of the world economic leader - China and several Member States requires a balanced and deliberate plan, considering interests of all parties, internal and external challenges for each country individually and for the project as a whole.

An analysis of the global and regional risks and challenges of the EAEU-OBOR conjugation has revealed that the first ones (including instability and crisis in the US-centric global monetary and financial system, sanctions regimes and trade wars, threats to national energy security) may influence the process of conjugation heterogeneously. On the one hand, it strengthens the regional integration and solidarity between countries to create a multipolar world. On the other hand, the aforementioned risks reduce the countries' resources, since the fighting against its negative consequences appears to be a matter of 'primary concern' as compared to the collaboration for sustainable development and the launch of the joint projects. At the same time, some of these risks – including, for example, inconsistencies in the interests of the participating countries, unbalanced structure of the mutual trade, bureaucratic difficulties and restrictions, currency and investment risks – may diminish the resulting positive effect of the conjugation.

In view of identified risks and challenges, the main directions at the initial stage of EAEU-OBOR conjugation are:

1. Enhancement of institutional interaction between supranational and national regulatory bodies of the EAEU and China, and the formats of inter-country dialogue.
2. Development of a transparent regulatory framework for conjugation, including the harmonization of the EAEU Member States` legislation and finishing the formation of EAEU common markets.
3. The elimination of barriers and restrictions in mutual trade, including providing a flexible mechanism for identifying and preventing the new ones.

4. Support for EAEU Member States` export sectors, which have competitive advantages in the Chinese market: in particular, food and agriculture products.
5. The accelerated implementation of national and integration projects in the transport and logistics spheres.
6. Diversification and increasing export of hydrocarbon resources to China aiming at ensuring the energy security and the sustainability of the region.
7. Ensuring the security of mutual payments by expanding the use of national currencies, and / or creating new payment instruments based on distributed ledger technologies.

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# Interests and policies of leading non-regional players vis-à-vis the Eurasian Economic Integration

**SUMMARY:** I. Introduction. II. Mutual adjustment of the interests of China, Eurasian Union and Central Asian states. III. Relations between EU and EAEU. IV. Conclusions. V. Bibliography.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a young economic union that has been at play for slightly over five years. It was created to strengthen national economies and enhance opportunities available to its member states in global economy by ensuring four freedoms, free movement of goods, services, finances, and labor.

Its formative years coincided with a period of global economic instability and geopolitical changes in Eurasia.

Geopolitically and economically, Eurasian (post-Soviet) space today is of great interest to leading global and regional actors. Many among them, first of all Western nations, look at the EAEU as Russia's attempt to create a political, rather than economic, union that would strengthen the position of Moscow. Such union, they believe, can constrain the pursuance of their interests in the region.

Eurasian neighbors – China, the EU and other nations – understand the importance of developing common principles of economic interaction. Many of them have quite close economic ties with member states of this integration alliance. But during more than five years of its existence the EAEU set in place supranational organs, and the member states delegated to them several commercial and economic powers and functions. As matters stand

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<sup>1</sup> PhD in Political Sciences, Head of Sector of Center for post-Soviet Studies. Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences. Contact Information: e\_kuzmina07@mail.ru, +7(499) 128-1781

today, bilateral relations with the EAEU member states in the area of economy, and first of all in commerce, are unsustainable without contacts with the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) or without consideration of the EAEU's legislation and technical and hygienic regulations. It is not for nothing that several countries signed or work towards signing free trade zone agreements with the EAEU while international organizations and regional economic unions sign cooperation agreements with it.

This article explores what motivates China's and the EU's activities in Eurasian (post-Soviet) space and their attitude to the EAEU. Because the EAEU is their neighbor. It is China and the EU, along with Russia, who are the biggest commercial and economic partners of the EAEU member states. The EAEU's territory is traversed by Eurasia's major trade and transportation routes, which form much of the backbone of the continent's transportation logistics network.

## **II. MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT OF THE INTERESTS OF CHINA, EURASIAN UNION AND CENTRAL ASIAN NATIONS**

Cooperation with the EAEU member states and, generally, with post-Soviet nations is fully compatible with China's national development strategies.

First such strategy to be adopted (March 2000) was the global strategy of "openness," which applies to foreign trade, as well as Chinese investment and the use of Chinese labor outside China. China is mostly interested in access to resources of the receiving countries. But this strategy is also useful in expanding the pool of partner countries interested in equipment and services of Chinese companies. With this in mind, China provides financial assistance such as big loans to developing countries. As Chinese companies establish themselves outside China, they gain the opportunity to use local industrial advantages. And the share of expenditures on transportation of resources in these companies' overall production costs shrinks. This is one of the working instruments to ensure the planned growth rates of China's economy.

Another concept in use during the last several years has been "advancement into the West" (xi jin). In terms of international relations, it implies intensification of China's economic activity and its greater openness vis-à-vis countries to the west of it. According to the Chinese experts, this strategy should ultimately bring about a new, "truly open" global order.<sup>2</sup>

According to Russian economist V.Matveyev, China's strategy of "advancement into the West" is the ideological base of its policy of non-involvement in other countries' home affairs, non-participation in conflicts and

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**2** China's "Advancement into the West" Shows the Way Using A Balancing Strategy. URL: [http://www.qstheory.cn/gj/gisspl/201404/t20140422\\_342588.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/gj/gisspl/201404/t20140422_342588.htm) (in Russ.)

confrontation, creation of a maximally expansive friendly or, at least, loyal environment (Matveyev, and Tsentral'naya, 2016, Pp. 169-188). And the Chinese experts complement their peace-making constructs with quite realistic appeals: "getting rid of illusions, to boost the nation's overall might, for those who have no power have no say" (Matveyev, and Tsentral'naya, 2016, Pp. 169-188).

Interaction with the EU remains the backbone of China's economy. Forging stronger ties with Europe is especially important for China at a time when its geopolitical and economic rivalry with the USA is on the rise and the USA feels the need to reduce Chinese imports and close down American manufacturing facilities in China while also alertly watching the Celestial Empire's sea routes. However, the region of utmost importance for Beijing to the west of its border is Central Asia and Russia because they are traversed by in-land trade routes to Europe and South Asia.

But the transportation network linking China to Eurasia's western part does not keep up with China's growing demands. So China's strategic goal is ensuring a safe and smooth transport of goods to markets in Europe, Russia, Central Asia, as well as the Near and Middle East. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was designed precisely to address this strategic objective. The project envisions fast-paced development of the transportation and logistics infrastructure for the transit of goods and shaping customs and currency rules in a fashion that would suit China while also increasing volumes of Chinese trade with neighboring countries. In Central Asia and across entire post-Soviet space Beijing is implementing one part of this project, Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), inaugurated by the Chinese leader in 2013 in the capital of Kazakhstan – Astana (now Nur-Sultan).

But reaching out into Central Asia is not without risks for Beijing: political instability in some states, conflicts between countries, and interethnic strife. Besides, population of the region obviously tends to take a negative view of the growing Chinese presence. Another factor not to be dismissed is the competition for influence in the region with other global and regional powerhouses. The USA is carrying out its own geo-economic project of the region's restructuring – The New Silk Road. Russia is strengthening its traditional influence strengthening the EAEU and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The EU uses Central Asia's oil and gas to complement and partially replace hydrocarbon fuels from Russia. Some of Eurasia's regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Japan, North Korea), too, are trying to forge ties with Central Asian nations. All this slows down China's economic expansion in the region.

China is fairly clear-eyed about Russia's influence on post-Soviet (Eurasian) space and its plans to keep its position in the region intact. Besides,

Beijing feels quite satisfied by Russia's military and technical cooperation with Eurasia's post-Soviet countries, since it reduces China's security expenditures in territories along its western borders.

Since 2005 China has been interacting with Russia and Central Asian countries under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The cooperation over security issues under the aegis of the SCO – struggle against terrorism and extremism, drug production and trafficking – is quite efficient. Economic interaction under the aegis of this organization is weaker. The SCO has yet to produce joint economic projects – the ones that are rated as such are actually bilateral projects. Although there has been some stepping-up of activities in this area: the creation of the SCO's interbank association and Business Council, as well as the signing of economic integration promotion programs. China has undertaken several failed attempts to create a free trade zone (FTZ) with Russia and Central Asian countries under the SCO's aegis. Russia and Central Asian countries did not proceed with these plans first of all because they fear that their local producers may lose competition to Chinese products and some of their local industry sectors would disappear.

Commercial and economic ties with China, however, are important for Russia and Central Asian countries. China is their biggest trade and investment partner.

TABLE 1 CHINA'S TRADE WITH RUSSIA AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES IN 2010-2019, \$ MILLION

STATES	2010			2015			2019		
	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	29 617	2 25 914	3 968	34 757	33 259	1498	54 127	56 792	-2 665
KAZAKHSTAN	9320	11109	-1789	8427	5840	2587	6538	7824	-1286
KYRGYZSTAN	4128	72	4056	4285	57	4228	1734	82	1653
TAJIKISTAN	1377	56	1321	1795	52	1743	605	55	550
TURKMENISTAN	525	1045	-520	816	7828	-7012	431	8 686	- 8 255
UZBEKISTAN	1181	1301	-120	2229	1267	962			

SOURCE: [http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral\\_TS.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral_TS.aspx)

As for the trade with Russia and Central Asia, Chinese exports are dominated by finished goods, and its imports are dominated by fuels, metals, agricultural raw materials, and wood and articles of wood. For Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, the first five export goods are represented by footwear and clothes industry goods; for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, by equipment and finished metal goods. In addition to tools and equipment, Russia also

buys furs. Over 2010–2019, the shares of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in trading with China grew significantly due to the commencement of Central Asia–China gas pipeline operations. Another reason why the volumes of trade between Uzbekistan and China have grown in the last two years at a breakneck speed is Tashkent's new, more open foreign policy.

Russian imports to China have grown by 2.3 times during this period not only because the import of hydrocarbon fuels have grown by 3.2 times but also due to such articles as timber and timber products, fish and seafood, non-ferrous metals, etc.

Beijing actively promotes the idea of using yuan in bilateral trade. Since 2011 China has been doing currency swaps with all countries of the region. Since late 2014, the currency pair has been traded at Kazakhstan's stock exchange and at the regional market of China's Interbank Foreign Exchange Center (the city of Ürümqi). (Kazantsev, Zvyagelskaya, Kuzmina, 2016)

Because of the lack of sound and correlated statistical data it is hard to estimate the volume of Chinese investment in Central Asia and Russia. As matters stand, China includes in its statistics not only direct investment, loans, concessionary loans, and matching funds, but also grants disbursed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the SCO. They are distributed across sectors in line with China's economic priorities.

According to the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), in 2005–2019 China's cumulative investment in Kazakhstan stood at \$35.16b; in Kyrgyzstan, at \$4.73b; in Tajikistan, at \$2.15b; in Turkmenistan, at \$6.8b; in Uzbekistan, at \$5.69b<sup>3)</sup>

Investment in Russia's economy during this period stood at \$55.14b. The distribution by sector is as follows: agriculture, \$2.88b; chemical industry, \$2.64b; energy, \$30.85b; finance, \$1.2b; logistics, \$250m; transportation, \$2.65b; iron and steel, \$6.5b. (China Global Investment Tracker).

Taking into account all of the above mentioned economic and geopolitical factors, China, one the one hand, and Russia and the EAEU member states, on the other, decided to begin the process of mutual adjustment of two projects – the EAEU and the SREB.

Despite the fundamental differences between these projects, they pursue the same objective – increasing competitiveness of the national economies and their importance for global economy, as well as integrating them into global value chains.

In 2015, after the signing of the document on mutual adjustment of the EAEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB – the BRI's Western offshoot), the parties set about drafting the Agreement on Trade and Economic

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<sup>3</sup> China Global Investment Tracker (04.03.2020) American Enterprise Institute. URL: <http://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>

Cooperation Between the EAEU and the People's Republic of China. As a member of the EEC's College (in the rank of minister) Tatyana Valovaya put it, "This is the agreement on the comprehensive economic cooperation of non-preferential nature – presently the matter at hand is not the introduction of a free trade regime but the expansion of commercial and economic cooperation" (Marinin, 2015).

In May 2018 this agreement was signed; and in October 2019, ratified. It does not contain provisions for abolishing or lowering customs duties. The matters that the agreement does cover include simplifying trade rules, setting in place options for electronic customs clearance; increasing transparency and working towards mutual recognition of standards, technical rules and conformity evaluation procedures; protection of intellectual property; regulating electronic commerce; cooperation in public tenders. The Agreement also outlines future areas of possible cooperation: agriculture, energy, transportation, industrial cooperation, information and communication infrastructure, technologies and innovation, finances and environment (Monitoring of current events in international trade). This agreement should complement the bilateral agreements between the EAEU member states and China already in place.

The bilateral Russia-China relations and their strategic stability are the key factors in the success of the mutual adjustment of the EAEU and China's BRI and of the project of creating, in the future, the Greater Eurasian Partnership. From the very beginning the EAEU countries had a role to play in the BRI.

Vladimir Putin said on several occasions that relations with China and the linking of the two projects are important for building the Greater Eurasian partnership (GEP). At the same time he believes that the GEP involves forging ties not only with China but with the EU, the ASEAN, and the SCO as well. According to him, "the adding up of the potentials of such integration formats as the EAEU, Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Association of South East Asian Nations can form the basis for a Greater Eurasian partnership. We would welcome the participation of our European colleagues – in particular, of course, the EU states – in such partnership. In this case it would become truly harmonious, balanced and all-inclusive and afford a unique chance to create a single space of co-operation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans – in fact, the first such space in history."<sup>4</sup> A similar approach is maintained in the EEC. According to the EEC College's member Valovaya, "we are simultaneously building two partnership tracks of equal-terms economic relations with our

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<sup>4</sup> Address of the President to the Federal Assembly. December 3, 2015. The site of the President of the Russian Federation. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50864> (in Russ.)

eastern (PRC) and western (EU) neighbors, this is already the foundation for the common barrier-free economic space across entire Eurasia. This is precisely the focus of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative. One should create an economic environment in Eurasia that would have as few barriers as possible to the movement of goods, services, capital, labor, ideas. This is where we see areas of common interest." (Monitoring of current events in international trade).

2019 in effect saw the start of the convergence of the two initiatives, at the One Belt One Road forum in Beijing: the creation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership under the leadership of Russia and the EAEU countries, on the one hand, and China's BRI. De-facto and de-jure these strategies have become part and parcel of the present political landscape of both countries. As a matter of fact, this is a long-term strategy of shaping Eurasia. (Luzyanin, 2019).

### III. RELATIONS BETWEEN EU AND EAEU

Russia and the EU have quite a large region of "common neighbors". This includes not only contiguous post-Soviet European countries, but also countries in the Caucasus region and even Central Asia.

Trade between the EU and the EAEU is picking up after a slowdown in the mid-2010s. The EAEU's exports to the EU in 2019 totaled \$223.5b; in the opposite direction, \$103.7b<sup>5</sup> EAEU's main partners in Europe are Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, and France.

**TABLE 2 EUROPEAN UNION'S TRADE WITH MEMBER COUNTRIES  
OF THE EURASIAN UNION IN 2010-2019, \$ MILLION**

STATES	2010			2015			2019		
	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE	EXPORT	IMPORT	TRADE BALANCE
<b>ARMENIA</b>	728,2	323,9	404,3	688,7	323,6	365,1	888,8	550,8	338,0
<b>BELARUS</b>	8816,1	3625,8	5190,3	6290,3	4265,8	2024,5	7688,8	4803,8	2885,1
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	7036,9	21041,2	-14004,3	6676,1	17955,2	-11278,9	6762,4	21051,8	-14004,4
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	279,2	272,7	6,5	289,1	54,3	234,8	371,1	915,2	-544,1
<b>RUSSIA</b>	114633,0	198757,7	-84124,7	80230,3	135604,9	-55374,6	100585,2	164925,8	-64340,6

**SOURCE:** [http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral\\_TS.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral_TS.aspx)

As for the EU, its most important Eurasian partners are Russia and Kazakhstan. Besides, the fact that the EU buys large quantities of hydrocarbon

<sup>5</sup> Alpatova, I. Zakon umnozheniya [The Law of Multiplication]. Rossiiskaya gazeta (Moscow edition) [newspaper]. No. 48(8102). 2020-03-04. URL: <https://rg.ru/2020/03/04/v-tpp-rossii-poschitali-vygody-ot-obnuleniiia-tamozhennyh-poshlins-es.html> (in Russ.)

fuels from these countries accounts for the negative trade balance with them. Oil accounts for 89.1% of Kazakhstan's imports to the EU; and gas, oil and oil products account for 72.1% of Russia's imports to the EU.<sup>6</sup>

For the EAEU countries, the EU (27 countries) is one of the most important commercial and economic partners. In 2019 the EU's share in Russia's foreign trade was 41.7%; in Kazakhstan's, 32.5%; in Armenia's, 20.8%; in Kyrgyzstan's, 17.3%; and in Belarus's, in 2018, 23.8%.

The EAEU countries have a huge potential as exporters to the EU, but this potential remains unrealized because of the existing restrictions and barriers. The EAEU countries, for instance, could be exporting much more flour, sunflower oil, methanol, various metal alloys, cargo vehicles. And the EU could be selling to the EAEU more foodstuffs, electronics, and passenger cars. According to Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the introduction of an EU-EAEU free trade zone could generate \$31.6b.

If a zero customs duty rate is combined with a 50% reduction in non-tariff barriers (introducing uniform technical standards and customs rules, simplifying administrative procedures, etc.), this can generate more than \$102.6b, according to A. Spartak, chairman of the Committee on Economic Integration and Foreign Trade of Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>7</sup>

The economic potential of the EU-EAEU relations, however, remains un-tapped because of geopolitical considerations. As matters stand, Russia and the EU are competing for political and economic influence in post-Soviet space, including the opportunities to influence the EAEU members.

Although both Russian and European leaders in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries more than once spoke about a united Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok, Brussels and Moscow have had different visions of this integration. The EU's goal has been to "install everything but the institutions" in post-Soviet countries. Russia sees itself as an equal partner that not simply adopts the EU's standards but also participates in the elaboration of mutually acceptable rules and standards.<sup>8</sup> Brussels is determined to export not only economic standards, but socio-cultural and political norms as well. Moscow, meanwhile, keeps political issues and society's socio-cultural norms off the agenda.

In order to strengthen its position, Moscow was looking for a format of an integration institution that would become a pole of attraction in Greater

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<sup>6</sup> The author of this article calculated this using [http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral\\_TS.aspx](http://www.trademap.org/countrymap/Bilateral_TS.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> Alpatova, I. Zakon umnozheniya [The Law of Multiplication]. Rossiiskaya gazeta (Moscow edition [newspaper]. No. 48(8102). 2020-03-04. URL: <https://rg.ru/2020/03/04/v-tpp-rossii-poschitali-vygody-ot-obnuleniiia-tamozhennyh-poshlinsk-s-es.html> (in Russ.)

<sup>8</sup> Zarifulin, K. Otnosheniya YeS — YeAES v 2015–2018 gg.: zastoi obshcheevropeyskoy integratsii [EU-EAEU relations in 2015-2018: Stagnation in Pan-European Integration]. // Official site of the Russian International Relations Council. 2019-04-30. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/columns/postsoviet/otnosheniya-es-eaes-v-2015-2018-gg-zastoi-obshcheevropeyskoy-integratsii/>

Europe as powerful as the EU. Since the mid-2000s Russian president Vladimir Putin has repeatedly proposed the concept of “integration of integrations”. The idea was also supported by the leaders of the EAEU’s founding members – Kazakhstan and Belarus. At that time discussions revolved around the strengthening the Eurasian Community, as a starting point for future cooperation with Europe on equal terms.

The EU meanwhile launched its European Neighborhood Policy, then developed and began to realize the Eastern Partnership program, reaching out both to its neighbors, such as Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and countries with which it does not have a common border, such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan. Brussels has its own vision of how it should interact with post-Soviet states without admitting them into the EU’s fold. One of the main objectives of the Eastern Partnership, according to an expert of the Russian International Affairs Council K.Zarifulin, has been to encircle Russia with states with European economic and political standards and laws. This would force Russia “to play by the EU’s rules (that is integrate) in mid-term” (Zarifulin 2015.2018.)

The confrontation of two models reached its peak in 2014, when countries from the “common neighborhood” began to view the signing of the EU association agreement and the accession to the EAEU as their long-term alternatives. The situation in Ukraine became a catalyst for this face-off.

The EU introduced sanctions against Russia, the EAEU’s driving force, and in 2016 adopted 5 guiding principles for its relations with Russia, which in fact blocked the promotion of any meaningful initiatives in Russia-EU relations until the Ukrainian crisis is settled.<sup>9</sup>

The EU’s approach to the EAEU is also influenced by the stance adopted by Kazakhstan and Belarus – initially these countries considered the Eurasian integration as something to help them strengthen their economies at the expense of Russia’s and were opposed to the idea of a political alliance. And when Russia and the West engaged in the war of sanctions, these countries (together with Armenia) began profiting from re-export of European goods, significantly undermining the very idea of a customs union. But the ensuing trade disputes and blockades inside the EAEU caused much more harm to political, rather than economic, relations inside the EAEU.

As a result, Brussels has not recognized the EAEU as an equal or at least institutionally symmetric entity and from the very start has been refraining from any official contacts with the EEC’s officials.

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<sup>9</sup> YeS prinyal pyat’ printsipov postroeniya otnosheniy s Rossiey [EU Adopts Five Guiding Principles for EU-Russia Relations] // TASS news agency. 2016-04-14. URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/2738040> (in Russ.)

In 2018 the EU, like China and Russia, began talking about connectivity between Europe and Asia. A Joint Communication of the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy presented the vision of a new all-encompassing strategy to increase ties between Europe and Asia<sup>10</sup>. The Communication spells out main areas of interaction: transportation; energy and digital communications; cultural, first of all educational, cooperation; and the strengthening of bilateral, regional and global partnerships on the basis of mutually agreed-upon rules and standards. Presently there are no specific programs for the realization of this concept, nor are there plans in place to create new integration organizations or transregional free trade zones. This, we believe, leaves room for maneuver without imposing any special obligations on the EU and its partners. It should be noted that the existing official documents on connecting Europe and Asia mention only India, China, and the ASEAN. It is possible, however, that Central Asian nations will be included in this format too. Especially since the EU in 2019 adopted a new Central Asia strategy,<sup>11</sup> and in March 2020 the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between the EU and Kazakhstan<sup>12</sup>, signed in December 2015, entered into force.

Besides, the European Commission's official stance is that recognition of the EAEU is conditional on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements in Ukraine and the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. That was stated yet in 2015 by the European Commission's president Jean-Claude Juncker, in response to a letter inviting to participate in the EEC. Chairman of the board of the EEC Tigran Sargsyan came back with this response: "The Eurasian Economic Union and the Eurasian Economic Commission - our supranational organ representing five countries – have no relation to the Minsk Agreements. We are a purely economic alliance, political issues are not on our agenda."<sup>13</sup>

Both Eurasian and European experts have said repeatedly that contacts between two unions should be raised to a new level. Thus, in 2019, at the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Berlin Eurasian Club, the issue was broached by the

<sup>10</sup> Connecting Europe and Asia: Building blocks for an EU Strategy. Bruxelles, 19.09.2018. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/50724/node/50724\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/50724/node/50724_en)

<sup>11</sup> The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership. // Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Brussels, 15.5.2019. URL: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint\\_communication\\_-\\_the\\_eu\\_and\\_central\\_asia\\_-\\_new\\_opportunities\\_for\\_a\\_stronger\\_partnership.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_communication_-_the_eu_and_central_asia_-_new_opportunities_for_a_stronger_partnership.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Maltabarov, A. Kak YeS i YeAES khotyat sotrudnichat' [How the EU and the EAEU Envision Their Cooperation?] // Kapital.kz. 2019-10-30. URL: <https://kapital.kz/economic/82138/kak-yes-i-yeaes-khotyat-sotrudnichat.html> (in Russ.)

<sup>13</sup> Khimshiashvili, P.V. V YeAES uvideli progress v otnosheniyakh s Yevropeyskim soyuzom [The EAEU Sees Progress in Its Relations with the EU] // RBK. 2019-11-14. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/14/11/2019/5dec303d9a79476b0c68e68f> (in Russ.)

Member of the Board (Minister) for Economy and Financial Policy of the Eurasian Economic Commission Timur Zhaksylykov. He commented that “in a situation when the global economic architecture is changing” it was just about time to emphasize the speeding up of development of cooperation between the two influential bodies<sup>14</sup>.

Business, too, is interested in mutually rewarding cooperation. In 2017, on the initiative of representatives of European and Eurasian business communities, a memorandum on a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok was signed.<sup>15</sup> By April 2020 the memo was signed by 93 associations and companies, including Schneider Group, Bosch, Metro, Rhenus Logistics, Siemens, Knorr-Bremse, OWC, Wilo, Knauf, Allianz, Belorussian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Association of Banks of Russia, Rostselmash, Gazinformservice, Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and some others ( Memorandum: On a Common Economic Space From Lisbon to Vladivostok).

Cooperation is important both for the EU and the EAEU since some areas of business are the purview of the EAEU rather than national bodies. These areas include standardization and technical compliance; simplification of trade rules; investment; digitalization. In many of these areas cooperation is already in progress. Thus, in the area of standardization and technical compliance the EAEU bodies are working together with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) / European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC).<sup>16</sup> The EAEU also cooperates with such influential business associations as the Association of European Businesses (AEB) and the Eastern Committee of German Economy (Ost-Ausschuss-Osteuropavereins (OAOEV)).

The issues of simplification of trade rules are the exclusive competence of the EAEU and the EU. A discussion of these issues, therefore, could become a foundation for practical interaction of the two unions. Especially since all members of the EAEU except Belarus are members of the WTO, like the EU, and signatories of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The EAEU members still have a lot of work to do to have the TFA implemented, and this can become a good platform for cooperating with the European partners.

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**14** Maltabarov, A. Kak Yes i YeAES khotyat sotrudничат? [How the EU and the EAEU Envision Their Cooperation?] // Kapital.kz. 2019-10-30. URL: <https://kapital.kz/economic/82138/kak-yes-i-yeaes-khotyat-sotrudnichat.html> (in Russ.)

**15** Memorandum: On a Common Economic Space From Lisbon to Vladivostok. URL: <https://lisbon-vladivostok.pro/memorandum/>

**16** The mentioned committees are the agencies appointed by the EU to oversee the progress of standardization and the voluntary adoption of standards across the EU. These agencies maintain the platform for the elaboration of the European standards and other technical documents related to different kinds of products, materials, services and processes.

Another promising area where objectives pursued by the EU and the EAEU are largely similar is digitalization. In May 2015 the European Commission approved A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, consisting of three “pillars”: 1. Facilitating access to online products and services for individual consumers and businesses across the EU; 2. Creating an environment conducive to the development of digital networks and services; 3. Ensuring the maximal growth of the European digital economy. The Digitising European Industry initiative, launched in 2016 and covering a range of aspects, from legislation to education, became a part of the Strategy<sup>17</sup>. The EAEU has similar documents and plans. An important case in point is the Main Directions of the Realization of the EAEU’s Digitalization Agenda until 2025. The key areas of digital economy’s development in the EAEU countries will include digitalization of economy sectors and markets; introduction of the modern technologies and instruments for managing integration processes; digital infrastructure development; protection of data and channels of communication. Digital projects and initiatives may account for up to 11% of the expected aggregate growth rate of the EAEU’s GDP by 2025<sup>18</sup>. Business is already cooperating in this area. In 2017 the Eastern Committee of German Economy in partnership with the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs founded the German-Russian Initiative for Digitalization (GRID). The initiative is destined to assist Russian companies and organizations in defining and carrying out their digitalization strategies<sup>19</sup>.

2019 saw the launch of the first track of the EU-EAEU technical dialog. A part of this track has been provision of information about the EAEU’s acts concerning European companies operating on the market of the five countries. “We have received hundreds of letters from our European partners concerning different pieces of legislation. And we also receive similar letters and comments from the European Commission, which communicates its position on various legislative drafts, since they are likely to affect European business,” noted Tigran Sargsyan (European Union). Experts from the European Commission work with experts from the EAEU, arranging meetings of officials and video-conferences.

According to the Member of the EEC’s Board of Industry and Agriculture Artak Kamalyan, interaction with the EEC will be focused on supporting the

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<sup>17</sup> Round-table discussion of experts: “EU – EAEU: in Search of Synergy.” Gaidar Forum, 2018-02-17. Summary of the speech of the vice-president of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs M.V.Larionova. URL: <https://www.hse.ru/mirror/pubs/share/213923380> (in Russ.)

<sup>18</sup> Itogi VEES: dan start tsifrovomu etapu yevraziskoy integratsii [SEEC Results: Start of the Digital Phase of Eurasian Integration]. // Official site of the Eurasian Economic Commission. 2017-10-12. URL: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/12\\_10\\_17.aspx](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/12_10_17.aspx)

<sup>19</sup> Commission publishes mid-term review of the 2015 Digital Single Market strategy. // official website of the European Union. 10.05.2017. URL: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-17-1233\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1233_en.htm)

dialog between business associations and companies from the EAEU and the EU<sup>20</sup>.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Both China and the EU are very interested in strengthening ties with the EAEU countries. They are interested in these countries economically as well as politically. Besides, the EAEU member states are important transit countries playing a major role in commercial and economic relations between China and the EU.

Russia, China and the EU are the biggest economic partners for the EAEU member states. And while in some areas they are rivals, in some others, their interests overlap. Besides, Russia and Kazakhstan are major suppliers of hydrocarbon fuels and metals to China and the EU.

In many ways China's and the EU's relations with the EAEU depend on their relations with Russia as the EAEU's backbone and driving force. The strategies pursued by Brussels and Beijing vis-à-vis the EAEU, however, are quite different.

China cooperates with Russia in the format of strategic partnership. Post-Soviet nations are important for the Celestial Empire not only economically, but also from the viewpoint of security in its eastern borderlands. And this security is facilitated by Moscow's military and technological cooperation with Central Asian nations. This is why China is keen to maintain stable and mutually beneficial contacts with Russia in the region. And signing the China-EAEU agreement on trade and economic cooperation became a compromise solution, affording China the opportunities to strengthen its position in economic cooperation with the EAEU member states.

The EU has been mostly focused on its geopolitical position in post-Soviet space. Its relations with Moscow are largely confrontational, with reciprocal sanctions only making things worse. As a result, the EU does not recognize the EAEU as an integration alliance and builds individual bilateral contacts with its member states. European business, however, has been demanding ever more strongly that Brussels reconsider its relations with the EAEU because aligning the technical, sanitary and other standards of the two Unions is an economic necessity. Perhaps the current economic crisis related to the global pandemic and the drop in the hydrocarbon fuel prices can motivate the EU to take a softer stance on Moscow. And recognizing the EAEU can become the first step in this direction.

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**20** YeEK nalazhivaet sotrudничество с европейскими партнерами [Eurasian Economic Commission Reaches Out to European Partners] // Official site of the Eurasian Economic Commission. 2020-03-05. URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-03-2020-1.aspx> (in Russ.)

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# Eurasian Economic Union as the major integration undertaking in the post-Soviet space

**SUMMARY:** I. Current status II. Limitations and deficits of the EAEU development  
III. Macroeconomic results of integration IV. Prospects for Eurasian economic integration

## I. CURRENT STATUS

Five years have passed since the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015, and during this period the post-Soviet integration project has become a significant factor in the development of the entire Euro-Asian region.

Currently, the EAEU functions as a full-fledged integration Association with its supranational and interstate institutions. It has a fairly wide scope of supranational powers in the areas of trade policy, foreign trade, customs and technical regulation, antitrust control over cross-border transactions, functioning of the internal market, and a number of others. Within the framework of the EAEU, a supranational model of integration has been consistently implemented, which has so far been successfully realized only in the activities of the European Union.

By the time the EAEU was created in 2015, the Customs Union and the common customs territory of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan had been in operation for several years, common markets for goods and labor were launched, and macroeconomic, transport, energy, agro-industrial, migration and intellectual property policies entered into coordination stage. The formation of a common market for services started and by the end of 2019 covered 49 sectors, plus 14 more sectors will start operating in the common market mode in accordance with the liberalization plans until 2021.

In the period 2015-2019 progress continued in the main areas of integration, including in 2017 the updated customs code of the EAEU came into

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor and Head of Chair in the Russian Foreign Trade Academy

force with the spirit of the WTO Agreement on trade facilitation, the regime of the common market of goods extended to such sensitive areas as medicines and medical devices, and the main directions and Roadmap for the implementation of the digital agenda of the EAEU until 2025 were agreed.

The full implementation of the “four freedoms” and the principles of the Economic Union is expected by 2025, when it is planned to create a financial regulator of the EAEU and complete the formation of common markets – financial, for oil and oil products, gas, electricity, and transport services.

The membership of the EAEU, compared to the three participants of the Customs Union (Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan), which was formed in 2010 and became the predecessor of the EAEU, increased due to the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Until recently, the issue of further expansion of the EAEU was not actively discussed, but since mid-2019, it has returned to the agenda due to the interest shown by Uzbekistan (the fourth largest economy in the CIS, surpassing Belarus) in joining the EAEU. In 2018 the first observer country for the EAEU appeared, and it was Moldova.

The EAEU has consistently increased its activity in the international arena. In 2016 a free trade agreement with Vietnam entered into force, and in 2018-2019, an Agreement on trade and economic cooperation with China, a Temporary preferential agreement with Iran, and a free trade agreement with Singapore were signed. Negotiations are underway on a free trade zone with Egypt and Israel, and such negotiations have begun with India. In 2020 The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC, the permanent Executive body of the EAEU) will have to determine the directions for further work on concluding free trade agreements with foreign partners.

Dialogue is developing with international organizations and regional associations, including the WTO (four participants of the EAEU are members of the WTO, Belarus is actively negotiating to join this organization), the World customs organization, the OECD, the Shanghai cooperation organization, the CIS, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the Andean community, and the African Union.

An important result of 2019 was the beginning of a technical dialogue between the heads of divisions and experts of the EEC and the European Commission on trade issues, including customs regulation and administration, technical, sanitary and phytosanitary regulation, and certain aspects of trade policy.

In order to give additional impetus to Eurasian integration, a Declaration on the further development of integration processes within the EAEU was adopted at the EAEU summit in December 2018 (Saint Petersburg). The main emphasis of the Declaration – ensuring the maximum efficiency of the single market of the EAEU, the formation of “areas of innovation” and the

promotion of scientific breakthroughs, unlock the potential of integration for people, the development of the EAEU as one of the most important centers of the modern world, open to mutually beneficial and equal cooperation with external partners. In order to specify the provisions of the Declaration, work on Strategic directions for the development of the Eurasian economic integration until 2025 should be completed in 2020, and it may be necessary to expand the mandate and powers of the EAEU in certain areas, including innovation, social and humanitarian issues.

## **II. LIMITATIONS AND DEFICITS OF THE EAEU DEVELOPMENT**

Along with obvious achievements, there are still many problems in the Eurasian economic integration. This also applies to institutional issues of integration development and the economic results of the Eurasian integration project.

There is still a lack of supranationality in the activities of the EEC, where the supranational Executive body – the EEC Board and the interstate body – the EEC Council at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers of the member countries are united. The Eurasian bureaucracy in its pure form is not formed and operates with a constant eye to national governments. The decision-making mechanism is strongly consensus-oriented, all parties have an equal number of votes in the Board, and it is always possible to veto a decision. As a result, there is a situation of bargaining between the parties, pushing the interests of integration into the background. The EAEU court does not yet have sufficient authority to actually influence the course of integration and protect integration values.

Significant contradictions in the interests of the EAEU member States did not allow, as previously planned, to transfer control over the provision of state aid (subsidies) in industry and agriculture to the supranational level. It was only possible to adopt an Agreement on the procedure for voluntary co-ordination of specific subsidies for industrial goods by the EAEU countries with the EEC. Thus it turns out that violations of competition conditions by companies are regulated at the level of the EEC (antitrust control in cross-border markets), while the practice of subsidizing national businesses by governments is not.

A significant number of barriers, exemptions and restrictions remain on the way of functioning of common markets (according to the Eurasian development Bank, the ad valorem equivalent of non-tariff barriers in the domestic market at the time of creation of the EAEU reached 15% of the value of mutual commodity flows). The agreed list of consolidated barriers to the full operation of common markets as of the end of 2019 included about 70 items and covered almost all areas of regulation.

The main restrictions for the free movement of goods in the EAEU are currently associated with incomplete work on the harmonization and unification of technical regulations, as well as with the actions of the parties that violate the principles of the Customs Union. We are talking about varying and not yet agreed within the framework of the EAEU conditions for accession of its members to the WTO (primarily for Kazakhstan), counter-sanctions applied unilaterally by Russia against a wide range of imported goods from Western countries and Ukraine, the withdrawal of Russia and Ukraine from the free trade regime, the partial restoration of customs and other forms of control on the internal borders of the Union in response to inconsistency in trade policy and economic interests of the parties.

In the external circuit of the EAEU, problems remain with elaborating a common position on trade agreements with third countries, which is again due to differences in the economic interests of the parties and difficulties in coordinating the negotiation process. For agreements that cover not only trade in goods, as with Singapore, the principle of implied competence, once adopted in the EU, does not work, and the parties enter into a General agreement on goods, while for services separate bilateral agreements of each EAEU country with a foreign partner are discussed.

An important aspect of the Eurasian economic integration is that according to the nature of the economic effects of the implementation of the internal and external integration agenda, the EAEU members are divided into two groups. This division dictates the need to find strategic compromises between these groups on issues of internal and external liberalization.

On the one hand, calculations based on the General equilibrium model show that there is a serious asymmetry in the potential effects of deepening integration within the EAEU for different participants. Small countries of the Association – Armenia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan – are most interested in reducing (completely eliminating) non-tariff barriers within the EAEU. This is primarily due to the structure of trade of the EAEC with each other, a greater orientation Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan on the domestic market of the EAEU, and Russia and Kazakhstan – on foreign markets, a small proportion of trade turnover with the EAEU partners in the total foreign trade of Russia and Kazakhstan.

On the other hand, the calculations show an inverse asymmetry in the distribution of effects between the EAEU partners from integration with foreign countries by concluding free trade agreements with them. In this case, Russia and, to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan are the main winners, while small EAEU countries may even suffer losses due to their export structure and focus on the Russian market, which will become more competitive after the emergence of new categories of preferential suppliers.

Difficulties in the development of the Eurasian integration project are also related to a number of structural factors.

The EAEU is initially an economically highly unbalanced, geographically disunited Union with an extremely high concentration of business activity and trade flows in Russia. In the EAEU PPP GDP in 2019 Russia accounted for 85% (87% in the GDP at market prices), in total foreign trade turnover nearly – 80%; RF per capita GDP exceeded the similar indicators for new members – Armenia and Kyrgyzstan – almost 3 and more than 7 times, respectively.

Almost the entire volume of mutual trade in goods in the EAEU is formed with the participation of Russia – about 97% in 2019. The Mutual trade turnover of Belarus and Kazakhstan is only 1.3-1.4% of the internal trade of the EAEU. Armenia practically does not trade with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and has very small turnover with Belarus. The exchange of services is just as unbalanced as the trade in goods.

Economic problems faced by Russia in recent years, which led to the decline in business activity in the country, shrinking domestic demand, decreasing in resources for development, stimulated EAEU partners to search for new markets and sources of financing, strengthen multi-vector policy, but in general didn't lead to a reorientation of integration preferences from the Russian direction and to the significant weakening of economic ties with Russia. Many sources of development and income related to Russia are still non-alternative for the EAEU members. Similarly, for Russia, partners in the EAEU are important as sales markets for non-raw non-energy products, suppliers of labor, partners in international transit, etc.

Trade among the EAEU countries is much more diversified than with external partners. So, in 2018, Russian exports to Belarus covered 1121 4-digit commodity items, to Kazakhstan – 1114, Armenia – 880, while to Germany – 758, China – 652; Belarusian exports to Russia – 1031 commodity positions to Germany – 396; Armenian exports to Russia – 546 positions, to Germany – 113. Thus, despite the fact that the share of mutual trade in the total foreign trade turnover of the EAEU countries remains at a fairly low level – 12-14% in the 2010s, the quality of this trade is on average higher than exports to third countries.

As a result, from the economic point of view, the Eurasian integration project meets the needs of all its participants, and to a significant extent. Especially in view of the numerous challenges faced by the EAEU countries and the ambitious long-term strategies for their development that have been announced.

Significant trade imbalances in favor of Russia are a serious economic constraint on Eurasian integration and intraregional trade. With the Russian

Federation's share in mutual exports of the EAEU at 63% in 2019, its position in mutual imports is twice as weak – only 32%. Belarus, whose economy is about 4% of Russia's, has a significantly larger volume of intraregional imports than Russia (37% in 2019).

The total positive balance for Russia in trade with the EAEU increased to 18-19 billion dollars in 2018 -2019 (12 billion dollars in 2016), the trade imbalance ratio (the ratio of net balance to turnover) in favor of Russia was 32% in 2019 (with Kyrgyzstan – 66%, Kazakhstan – 143%, Armenia – 39%, Belarus – 23%). In other words, Russia has significant imbalances with each country.

The situation with trade imbalances is explained by large energy supplies (relative to the size of trade turnover) from the Russian Federation, a more powerful Russian export sector, but most importantly – by the prevailing low competitiveness and limited export supply from the EAEU partners, especially given the growing complexity and technological intensity of Russian imports. An increase in the capacity of the Russian market for products from the EAEU countries could be expected, other things being equal, if the EAEU implements a coordinated industrial policy aimed at creating complementary industries and new value chains, but this does not happen.

In general, in terms of the efforts taken by members of the Association for strengthening and modernization of industrial potential, innovative development of the economy, merchandise exports of each of the EAEU countries is not consistent with import demand patterns. This is illustrated by the index of commodity complementarity of regional trade, which has decreased for all EAEU countries without exception compared to the beginning of the 2010s. The massive import of finished industrial products, components, and technological equipment from outside the EAEU, primarily from China, the creation of joint (assembly) enterprises, and the building of cross-border production chains with foreign countries – all this accelerates the modernization and development of relevant domestic industries and sectors, but at the same time reduces the incentives for deepening integration and cooperation among the EAEU members.

### III. MACROECONOMIC RESULTS OF INTEGRATION

The macroeconomic results of the Eurasian economic integration are quite contradictory.

The share of the EAEU in global GDP by PPP decreased from an average of 4.1-4.2% in the first half of the 2010s to 3.6% in 2019, and their share in international trade also decreased. But at the same time, the positions of the EAEU countries in the international rankings of competitiveness, innovation, and business climate have increased.

There is some convergence in the levels of development of the EAEU countries. If in 2010 the ratio of the difference between the maximum and minimum GDP in PPP per capita to the average value was 1.48, in 2018 it was 1.40. In 2014-2018 Armenia's per capita GDP increased by 4.5 percentage points compared to the Russian indicator, and Kyrgyzstan's per capita GDP increased by 1 percentage point compared to Russia.

The criteria for macro-financial stability established in the EAEU (levels of public debt, budget deficit, and consumer inflation) have been poorly observed in recent years, but the situation has improved in 2018-2019. Thus, in 2015, there were 6 violations in 5 countries according to 3 criteria, in 2016 – 8, in 2017 – 5, in 2018 and 2019 – only 2 (Armenia and Kyrgyzstan exceeding the level of public debt).

As a positive development, it should be noted that in the period 2015-2019, the levels of consumer inflation in the EAEU countries have significantly converged, which was also facilitated by the countries' more responsible financial and economic policies. If in 2015-2016 three EAEU countries had consumer inflation indicators that were more than 5 percentage points higher than the minimum value for the Union States, in 2017-2019 none of the EAEU countries deviated by more than the set amount from the minimum value. The convergence of inflation indicators at relatively low levels increases the investment and business attractiveness of the Eurasian economic space and creates conditions for closer coordination of macroeconomic and financial policies.

An important issue is the assessment of the progress towards the full-scale common market. The latter is deemed to be mostly completed, but is needs quantified economic proof. From this view, the results are not obvious enough.

Analysis of changes in the structure of supply for the consumption in the internal market of the EAEU in the 2010s showed significant differences in supply trends by industry. However, at the level of two major economic sectors – agriculture and manufacturing – we can see a tendency, though very weak yet, for increasing importance of mutual trade against a reduction in the share of the component "supply of national products to national markets" and/or a decrease in the contribution of imports from third countries (in both cases the share of mutual trade increased by roughly 1 percentage point in 2019 to 2011)<sup>2</sup>. Most noticeable shifts in supply in favor of intra-regional trade can be seen in such manufacturing industries as wood processing. Improvement of the economic situation and expansion of domestic demand in the EAEU in 2018 in most processing industries and in the man-

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<sup>2</sup> Calculated by the author based on EEC data. Retrieved from: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr\\_i\\_makroec/dep\\_stat/tradestat/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr_i_makroec/dep_stat/tradestat/Pages/default.aspx)

ufacturing as a whole was not followed by the increase in the share of imports, which indicates the sustainability in the development of mutual trade and/or import substitution.

Another quantifiable, though of course only indirect, measure of the degree of progress towards the common market is the price level indices (PLIs) obtained as a partial from dividing purchasing power parities by market exchange rates. Eurostat publishes a price convergence indicator calculated as the coefficient of variation of the PLIs (the ratio of standard deviation to average value) for a group of countries, such as the EU-28 or the Eurozone. A number of experts also suggest the use of PLIs at fixed exchange rates (to exclude the impact of exchange rate volatility) and in relation to actual individual consumption, which gives a more complete and comparable picture of household consumption levels (Eurostat: Konijn, 2014).

The analysis on the basis of the PLIs, showing differences in price levels in the EAEU countries, reduced to the common currency, indicates the absence of price convergence for the GDP of the member States of the Union to date. Moreover, the divergence of price levels after the establishment of the EAEU has increased. However, the PLIs for GDP are not always indicative because of the sufficiently volatile PLIs for investment, exports and imports.

In the sphere of final consumption of households of the EAEU, the most significant component of national markets, in contrast to calculations for the entire GDP, after 2012, when the mechanisms of the Customs Union and single economic space, the CIS multilateral free trade area (important for Armenia and Kyrgyzstan) became operational, there was a noticeable and fairly steady decline in the coefficient of variation, which means a convergence of price levels between the countries. Although not everything is clear, as the ratio of the Russian and the EAEU partners PLIs in different periods varied in different directions, plus the PLIs of final consumption are not quite comparable, since, for example, in the EAEU countries the state participates differently in the provision of non-market services, such as health-care and education.

Thus, based on the dynamics of the PLIs, it is impossible to draw an unambiguous conclusion about the convergence of prices within the EAEU, especially about the influence of the integration factor on the convergence of prices, which, from the point of view of economic theory, should accompany the movement to the common market.

As noted, mutual trade of the EAEU countries is at a low level – 12-14%, which is less than in foreign associations with a comparable number of participants (NAFTA, ASEAN, Mercosur). Dynamics of the value of trade volumes is quite contradictory and depends on a large number of external

factors (the level of world commodity prices, the gravitational influence of the economies of China and the European Union, etc.). On a global scale, intraregional exports of the EAEU are very small – 0.3% of global exports. But, as also mentioned above, intraregional trade is mainly focused on higher-value products and is therefore very important for partners. The use of national currencies of the EAEU countries in settlements in mutual trade in goods and services has increased from 63-68% in 2013-2014 to 74-76% in 2016-2018 (98% of payments in national currencies are made in the Russian ruble).

#### **IV. PROSPECTS FOR EURASIAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

The prospects for the Eurasian integration project depend on a complex set of factors. Moreover, the development of the EAEU today is dominated by downside risks.

This is due to the low and very low economic dynamics predicted for the medium term in the bigger EAEU countries. Especially in Russia and Belarus. This will strongly hamper the development of the domestic market and may encourage various trade restrictions in favor of national producers and suppliers.

A difficult test for Eurasian economic integration is the tax maneuver implemented by Russia (transferring export duties on energy resources to internal taxation), which leads to an increase in fuel prices on the domestic market of the EAEU and will have an increasing negative effect on recipients of Russian energy subsidies, especially for Belarus. Russia also provides energy subsidies to Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, but it is Belarus that is most dependent on such subsidies: their absolute value was \$5.5 billion in 2018 (9,3% Belarussian GDP) and \$3.8 billion in 2019 (6.2%). Now Russia and Belarus are in search of a mutually acceptable compensatory arrangements in connection with the ongoing Russia's tax maneuver. Among other things, this task is aimed at developing a new "road map" for creating a full-fledged Economic Union of Russia and Belarus in the format of a Union State (a special privileged format of relations between the two countries), deepening cooperation in the areas of finance, tax regulation, and monetary policy.

Long-term risks for the EAEU are associated with the increasing influence of non-regional players (primarily China and the EU) on the economic processes in the Union, as well as the economic and political orientation of its participants.

A very difficult topic is the role and influence of China on the Eurasian economic integration. Chinese-style globalization and traditional regional integration are at least not compatible. In our opinion, the Chinese factor (of course, not only because of it) is slowing down integration processes around

the world. The EAEU is no exception. China already occupies a key position in the foreign trade of the EAEU States, especially in imports. In fact, through massive deliveries to the EAEU of the entire possible range of manufacturing products, China devalues, makes unnecessary (and more costly) the EAEU countries' own efforts to establish industrial cooperation, and reduces the potential and need for the development of intra-industry trade within the Union. Moreover, the financial conditions for Chinese supplies are the most favorable.

A serious external non-economic factor that, however, affects the economic prospects of the EAEU, is the sanctions confrontation between Russia and the West and the acute conflict situation in relations between Russia and Ukraine. This has led to the situation where de facto participants of the Association have formed different regimes of trade and economic cooperation with third countries, including the European Union.

What can positively affect the Eurasian integration project?

First, EAEU needs new drivers of integration, which, in our opinion, can be associated with reaching higher levels of cooperation in the digital, innovative and socio-humanitarian spheres, implementing large-scale joint projects in high-tech sectors and in the field of transport and logistics infrastructure.

Secondly, EAEU needs strategic decisions and political will to further develop integration. There are reserves for integration growth, including the implementation of the "integration breakthrough" scenario, which assumes a radical reduction and complete elimination of non-tariff barriers in the internal market of the Association. The scenario will allow, according to calculations based on the CGE-model, to almost double the volume of mutual trade within the EAEU.

Third, it is important to move more boldly from the model of regional economic integration implemented in the EAEU, preserving and developing it, to the concept of macro-regional integration in Eurasia, which involves the formation of a Bigger Eurasian partnership based on the principles of removing barriers to trade and investment and the convergence of regulatory systems. The likely beneficiaries of this partnership are the States of the EAEU and China, other CIS and SCO countries, individual APEC and ASEAN members, and in the future – the European Union.

The concept of the Bigger Eurasian partnership involves the intensification of foreign economic and trade policy of Russia and its partners in the EAEU in Eurasia and Asia Pacific with access to the complex of multi-level preferential and non-preferential trade and economic agreements with third countries and their associations targeted activities at sites of regional organizations and forums, intrablock dialogues and multilateral initiatives to promote the ideology and principles of the Partnership. In the framework of

macro-regional integration in Eurasia will be comfortable for all participants to resolve the issues of further development and deepening of economic co-operation in the Euro-Asian region, effectively mobilize the growth potential of trade and investment.



TATYANA FLEGONTOVA<sup>1</sup>

OLGA PONOMAREVA<sup>2\*\*</sup>

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TIMUR ALIEV<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

YULIANA LATYPOVA<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

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# EAEU trade policy towards third countries: priorities and mechanisms

**SUMMARY:** I. EAEU`s cooperation with the third countries II. EAEU Trade Policy Priorities III. Statistical analysis of EAEU`s external trade and investments IV. EAEU current RTAs umbrella V. The development of the Greater Eurasian Partnership VI. Bibliography

## I. EAEU`S COOPERATION WITH THE THIRD COUNTRIES

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)<sup>3</sup> is a regional undertaking that includes the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation. The EAEU replaces international agreements concluded previously within the Customs Union and Common Economic Space. The EAEU has an international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the EAEU. The Treaty on the EAEU within the framework of its capacities ensures the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor. In this regard, a Customs Union takes effect within EAEU Members. The Treaty on the EAEU ensures common trade policy in the economic sectors as specified therein in international agreements within the Union. The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has supranational regulatory body status. A number of issues related to in-

<sup>1</sup> Deputy Director of Institute for International Economics and Finance, Russian Foreign Trade Academy

<sup>2</sup> \*\*Researcher, Institute for International Economics and Finance, Russian Foreign Trade Academy

\*\*\* Senior researcher, Institute for International Economics and Finance, Russian Foreign Trade Academy

\*\*\*\* Researcher, Institute for International Economics and Finance, Russian Foreign Trade Academy

<sup>3</sup> Договор о Евразийском экономическом союзе // URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/420205962>

ternational trade have been submitted to the supranational level. The EAEU Member States' obligations provide for common trade policies in trade in goods with the third countries and coordination in trade in services. The decisions of the EEC are obligatory for execution in the territory of the EAEU Member States.

## **II. EAEU TRADE POLICY PRIORITIES**

Current trends in the development of world trade indicate an increase in the interdependence of most countries, which is manifested in the conclusion of numerous preferential trade agreements. Under these circumstances, the EAEU is working on new approaches to trade policy. As far as competition on the markets is growing, there is a need to increase the efficiency of the global supply and production chains, expand market access, attract finance and trade flows. Thus, at the current stage, EAEU and its Members have created a "proactive trade policy" and a roadmap for trade and economic cooperation.

As Veronika Nikishina, the Minister for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission stated<sup>4</sup>, the EAEU policy is aimed at creating not just a network of bilateral free trade areas, but its own trade blocks: systems consolidating several FTAs and other forms of trade agreements that will ensure the formation of a favorable long-term stable economic environment and regional sustainable development.

Veronika Nikishina also noted that the dialogue on the creation of FTAs is based on three main principles: the presence of export interest in accessing the markets, mutual investment interests and the creation of mutually beneficial partnership models.

In 2020, Mikhail Mishustin, the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, reiterated EAEU and its Members' willingness to facilitate trade negotiations with the key partners<sup>5</sup>. He also highlighted the importance of concluding the negotiations with Egypt and Israel, starting negotiations with India and facilitating economic ties with the countries, which have signed trade agreements with the EAEU, such as Viet Nam, Iran, Singapore, Serbia and China.

## **III. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF EAEU'S EXTERNAL TRADE AND INVESTMENTS**

### **EAEU FOREIGN TRADE WITH THIRD COUNTRIES**

EAEU trade with the third countries plays a more significant role than trade

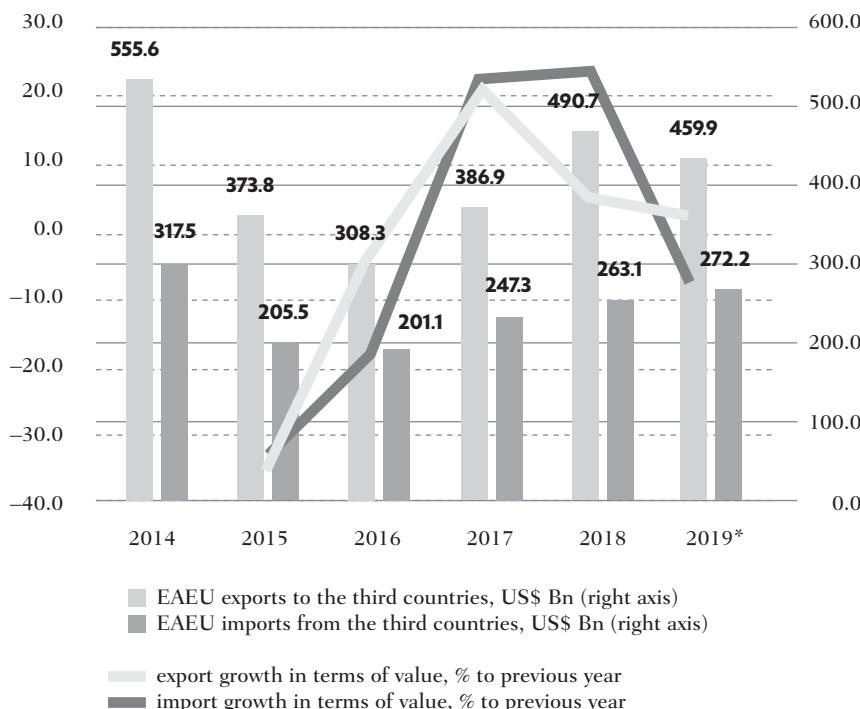
**4** ЕАЭС обновляет приоритеты торговой политики // URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/06-12-2016.aspx>

**5** Мишустин рассчитывает на сотрудничество ЕАЭС с Египтом, Израилем, Индией // URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/7655251>

within the region. The intraregional exports of EAEU accounted for only 11.7% of its total exports and the level of intraregional imports reached 18.1% in 2019.

In recent years EAEU external trade in goods is characterized by the following trends. In 2014-2016, the EAEU's flows of both exports and imports had been declining steadily. In 2017, EAEU exports to the third countries increased up to \$386.9 Bn, and at the end of 2018, it amounted to \$490.7 Bn. During this period, the volume of EAEU imports of goods from the third countries changed from \$317.5 to \$263.1 Bn. In January-November 2019, exports decreased by 6.3%, while imports increased by 3.4% in comparison with the same period of the previous year (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. EAEU TRADE IN GOODS WITH THE THIRD COUNTRIES IN 2014-2019



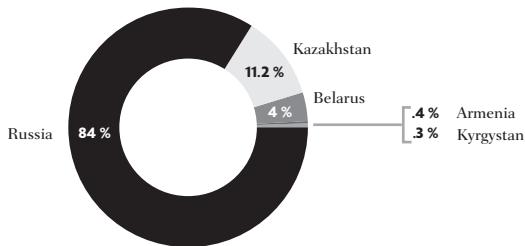
**NOTES:** \* – estimates based on January-November 2019 data.

**SOURCE:** EEC.

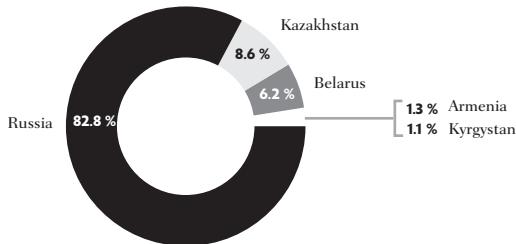
The share of the EAEU Member States in EAEU exports to the third countries was distributed as shown in Figure 2. Russia takes a large part of this export market (84.0%), followed by Kazakhstan (11.2%) and Belarus (4.0%). Armenia and Kyrgyzstan account for 0.4% and 0.3%, respectively.

**FIGURE 2. EAEU MEMBER STATES' SHARES IN THE EAEU EXPORTS OF GOODS TO THE THIRD COUNTRIES IN 2019**

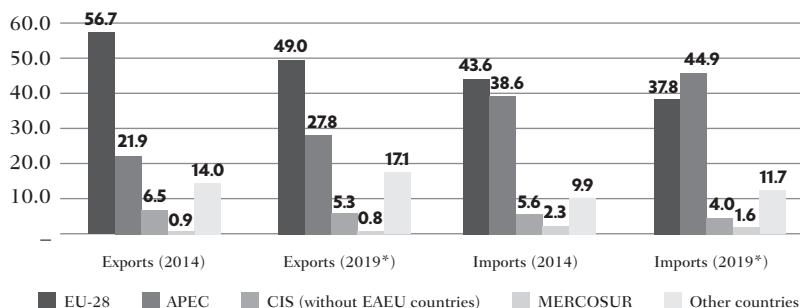
90

**NOTES:** \* – data for January-November 2019.**SOURCE:** EEC.

The share of the Republic of Armenia in the EAEU imports of goods from the third countries was 1.3% for the first 11 months of 2019, the Republic of Belarus accounted for 6.2%, the Republic of Kazakhstan – 8.6%, the Kyrgyz Republic – 1.1%, the Russian Federation – 82.8% (see Figure 3 ).

**FIGURE 3. EAEU MEMBER STATES' SHARES IN EAEU IMPORTS OF GOODS FROM THE THIRD COUNTRIES IN 2019****NOTES:** \* – data for January-November 2019.**SOURCE:** EEC.

Recently, the EU has been the EAEU's most important trading partner, with about half of EAEU exports to the third countries and 38% of EAEU imports from the third countries. At the same time, the importance of the Eastern market for EAEU companies has increased significantly. Thus, in 2014-2019, the share of the European Union countries in the EAEU external exports decreased by 7.7 p.p. and in imports from the third countries by 5.8 p.p., while the share of APEC economies increased from 21.9% to 27.8% and from 38.6% to 44.9%. The CIS countries (except for the EAEU Member States) changed their share in EAEU external exports of goods from 6.5% to 5.3% and in EAEU external imports from 5.6% to 4.0%, MERCOSUR countries – from 0.9% to 0.8% and from 2.3% to 1.6%, other regions – from 14.0% to 17.1% and from 9.9% to 11.7%, respectively (see Figure 4 ).

**FIGURE 4. CHANGES IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL STRUCTURE OF THE EAEU EXTERNAL TRADE IN GOODS IN 2014-2019**

**NOTES:** \* – data for January-November 2019.

**SOURCE:** EEC.

In the structure of EAEU external exports of goods, the main part of deliveries accounts for mineral products (66.3% of the total value of EAEU exports to the third countries in 2019), including products of fuel and energy complex (64.7%). Major export commodity groups also include metals and their products (8.9%), chemical industry products (5.8%), agricultural foods-tuffs and raw materials (5.4%), machinery, equipment and vehicles (3.3%), wood and paper products (2.8%) (see Table 1 ).

**TABLE 1. THE PRODUCT STRUCTURE OF THE EAEU EXTERNAL EXPORTS IN 2019**

HS CODES	PRODUCT GROUP	EAEU	ARMENIA	BELARUS	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	RUSSIA
10-24	Food products and agricultural raw materials (except textile)	5,4	19,2	4,4	5,1	9,3	5,4
25-27	Mineral products	66,3	38,5	37,6	76,8	13,1	66,6
27	Fuel and energy products	64,7	3,6	37,1	73,4	8,4	65,4
28-40	Chemicals, rubber	5,8	1,0	23,4	3,6	1,5	5,3
41-43	Leather, fur	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,4	0,0
44-49	Wood and paper products	2,8	0,1	7,1	0,1	0,3	3,0
50-67	Textiles, textile products and footwear	0,2	4,4	2,1	0,2	2,1	0,1
72-83	Metals and products from them	8,9	13,8	7,5	12,1	4,3	8,5
84-87, 90	Machinery, equipment and vehicles	3,3	3,6	7,8	0,6	3,5	3,4
	Other products	7,2	19,3	10,0	1,5	65,6	7,5

**NOTES:** \* – data for January-November 2019.

**SOURCE:** EEC.

As for the structure of imports, EAEU basically imports machinery, equipment and vehicles (44,3%), chemicals and rubber (19,3%), food products and agricultural raw materials except textile (11,0%), metals and products from them (7,1%), textiles, textile products and footwear (6,6%) from the third countries (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. THE PRODUCT STRUCTURE OF THE EAEU EXTERNAL IMPORTS IN 2019

HS CODES	PRODUCT GROUP	EAEU	ARMENIA	BELARUS	KAZAKHSTAN	KYRGYZSTAN	RUSSIA
10-24	Food products and agricultural raw materials (except textile)	11,0	14,6	17,9	7,5	7,4	10,8
25-27	Mineral products	1,3	6,5	1,0	2,0	1,2	1,2
27	Fuel and energy products	0,7	5,2	0,5	1,1	1,0	0,6
28-40	Chemicals, rubber	19,3	14,3	17,5	13,9	14,6	20,2
41-43	Leather, fur	0,5	0,6	0,4	0,3	1,2	0,5
44-49	Wood and paper products	1,5	2,8	2,2	1,1	1,6	1,5
50-67	Textiles, textile products and footwear	6,6	9,2	8,8	5,3	29,6	6,2
72-83	Metals and products from them	7,1	5,3	7,4	9,8	7,4	6,8
84-87, 90	Machinery, equipment and vehicles	44,3	36,6	36,1	53,4	31,5	44,2
	Other products	8,4	10,0	8,6	6,6	5,5	8,6

**NOTES:** \* – data for January-November 2019.

**SOURCE:** EEC.

## INVESTMENT COOPERATION OF THE EAEU MEMBER STATES WITH THE THIRD COUNTRIES

At the beginning of 2019, the value of accumulated FDI received by Belarus from the third countries and sent from Belarus to the third countries was estimated at \$9.0 Bn and \$0.24 Bn. They accounted for 68.7% and 16.9% of the total FDI stock of Belarus.

As of October 1, 2019, the share of the third countries in Kazakhstan's FDI inward and outward stocks reached 96.6% and 91.9% (in absolute values – \$155.3 Bn and \$25.2 Bn). The Russian Federation has accumulated \$531 Bn of FDI from the third countries (99% of total Russia's FDI inward stock), while the value of Russian direct investments to the third countries has reached about \$463 Bn or 98% of total Russia's accumulated outward FDI (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3 INVESTMENT COOPERATION OF BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIA WITH THE THIRD COUNTRIES**

INDICATOR	FDI INWARD STOCK, \$ BN	INDICATOR	FDI OUTWARD STOCK, \$ BN
To Belarus, in total	13,1	From Belarus, in total	1,4
Including from the third countries	9,0	Including to the third countries	0,24
Share, %	68,7	Share, %	16,9
To Kazakhstan, in total	160,8	From Kazakhstan, in total	27,4
Including from the third countries	155,3	Including to the third countries	25,2
Share, %	96,6	Share, %	91,9
To Russia, in total	536,8	From Russia, in total	472,2
Including from the third countries	531,4	Including to the third countries	462,8
Share, %	99,0	Share, %	98,0

**NOTES:** Data for Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are not available; data for Belarus – as of 01.01.2019, for Kazakhstan and Russia – as of 01.10.2019.

**SOURCES:** National Bank of the Republic of Belarus; National Bank of Kazakhstan; Bank of Russia.

#### IV. EAEU CURRENT RTAS UMBRELLA

##### EAEU - VIET NAM

The Free Trade Agreement between the EAEU, its Member States and Vietnam has been signed on May 8<sup>6</sup>, 2015, and entered into force on October 5, 2016. It has become the first FTA, which EAEU as a single body has become a part of. Parties' tariff liberalization obligations within the Agreement covered almost 88% of the mutual trade in goods (the details are highlighted in Table 4 below). At the same time, 12% of the trade turnover between the EAEU and Vietnam is subject to exemptions according to the provisions of the Agreement. EAEU exemptions list includes mainly sensitive product groups, such as meat products, tea, coffee, sugar, motor vehicles, clothing, steel pipes, etc.

**TABLE 4 EAEU PRIORITY PRODUCT GROUPS' TARIFF CHANGES ON THE MARKET OF VIET NAM.**

PRODUCT GROUP	TARIFF RATE		TRANSITION PERIOD
	2015	WITHIN FTA	
Milk and dairy products	3-15%	0%	-
Poultry	20-40%	0%	5 years
Meat products	22-35%	0%	3 years

**6** Соглашение о свободной торговле с Вьетнамом // URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/Pages/%d0%a1%d0%be%d0%b3%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%8f-%d0%be-%d1%81%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b9-%d1%82%d0%be%d1%-80%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%bb%d0%b5-%d1%81-%d0%92%d1%8c%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%be%d0%bc.aspx>

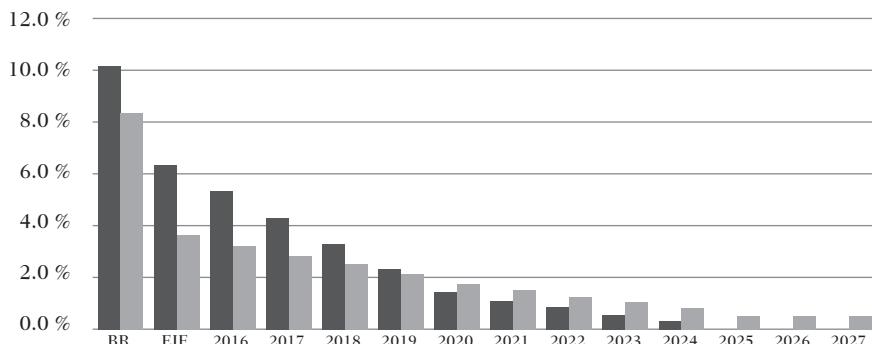
Wheat and meslin	5%	0%	-
Canned fruits and nuts	18-40%	0%	5-10 years
Flax seeds	10%	0%	-
Rape and colza seeds	5%	0%	5 years
Molasses	10%	0%	-
Beverages	10%	0%	10 years
Potash fertilizers	6%	0%	-
Petrol	19%	0%	12 years (up to 2027)
Tires	5-30%	0%	5 years
Trucks	17%	0%	10 years
Buses	30-40%	0%	10 years
Cars	50-70%	0%	10 years
Fishing vessels, floating bases	5%	0%	-

SOURCE: EEC.

The average import tariff rates in the mutual trade between the EAEU and Vietnam will gradually decrease from 10% in Vietnam and 8% in EAEU and will be eliminated until 2027. According to Vietnam's commitments, the average tariff rates for agricultural products will be reduced from 16.0% to 0.2% at the end of transition periods for industrial goods from 8.9% to 0%. In turn, the EAEU Member countries will reduce the average rate of import customs duties for agricultural products from 9.9% to 0.4% for industrial goods - from 8% to 0.5%, respectively.

Despite the fact that the EAEU-Viet Nam Agreement is the first FTA for the EAEU, some provisions of the Agreement cover trade rules beyond tariff regulation. Thus, there are particular commitments in such areas as intellec-

FIGURE 5 TARIFF REDUCTION SCHEDULE WITHIN EAEU-VIET NAM FTA



NOTE: Note: BR – base rate, EIF – entry into force. The blue bar – Viet Nam, the red bar – EAEU.

SOURCE: EEC.

tual property rights protection, sustainable development, electronic commerce, government procurement, competition, transparency. Besides, Russia and Viet Nam signed a bilateral trade agreement on services and investment.

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### EAEU – IRAN

Interim Agreement leading to the formation of a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, of the other part, has been signed on May 17, 2018, and a year after entered into force (on October 27, 2019)<sup>7</sup>. At the current stage, Agreement doesn't cover substantially all the trade, as GATT Art. XXIV (Exceptions to the Rule of Non-discrimination) requires in case of FTAs, but around 50% of the mutual trade between the Parties. Iran's tariff liberalization measures cover about \$ 1 Bn and include meat and fat products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, mineral water, grains, tobacco, metals, cosmetics, timber, certain types of electronic and mechanical equipment. Iran will be provided with tariff preferences for many kinds of food products, including vegetables, fruits, dried fruits, as well as building materials, utensils, carpets and some non-ferrous metal products. It's important to note, that as far as Iran's legislation requires limitation on the minimum permissible import tariff of 4%, Parties agreed on tariff discounts instead of tariff elimination. Besides, it was negotiated, that if Iran reduces its import tariff rate, then the goods from the EAEU will be granted with the reduced duty accordingly.

In addition to tariff reduction, the Agreement implies the Parties' trade policies compliance with the fundamental principles of the World Trade Organization. As far as Iran and Belarus are not WTO members yet, the transition period for a number of provisions has been granted. The Agreement does not include provisions on public procurement, sustainable development, e-commerce, intellectual property, but there are provisions on freedom of transit.

Interim Agreement will function for three years after entering into force; afterward Parties should conclude a comprehensive free trade agreement.

### EAEU - SINGAPORE

On 1 October 2019, the EAEU and its Member States, from one side, and Singapore, from the other side, signed a regional trade agreement (the EAEU–Singapore Agreement) in Yerevan<sup>8</sup>. This Agreement is a document

<sup>7</sup> Interim Agreement leading to formation of a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, of the other part // URL: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl\\_torg/Documents/Interim%20Agreement%20EAEU-Iran\\_final.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl_torg/Documents/Interim%20Agreement%20EAEU-Iran_final.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Соглашение о свободной торговле с республикой Сингапур // URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/>

package providing for the creation of a Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and a number of agreements, which imply measures to open the markets.

Singapore, the EAEU, and its Member States signed an Agreement on the creation of a free trade area (FTA) for trade in goods. The agreements on trade in services and investment (to date, only Singapore and Armenia have finalised negotiations<sup>9</sup>) will be agreed on a bilateral basis.

The major share (92.6% in 2018) of the EAEU's exports of goods to Singapore is accounted for three product groups: 271019 "Other distillates and products", 270900 "Crude oil and crude oil products from bituminous minerals", and 271012 "Light distillates and products." As of the date of the Agreement with the EAEU, Singapore set zero import tariffs for all WTO members on MFN basis, with the only exception for alcohol and tobacco. According to the available information, the Republic of Belarus that is currently in the process of accession to the WTO and Singapore had a bilateral MFN agreement<sup>10</sup>.

**TABLE 5. TOP-10 PRODUCT GROUPS OF THE EAEU'S IMPORTS FROM SINGAPORE IN 2018  
(AT HS 6-DIGIT LEVEL)**

HS CODE	PRODUCT GROUP	EAEU'S TOTAL IMPORTS FROM SINGAPORE, \$ MN	SHARE, % OF THE TOTAL	CURRENT TARIFF	BINDING LEVEL
	All goods	945.7	100.0		
'890590	Other lightships, fire-fighting ships, dredgers, pontoon cranes, and other vessels whose navigation properties are secondary to their primary purpose	266.3	28.2	10	Import tariffs to be eliminated within 6–7 years
'271111	Liquefied natural gas	49.0	5.2	5	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force

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ru/act/trade/dotp/Pages/%d0%a1%d0%be%d0%b3%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5-%d1%81-%d0%a1%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b3%d0%b0%d0%bf%d1%83%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bc.aspx

**9** Armenia - Singapore Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment // URL: <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/international-investment-agreements/treaties/treaties-with-investment-provisions/4906/armenia---singapore-agreement-on-trade-in-services-and-investment-2019-.aspx>

**10** Republic of Belarus list of MFN agreements // URL: <http://pravo.newsby.org/belarus/postanovsm13/sovm232.htm>

'852691	Radio navigational devices	41.2	4.4	5	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force
'847350	Parts and accessories equally intended for machines assigned to two or more commodity items 8469–8472	33.3	3.5	0	—
'847170	Memory devices	28.6	3.0	0	—
'271012	Light distillates and products	24.0	2.5	5	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force
'300490	Other pharmaceuticals	21.3	2.3	Within 5–3%	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force
'180400	Cocoa oil, cocoa fat	17.2	1.8	5	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force
'390230	Propylene copolymers	15.8	1.7	Exceptions	Exceptions
'321590	Printing ink, writing or painting ink, and other types of ink, concentrated or non-concentrated, solid or non-solid	15.3	1.6	5	Import tariffs to be eliminated after the Agreement comes into force
	Other goods	433.6	45.9		

**SOURCE:** compiled based on ITC Trade Map data.

As for the imports from Singapore, top-10 product groups account for more than half of the EAEU's imports from this country. Import tariffs will be eliminated for most of them immediately after the Agreement comes into force, and yet there are exceptions (see the table above).

Considering a relatively low average level of the Common Customs Tariff set by the EAEU for the WTO Member States (in the case of Russia, it is 6.8%) and almost no tariff barriers in Singapore, the reduction of tariffs will have no significant effect. On the other hand, in terms of non-tariff regulation, certain provisions of the EAEU–Singapore Agreement may be considered as quite progressive.

Similar to other FTAs, the obligations between Singapore and the EAEU are based on WTO standards. Nevertheless, the Agreement contains WTO+

and WTO–X provisions that go beyond countries' WTO obligations. The latter specifically includes:

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- Obligations which prohibit the practice of zeroing<sup>11</sup> and rule out the possibility of using “the surrogate country” methodology for anti-dumping measures<sup>12</sup>;
  - Obligations in the area of trade facilitation (including the provisions on mutual recognition of authorised economic operators, express shipment measures);
  - Framework provisions on the mutual recognition of standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures;
  - Provisions on mutual protection of geographical indications and appellations of origin of goods;
  - Provisions on the transfer of innovative technologies;
  - E-commerce chapter includes the provisions on personal data protection, consumer protection, electronic signatures recognition;
  - Arrangements on the potential launch of negotiations on government procurement markets access (similar provisions have been incorporated into the EAEU–Vietnam FTA);
  - Provisions on environmental protection, in particular, on corporate social responsibility and transition to a low-carbon economy;
  - Provisions on the possibility to amend the FTA obligations in case of changes in WTO standards.

#### EAEU – SERBIA

On 25 October 2019, the EAEU, together with its Member States and the Republic of Serbia signed a free trade agreement (the EAEU-Serbia FTA)<sup>13</sup>. Unlike FTAs of the EAEU with Vietnam, Iran and Singapore, the EAEU-Serbia FTA was not drafted from scratch; instead, it was based on three bilateral preferential agreements between Serbia and Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The EAEU–Serbia FTA was viewed as a tool to harmonise the existing trade regimes that were not duly coordinated. The new Agreement creates a single FTA with common trade rules and expands the territorial scope of the EAEU-Serbia cooperation as Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are new to join economic integration with Serbia.

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**11** The dumping margin is normally calculated by establishing the average difference between the export and domestic prices for the relevant product group. However, in some cases, countries use the practice of zeroing by ignoring the differences between the prices when the export price is higher than the domestic one. Critics claim that this practice artificially inflates the dumping.

**12** This issue is analysed below.

**13** Free trade agreement between the EAEU and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part // URL: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl\\_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b1%d0%b8%d1%8f/Agreement.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b1%d0%b8%d1%8f/Agreement.pdf)

The EAEU-Serbia FTA is not as deep as the EAEU–Vietnam and EAEU–Singapore FTAs, as it hardly goes beyond trade in goods and similar rules of GATT-94. In case of inconsistency between the provisions of the EAEU-Serbia FTA and the provisions of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO, the latter shall prevail to the extent of the divergence, although Serbia has not joined the WTO yet.

The fact that the EAEU-Serbia FTA focuses solely on trade in goods does not fully correspond to its preamble goals, stipulating that the parties are eager to create a framework both for a free flow of goods and capital. Besides, the objectives of the EAEU-Serbia FTA include the achievement of financial stability in the signatory states. Nevertheless, the parties' intentions in respect of financial and investment integration remained unfulfilled in the Agreement.

At least one obligation under the EAEU-Serbia Agreement goes beyond traditional coverage of GATT-94 (the same rule is incorporated in the EAEU-Singapore FTA). In the course of anti-dumping investigation, the parties shall abstain from:

- Using the “surrogate country” methodology for the calculation of the normal value;
- Adjusting the normal value due to the specific characteristics of the internal market of the exporting country, which makes it possible for the competent authorities to claim that the exporter has a particular market situation or fails to reasonably reflect the SGA costs.

The prohibition of the “surrogate country” methodology has been equally incorporated into China's FTAs with Georgia and South Korea. This approach will obviously benefit Russian exporters that have been repeatedly accused of dumping due to non-market pricing in the Russian energy market, which entailed adjustment of the goods' normal value and, consequently, a higher dumping margin and a higher anti-dumping duty.

At the same time, we should not disregard Serbia's plans to deepen its integration with the European Union: in 2009 Serbia applied for the EU membership, in 2012 it officially acquired the status of a candidate state, and in 2014 it embarked on the accession negotiations with the EU. If Serbia eventually accedes to the EU, it will have to terminate the EAEU-Serbia FTA for the sake of the EU common<sup>14</sup> commercial policy<sup>15</sup>, and thus put an

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**14** Consolidated Version of The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union // URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A12012E%2FTXT>

**15** Thus, the Protocol of Accession of Croatia to the EU as the 28th member state provided for Croatia's withdrawal from the existing free trade agreements with third countries, including from the 2006 Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) that included 6 South-East European states (Balkan countries): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo.

end to the duty-free entrance of the EAEU's exports. Still, there are chances that the denunciation of the EAEU-Serbia FTA will entail compensation for the termination of the free trade regime payable by Serbia and the EU<sup>16</sup>.

#### EAEU – CHINA

At the current stage, there is no preferential agreement between the EAEU and China, but the non-preferential framework Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation has been concluded recently<sup>17</sup>. Negotiations on the Agreement lasted less than two years and ended on October 1, 2017. The Agreement was signed in May 2018 and entered into force on October 25, 2019. Despite the absence of the provisions on market access and tariff reduction, provisions on a wide range of issues, including mutual recognition arrangements and coordinated regulation, have been incorporated into the Agreement. These measures are aimed to increase efficiency and simplify mutual cooperation between the EAEU and China. In particular, the cooperation Agreement implies:

- Trade facilitation measures (for example, providing the possibility of electronic declaration, release of goods within the shortest possible time);
- Transparency mechanisms and mutual recognition of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures;
- Intellectual property rights protection (including those in the digital environment);
- Incentives to regulate electronic commerce (including through the use and mutual recognition of electronic authentication methods, the use of electronic documents, consumer rights and personal data protection, increasing transparency);
- Cooperation in the field of public procurement (including measures aimed to ensure access to information).

Besides, according to the Agreement provisions, the basic WTO principles of non-discrimination (national clause and most-favored-nation clause) are extended to Belarus, which at the moment has not joined the WTO yet.

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<sup>16</sup> Соглашение о свободной торговле: какие возможности появятся у Сербии и ЕАЭС? // URL: <https://mir24.tv/news/16385182/soglashenie-o-svobodnoi-torgovle-kakie-vozmozhnosti-poyavyatsya-u-serbii-i-eaes>

<sup>17</sup> Agreement on economic and trade cooperation between the EAEU and its Member States, of the one part, and the people's republic of china, of the other part // URL: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl\\_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%be%d0%b3%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5%20%d1%81%20%d0%9a%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b0%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%a2%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81%d-1%82%20%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b3%d0%b8%d0%b9%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b9%20%28EAEU%20alternate%29%20final.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%be%d0%b3%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%88%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5%20%d1%81%20%d0%9a%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b0%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%a2%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81%d-1%82%20%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b3%d0%b8%d0%b9%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%b9%20%28EAEU%20alternate%29%20final.pdf)

## V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREATER EURASIAN PARTNERSHIP

One of the main regional integration projects Russia is developing nowadays is the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP). The concept of the GEP was formulated as the initiative for further, more advanced development of regional economic integration in Eurasia. For the first time, the idea of a large-scale Eurasian partnership aimed at the intensification of interregional cooperation activities and building the basis for greater regulatory, economic and infrastructure connectivity was proposed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2015. He pointed out the potential advantages of GEP for the Russian economy and trade, in particular, stressing the importance of enhancing Russian export flows to Asia-Pacific countries and making the full use of Russia's geographical position<sup>18</sup>. Besides, there is strategic and economic rationale for creating GEP for the whole region that stems from the existence of numerous different and sometimes overlapping cooperation formats on the Eurasian continent that include regional economic blocks, regional preferential and non-preferential trade agreements, customs unions, partnerships, national, regional and interregional economic development strategies, international organizations activities, etc. On the one hand, the complexity and multimodality of international relations in Eurasia reflect the huge variety of economies with extreme differences in economic development and political strategies and "gravities". Thus, there is a growing necessity to advance the practicability of all these forms of economic and regulatory collaboration, serving the real needs of business and civil society. One of the key issues in developing GEP is to take into account all current cooperation formats mentioned above and diverging economic and political interests in the region and build a single clearly-defined system of international agreements.

There are a number of regional initiatives and trade partners that can be associated with the GEP framework. Key cooperation formats that combine potential participants of GEP in Eurasian region are presented below (see Table 6). The initiatives listed in the table differ from each other not only in membership but in institutional frameworks and cooperation goals as well. They are developing in three main fields: trade and economy (EAEU and RTAs), international security and politics (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), investments and infrastructure (One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR)), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Greater Tumangan Initiative (GTI)).

Nowadays Eurasian Economic Union of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia is in the center of Russia's regional economic integra-

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<sup>18</sup> Письмо Президента Федеральному Собранию, December 3, 2015. // URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50864>

tion agenda. Therefore, the EAEU is considered as the core element for the development of GEP.

**102** Besides the EAEU's FTAs that are in force or concluded (see section IV above) and those that are being negotiated, as well as the CIS free trade area represent a unique platform for expansion of trade liberalization in Eurasia. Some CIS countries, Uzbekistan in particular, are now considering joining the EAEU.

As for SCO, it is worth mentioning that nowadays its agenda covers not only security concerns but trade and economic issues as well. In 2018 SCO Leaders signed the Qingdao Declaration that contained provisions supporting multilateral trading system, open, inclusive and transparent economic regulation, development of trade, investment and financial cooperation among SCO member states and in Eurasia as a whole, intensification of the dialogue with the business community. In 2019 SCO Leaders' Declaration also covered cooperation on trade and economic track with the emphasis, among others, on transport, energy, agriculture, innovation spheres and with special attention attributed to the transfer to national currencies in mutual financial transactions and settlements<sup>19</sup>. Further expansion of economic cooperation within the SCO may lead to potential convergence of the SCO members' positions on global and regional trade issues. As a result, SCO may extend the boundaries and prospects of GEP. However, it is associated with serious limits that arise from existing economic controversies between some SCO members, China and India in particular.

**TABLE 6 - POTENTIAL GEP PARTICIPANTS' MEMBERSHIP IN INTEGRATION AND OTHER COOPERATION INITIATIVES IN EURASIA**

	EAEU	EAEU FTA PARTNERS	CIS FTA	SCO	SCO OBSERVERS AND PARTNERS	RTI	ASEAN	RCEP
ARMENIA								
BELARUS								
KAZAKHSTAN								
KYRGYZSTAN								
RUSSIA								
TAJIKISTAN								
UZBEKISTAN								
CHINA						FTA		
INDIA						FTA	**	
PAKISTAN								
TURKMENISTAN								

**19** PRESS RELEASE on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Heads of State Council Meeting (Bishkek, 13-14 June 2019). // URL: <http://eng.sectsco.org/news/20190614/550955.html>

SERBIA							
MOLDOVA	Observer						
UKRAINE			*				
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF						FTA	
MONGOLIA							
IRAN		Temporary					
AFGHANISTAN							
AZERBAIJAN							
VIETNAM							
SINGAPORE							
CAMBODIA							
NEPAL							
TURKEY							
SRI-LANKA							
ISRAEL		Negotiations					
EGYPT		Negotiations					

**NOTES:** \* The current status of Ukraine in CIS is in question. From January 1, 2016, Russia terminated the provisions of FTA concessions to Ukraine. \*\* In November 2019 India has decided to leave RCEP negotiations.

**SOURCE:** authors' representation.

Potential GEP membership creates the basis for inter-bloc and bilateral cooperation between EAEU and ASEAN. Whereas EAEU and ASEAN are now engaged in developing and intensifying the work on special cooperation mechanisms (such as EAEU-ASEAN Business Dialogue) and looking for the ways to advance trade and investment ties, other countries in the region – China, India, Republic of Korea – have already become the key trading partners for ASEAN with corresponding FTAs in force. Moreover, ASEAN FTAs comprise the basis for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations that are expected to be finished in 2020<sup>20</sup>. As was mentioned before the EAEU has already concluded two FTAs with ASEAN economies (Vietnam and Singapore). Therefore, ASEAN may also be viewed as one of the vectors for GEP development.

The key and the most significant cooperation vector for EAEU in the external Eurasian space lies in building mutually beneficial partnership with China. The EAEU-China Agreement can be perceived as the initial step on the way to create comprehensive GEP. This format represents the potential

**20** Huge Asia Pacific trade deal is set to be signed in 2020, Thailand says. // URL: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/04/rcep-asia-pacific-trade-deal-to-be-signed-in-2020-thailand-says.html>

future broad institutional framework for GEP, places the EAEU in the center of main integration initiatives in Eurasia and reflects the necessity to address the discrepancies in interests between different countries in the region. Yet, such a non-preferential agreement lacks the commitments and instruments that could create substantial favorable conditions enough to increase trade and investment and to develop industrial cooperation between member countries.

At present, it is rather difficult to discuss deeper commitments between EAEU and China than those that had already been incorporated in the EAEU-China Agreement. Nevertheless, it is crucial to ensure the regulatory basis of cooperation that would enable the successful implementation of joint investment and infrastructure projects. In terms of trade liberalization, the agreement on free trade in goods with China is a very sensitive and challenging step for all EAEU members. Still, in the context of services and investment liberalization Russia sees the potential in negotiating a bilateral trade deal with China that would have no supranational restraints as these spheres lie outside the EAEU competences. Additionally, liberalization in services and investment spheres may play a significant role in successful infrastructure cooperation.

In 2017-2018 Russia and China conducted the joint feasibility study on the prospects of negotiating Eurasian Economic Partnership (EEP) – a bilateral deal on trade in services and investment<sup>21</sup>. According to the results of the feasibility study, bilateral negotiations should also cover the movement of natural persons, electronic commerce, competition, transparency, energy safety and energy security, economic and technical cooperation, small and medium-sized enterprises, government procurement, institutional arrangements. As for the main restrictions in Russian and Chinese services sectors, there are limitations on commercial presence (mode 3) and movement of natural persons (mode 4). That is why these aspects could be addressed first of all within the potential EEP. In terms of investment liberalization, China has undertaken important unilateral initiatives. In particular, on January 1, 2020, new foreign investment law has entered into force that has granted national treatment to foreign investors and formulated market access commitments using a negative list<sup>22</sup>. Such positive steps could lead to the inclusion of rather high-quality provisions on investment in potential EEP.

Some areas, mentioned above, had already been included in the EAEU-China Agreement (e-commerce, competition, government procure-

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**21** China and Russia Sign the Joint Declaration of the Joint Feasible Studies on Completing Eurasian Economic Partnership Agreement, June 9, 2018. // URL: <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/newsrelease/significantnews/201806/20180602754961.shtml>

**22** Foreign Investment Law of the People's Republic of China. March, 15 2019. // URL: [http://www.fdi.gov.cn/1800000121\\_39\\_4872\\_0\\_7.html](http://www.fdi.gov.cn/1800000121_39_4872_0_7.html)

ment, transparency), therefore it is reasonable to pay more attention to new spheres or those aspects that imply higher degree of practicability in bilateral cooperation. For instance, the following potential additional themes may be negotiated and agreed upon:

- E-commerce: mutual recognition of digital signatures, elimination of language barriers, requirements to the regulation concerning personal data protection and consumer protection in e-commerce.
- Transparency and SMEs: electronic informational and communicational resources for the business community, especially for SMEs, that would help to facilitate SME's cooperation and their participation in regional GVCs.
- Movement of natural persons: measures to promote cross-border business trips, movements of skilled workers, services suppliers, etc. that represent an essential incentive for business to develop cross-border ties.
- Energy: one of the key trade and cooperation areas for Russia and a number of other Eurasian economies that should develop in line with existing (and potentially agreed) international trade and investment rules.

It is important to take into account that such an agreement may become a model for Russia's bilateral deals and commitments within GEP expansion. It is noteworthy that Russia is negotiating an analogous bilateral agreement on trade in services and investment issues with the Republic of Korea<sup>23</sup>. Nevertheless, due to the bilateral nature of the potential EEP agreement, it is not the most appropriate base for GEP. Negotiating more comprehensive commitments is required for further expansion of trade and investment cooperation between Russia and China. Still, it should rather be one of the fundamental vectors of GEP implementation than the model agreement. With regard to everything mentioned above, the conceptual scheme of GEP may entail the functioning of until two-tier and multi-format system of agreements (see Table 7).

The structure of GEP presented below incorporates agreements that are in force and the potential ones. GEP agreement should be formed as a non-preferential, open and flexible agreement that welcomes every country willing to join it. The provisions of the EAEU-China Agreement may become the core elements of non-preferential single GEP agreement with some extensions justified by orientation on a more wide pool of participants (CIS, SCO members, Middle East, ASEAN, other Asia-Pacific economies). One of the key fundamental provisions of GEP should be the commitment to WTO rules and principles.

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<sup>23</sup> Seoul, Moscow to hold 3rd round of FTA talks on service sector. // URL: <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200114001300320>

TABLE 7 SYSTEM OF AGREEMENTS UNDER GEP

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Non-preferential GEP Agreement		
<b>POTENTIAL PROVISIONS:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual property rights protection.</li> <li>• Electronic commerce.</li> <li>• Competition.</li> <li>• Trade facilitation.</li> <li>• Government procurement.</li> <li>• Transparency.</li> <li>• Domestic regulation in the services sector.</li> <li>• Small and medium-sized enterprises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy efficiency.</li> <li>• Environmental protection.</li> <li>• Labour standards.</li> <li>• Movement of natural persons.</li> <li>• Infrastructure connectivity in Eurasia.</li> <li>• Sectoral cooperation.</li> <li>• Economic and technical cooperation.</li> <li>• Modifications to the Agreement.</li> </ul>	
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b> Russia, other EAEU member states, China, other member states of SCO, CIS, Mongolia, ASEAN members, Middle East countries (Iran, Egypt), Asia-Pacific region (Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand) and other.		
Annexes – Preferential agreements under GEP		
<b>A. TRADE IN GOODS</b>	<b>B. TRADE IN SERVICES</b>	<b>C. INVESTMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tariff concessions</li> <li>• Non-tariff measures (rules of origin, SPS, TBT, trade remedies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market access and regulatory liberalization.</li> <li>• All 4 modes of supply covered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market access.</li> <li>• Investment facilitation.</li> <li>• Dispute settlement.</li> <li>• Environmental protection.</li> <li>• The right to regulate.</li> </ul>
Potential partners:	Potential partners:	
India, Israel, Egypt, Iran (currently temporary FTA agreement is in force)	China, Republic of Korea, India, Egypt, Iran, ASEAN countries and other	
Additional Annexes may include sectoral and specific regulatory agreements (e.g. on personal data protection) subject to the general principles of non-preferential provisions within GEP.		

**SOURCE:** authors' representation.

The operation of a single non-preferential GEP agreement allows moving away from similar bilateral agreements, which would basically repeat the same provisions. In general, provisions mentioned in the table above correspond to the traditional chapters of modern RTAs. Special attention should be given to economic and technical cooperation to support the least developed economies of Central Asia, the Middle East and South East Asia. Taking into account the objectives of GEP, special emphasis should be placed on the commitment of potential participants to create conditions for the development of infrastructural (at the first stage, in transport and energy spheres) connectivity in the region. The content of this chapter may be devoted to the adoption of specific region-wide infrastructure development goals as well as a number of general principles of cooperation. The chapter on sectoral cooperation acquires the same importance. It is clear that infrastructure connectivity and sectoral cooperation objectives may change with the accession

of new actors to GEP, so it seems reasonable to negotiate these two chapters in form of a living document, i.e. they could be modified. Thus, the non-preferential agreement of GEP will form the first level of Eurasian integration.

The second level implies the operation of various preferential agreements in the form of annexes to the single non-preferential one. It is important to note, that participation in the first level of integration will not require participation in the second one, but if a preferential agreement is concluded, all its parties must comply with the obligations of non-preferential GEP agreement. The annexes to GEP agreement in our model are divided into agreements on goods, services and investment. States participating in GEP will be able to enter into agreements to liberalize trade in goods, services and investment, taking into account their foreign trade policy priorities and other factors. Thus, existing and potential agreements between the EAEU and China, Russia and China fit into this structure, taking into account the current positions of the EAEU Member States on preferential agreements with the third countries. The EAEU-Vietnam and EAEU-Singapore FTA agreements may remain in their current form or be revised with regard to regulation (the non-preferential part) if Vietnam and Singapore wish to join GEP.

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108 Free trade agreement between the EAEU and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part // URL: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl\\_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b1%d0%b8%d1%8f/Agreement.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl_torg/Documents/%d0%a1%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b1%d0%b8%d1%8f/Agreement.pdf)

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# Eurasian Economic Union and Belt and Road Initiative

**SUMMARY:** I. Introduction II. Common cooperation EAEU-BRI III. Conclusion  
IV. References

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is fairly new economic union with an integrated single market of more than 183 million people. The member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation.

Nowadays commonly used Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was announced by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping during his visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013 as the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) first. The SREB was aimed at the renaissance of the Great Silk Road in modern conditions, not only delivering Chinese goods to Europe but to develop Central Asia as well.

On May 8, 2015 it was announced about plans of further conjunction of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Economic Belt, when the Joint Statement on Cooperation on the Construction of Joint Eurasian Economic Union and the Silk Road Projects has been signed. It is aimed at an efficient transport and infrastructure link between China and Europe, and, at the same time, at the socio-economic development of the Eurasian regions along the transport and logistics corridors of this project.<sup>2</sup> Five years have passed since the moment of the agreement singing, and this chapter analyzes outputs of this cooperation.

## II. COMMON COOPERATION EAEU-BRI

On January 6, 1995, Russia and Belarus signed an Agreement on the establishment of the Customs Union (CU). A little later, on January 20, a similar

<sup>1</sup> University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Research Fellow / Academic Program Coordinator, Institute of Public Administration and Politics

<sup>2</sup> [https://russiancouncil.ru/blogs/GreaterEurasia/34159/?phrase\\_id=36213211](https://russiancouncil.ru/blogs/GreaterEurasia/34159/?phrase_id=36213211)

agreement was signed in a new composition - Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. Then two other countries joined - Tajikistan (1999) and Kyrgyzstan (1996).

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The first few years, the CU improved the dynamics in the field of trade, but then problems began due to the low implementation of agreed decisions within the framework of a single customs union. Five member countries of the CU signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) in 2000. In fact, it was an attempt at a different approach to creating a customs union, taking into account previous mistakes. It was officially fixed that Russia has a leading role. The principle "one country - one vote" no longer acted. Russia owned 40 votes out of 100 possible. The main goal of the new organization was to create a single economic space in Eurasia.

But the EurAsEC did not live up to its expectations. The same has happened: low performance of what was written on paper, moreover, customs tariffs of some countries did not coincide with general tariffs.

In 2007, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed new documents regarding the Customs Union. The regulations of the CU were the following: the creation of a single customs territory, the application of a single customs tariff, a unified procedure for customs regulation, the creation of a governing body (Commission of the Customs Union). The CU began its work in January 2010, when the Common Customs Tariff of the three countries entered into force. Since July of the same year, a unified Customs Code was introduced on the territory of the CU member states; since July 2011, all customs control has been transferred to the external contour of the union.<sup>3</sup>

In autumn 2011, the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus made programmatic articles in the Izvestia newspaper on the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union. Since 2015, the EAEU has started to operate with actual members as Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. The EAEU introduces the free movement of goods, capital, services and people. There are common policies in macroeconomic sphere, transport, industry and agriculture, energy, foreign trade and investment, customs, technical regulation, competition and antitrust regulation etc.

### BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

The first proposal on creation of the SREB was made in September 2013, when the idea of connectivity with Europe via Central Asia with the purpose to increase trade between the Asia Pacific Region and Europe was declared. Later, in October of 2013 on a visit to Indonesia, President Jinping put forward the idea of a 'Maritime Silk Road of the Twenty first Century' (MSR). Taken together, the 'Belt' and the 'Road' initiatives reflect China's core strategy and

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<sup>3</sup> <https://tass.ru/info/1222521>

policy orientation. Incidentally, in Chinese lexicon the two initiatives are referred to as the Belt and the Road (BRI) or the One Belt One Road (OBOR).<sup>4</sup>

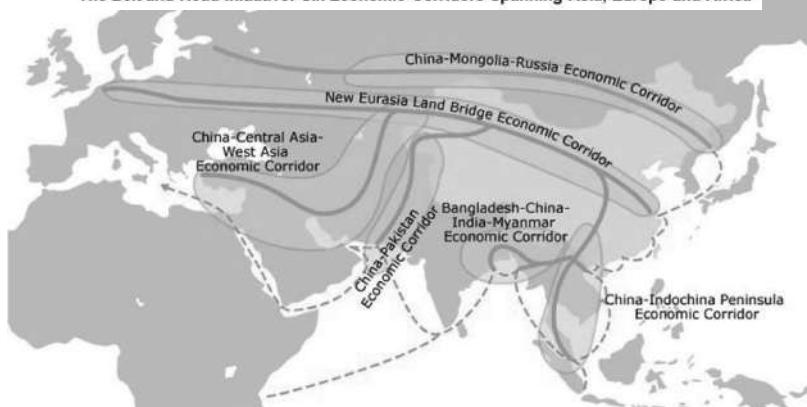
The BRI is 8,400 km long originating in Xian and includes 3,400 km in China, 2,800 km in Kazakhstan and 2,200 km in Russia. This initiative is focused on economic cooperation, and to build cultural and people-to-people exchanges.<sup>5</sup>

China aims at promotion of such cross-continental partnership in five areas: policy communication, road connectivity, unimpeded trade, money circulation, and cultural understanding. The Belt and Road initiative is geographically structured along six corridors, and the maritime Silk Road<sup>6</sup>:

- New Eurasian Land Bridge, running from Western China to Western Russia
- China–Mongolia–Russia Corridor, running from Northern China to Eastern Russia
- China–Central Asia–West Asia Corridor, running from Western China to Turkey
- China–Indochina Peninsula Corridor, running from Southern China to Singapore
- China–Myanmar–Bangladesh–India Corridor, running from Southern China to Myanmar
- China–Pakistan Corridor, running from South-Western China to Pakistan

**FIGURE 1. POTENTIAL SIX ECONOMIC CORRIDORS**

**The Belt and Road Initiative: Six Economic Corridors Spanning Asia, Europe and Africa**



**SOURCE:** What to Know About China's Belt and Road Initiative Summit", Time, as of January 30, 2018

**4** Nirmala Joshi, Kamala Kumari, "China's Silk Road Economic Belt and the Central Asian Response", Russian International Affairs Council, as of April 11, 2017; <http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytic-and-comments/analytic/chinas-silk-road-economic-belt-and-the-central-asian-response/>

**5** Ibid

**6** "What to Know About China's Belt and Road Initiative Summit", Time, as of January 30, 2018; <http://time.com/4776845/china-xi-jinping-belt-road-initiative-obor/>

The most interest is in those routes that come through territories of the EAEU and Central Asian countries: New Eurasian Land Bridge, China–Mongolia–Russia Corridor, and China–Central Asia–West Asia Corridor.

Funding sources of the BRI projects are the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with capital base of \$100 billion US dollars and the Silk Road Fund with the total capital of \$ 54.5 billion US dollars with capitalization increase possibility. AIIB is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia and beyond.<sup>7</sup> Their mission statement sounds the following: “By investing in sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors today, we will better connect people, services and markets that over time will impact the lives of billions and build a better future”.

The Silk Road Fund is China’s state-owned investment fund founded to foster investments in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. The fund is capitalized mainly by China’s foreign exchange reserves and is intended to be managed like China’s sovereign wealth fund. Creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Foundation provides even more powerful and wider support for the Belt and Road Initiative. The bank will support the construction of infrastructure projects along the BRI, and the states participating in the project will establish close business and diplomatic relations.<sup>8</sup>

#### EAEU AND SREB CONJUNCTION

Russia and China joined an agreement for greater cooperation between the EAEU and the SREB in May 2015. Getting to move on singing this agreement on behalf of the Union, Russia was criticized for such rush from other member-states. After that, on behalf of the Union, the authority to negotiate with China has been transferred to the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).

On October 1, 2017 in Hangzhou China’s Commerce Minister Zhong Shan and the Eurasian Economic Commission signed a joint statement on finalizing the negotiations process on the trade-economic agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and China. The sides agreed to organize a binding legal adjustment of the documents to begin preparing them for singing in the shortest time possible.

On October 25, 2019 the agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and its member states and the People’s Republic of China entered into force. Now, the agreement creates a

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<sup>7</sup> Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank ; <https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html>

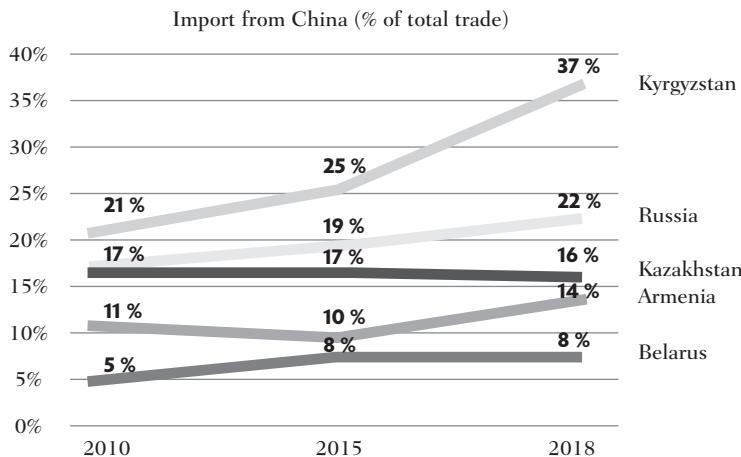
<sup>8</sup> Railway Infrastructure “Upside Transit Potential”, as of January 20, 2017; <https://sk.kz/upload/iblock/d23/d23a0c84f62fb49326f88509caa04fae.PDF>

legal base for trade and economic cooperation on a wide range of issues, including customs cooperation, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade protection measures, electronic commerce, intellectual property issues, etc. It is worth to note that the agreement does not provide reduction in duties; it aims to increase the level of transparency of regulatory systems, simplify trade procedures, and develop cooperative ties.<sup>9</sup>

In 2017, EEC formed the list consisting of 39 infrastructure projects within the framework of the EAEU and SREB conjunction, such as construction and modernization of automobile, railway and port infrastructure. Thus, one of such projects is a construction of a deepwater port in Arkhangelsk, Russia, and the White Sea - Komi - Ural railway line ("Belkomur"), Russia as well.

Regarding trade turnover between China and the EAEU member-states, it has increased substantially since 2015, especially import from China. The most significant rise of Chinese import is observed in Kyrgyzstan; if the share of import from China was around 25% of all import in 2015, then the same indicator was 37% in 2018. Rise of Chinese import among other EAEU member-states was more moderate (Armenia and Russia), constant (Belarus) or even negative (Kazakhstan).

**FIGURE 2. THE PROPORTION OF IMPORT FROM CHINA**



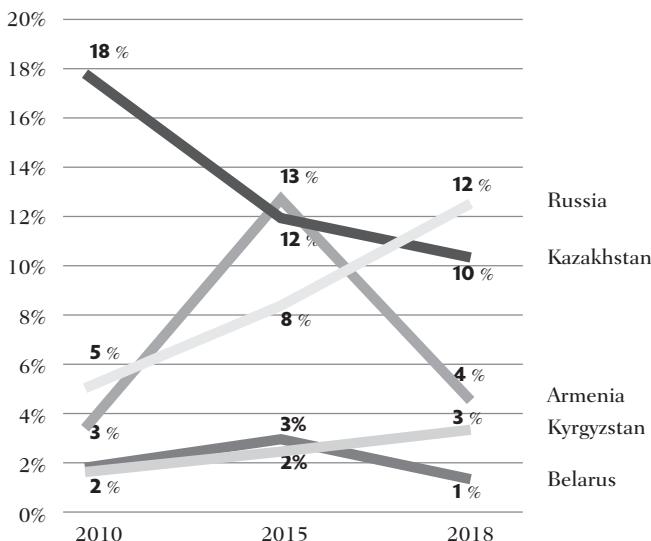
**SOURCE:** WITS

The export of commodities from the EAEU member-states to China declined since 2015 among most countries. Thus, Armenia experienced a fall in the percentage of export to China from 13% in 2015 to 4% in 2018, Kazakhstan's decrease was from 12% in 2015 to 10% in 2018. Russia and Kyrgyzstan

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/25-10-2019-5.aspx>

had an opposite trend – their export to China increased, from 8% to 12% for Russia, and from 2% to 3% for Kyrgyzstan.

FIGURE 3. EXPORT TO CHINA (% OF TOTAL TRADE)



SOURCE: WITS

It is worth to note, that while China's share in the EAEU foreign trade was 16.2% in 2018, the EAEU share in China's foreign trade was only 0.3% the same year, that shows how significantly small is export from five member-states of the EAEU to China.

Besides trade, investments from China play an essential role almost for all states of the Eurasian Economic Union, especially for Kazakhstan. If the amount of Chinese direct investments into Kazakh economy was 2 847,5 million USD in 2015, then in 2018 this amount was 8 620,4 million USD. A noticeable rise is observed in Belarus as well, while the growth of FDIs to Russia was small, and to Armenia without changes.

TABLE 1. FDIS FROM CHINA

FDIS FROM CHINA, MLN. USD	2015	2018
Armenia	3,1	3,1
Belarus	195,5	368,0
Kazakhstan	2 847,5	8 620,4
Kyrgyzstan	—	2520,7
Russia	1 350,4	2 622,6

SOURCE: EEC, National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

Besides statements on institutional cooperation, on May 4, 2020, in the midst of pandemic disease, China opened a new regular rail freight route to Europe, which aims to link the Chinese city of Yiwu with the capital of Lithuania. The length of this route is 10146 km, the railway line was laid through Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. And already from Vilnius, Chinese goods will be sent to another 36 European countries, including Spain, France, Denmark and Switzerland. The opening of a new line in a pandemic has become a new channel for international mail. It is expected that flights along this route will be operated once a week in the future. At present, the Chinese city of Yiwu is connected by 12 freight routes to 37 states and regions of Eurasia.<sup>10</sup>

Now, let's move to investigation of the bilateral relationships between each EAEU member-state and China, what has changed since 2015, the moment of signing the agreement on mutual conjunction.

## ARMENIA

In 2019, the Prime Minister of Armenia, N. Pashinyan, visited China as part of the summit "Dialogue of Asian Civilization". During the visit, he met with the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping. As a result of this meeting, a roadmap for building cooperation between these two countries for the coming years was outlined. The Member of the State Council and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi had an official visit to Armenia, during which important documents were signed, including the Agreement on a visa-free regime between the two countries. For many years, China has been the second trading partner for Armenia. In 2019, the volume of trade between the two countries amounted to \$ 945 million, an increase of 22.5% over the year. Cooperation in the field of culture and education between these two countries is deepening, and the study of the Chinese language is becoming more popular in Armenia.<sup>11</sup>

As well, in 2017 an office for cooperation with Armenia has been opened in Qingdao, China. Now, Armenian entrepreneurs have the opportunity to establish representative offices of their companies in that office funded by the One Belt - One Road Innovation Cooperation Center. The goal of the office is to deal with the presentation and implementation of Armenian services and goods in the Chinese market, stimulate tourism, and establish Armenian-Chinese business ties.<sup>12</sup>

**10** [https://m.ru.armeniasputnik.am/world/20200505/22944443/Kitay-otkryl-novyy-zhelezodorozhnyy-marshrut-kotoryy-svyazhet-ego-s-Evropoy--.html?mobile\\_return=no&fbclid=IwAR2z8S8\\_ocCEoqAc61vWpF3wYmVj8uAH\\_91FAFx3cqVGp7GgRI2iQJ\\_1SnE](https://m.ru.armeniasputnik.am/world/20200505/22944443/Kitay-otkryl-novyy-zhelezodorozhnyy-marshrut-kotoryy-svyazhet-ego-s-Evropoy--.html?mobile_return=no&fbclid=IwAR2z8S8_ocCEoqAc61vWpF3wYmVj8uAH_91FAFx3cqVGp7GgRI2iQJ_1SnE)

**11** <https://www.lragir.am/ru/2020/04/29/172472/>

**12** <https://www.panorama.am/ru/news/2017/11/22/%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9-%D0%BE%D1%84%D0%B8%D1%81-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%83-%D1%81-%D0%90%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%D0%B9/1868742>

Additionally, Armenia is the only EAEU country that has borders with Iran, with whom the Eurasian Economic Union has an Interim Free Trade Zone Agreement which came into force on October 27, 2019. It establishes the basic rules of trade between the EAEU and Iran, as close as possible to the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In 2018, China declared its interest in participating in the construction of the rail link between Iran and Armenia, as part of One Belt – One Road project.<sup>13</sup> The agreement on the construction of this rail link was approved by Armenian and Iranian governments in 2009. In 2012, the Dubai-based Rasia FZE Investment Company was granted a 50-year concession by the Armenian government to build and manage the 305-kilometer railroad from Armenia to Iran, to be named the Southern Armenian Railway. Because the path is sophisticated due to mountainous terrain through which it is supposed to pass, the cost of its construction is high and estimated at around \$3.5 billion. However, there were no any movements in further rail link construction as, according to experts' claims, it is useless as it goes nowhere, with dead-end because the transport branch will be closed by Armenia and Georgia - without access to Russia as Armenia is blocked by Turkey and Azerbaijan from both sides.

## BELARUS

There is a range of programs for development of cooperation between Belarus and China:

- Comprehensive strategic partnership development program for 2014-2018;
- Directive of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 5 of August 31, 2015 “On the Development of Bilateral Relations of the Republic of Belarus with the People’s Republic of China”;
- A set of measures to jointly promote the construction of the “One Belt - One Way” concept (intergovernmental document, September 29, 2016);
- In September 2016, the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation entered into force, signed in May 2015 during a state visit to Belarus by President Xi Jinping.

The main export from Belarus to China is occupied by potash fertilizers (40–50%), about 20% - nitrogen compounds, about 10% - petrochemical products with low added value.

In 2018, Belarus increased the export of dairy products to China 12.9 times to 186 thousand tons. In value terms, it increased 9.2 times to \$ 60 million. As well, 51 milk processing enterprises are certified for the right to

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<sup>13</sup> <https://financialtribune.com/articles/economy-business-and-markets/83024/china-interested-in-iran-armenia-rail-project>

supply products to China (including 1 company for baby food). A joint project of the Belarusian CJSC Meat and Dairy Company and the Chinese Drex Food Group is operating - ZAO Meat and Dairy Company, a state-owned Belarusian company, established a joint venture with the Chinese holding company DRex Food in the free trade zone in Shanghai to promote Belarusian products.<sup>14</sup>

Like Armenia, in July 2018, a contact office was opened in Qingdao to promote Belarusian products, where, under very favorable conditions, Belarusian exporters can obtain premises for an office, a warehouse, as well as apartments for living.<sup>15</sup> The same year a mutual agreement on visa-free regime between these two countries was signed.

In April 2018, the Belarusian Railways and DHL Global Forwarding China (a subsidiary of the international corporation DHL, one of the leaders in the global logistics market, 10% of the PRC transport market) held talks on container transportation and the rolling hub Kolyadichi. Belintertrans - Transport and Logistics Center (BTLC) cooperates with this company, they organized a number of mutual routes. So, in 2017 the route Shenzhen – Kolyadichi started to operate. BTLC provides a full range of transport and logistics services to Belarusian producers of milk, meat and any other goods for delivery to China. Chinese companies have signed memoranda of understanding with BTLC in the context of BRI.<sup>16</sup>

Belarus is considered as the final transport and logistics point in front of European markets, closing two trade corridors within the framework of the BRI concept - the Northern Eurasian corridor and the Central Eurasian corridor.

Besides cooperation in trade, the most ambitious cooperation project is the 'Great Stone' Industrial Park in Belarus. Initially, the park was conceived as a tax haven and a free customs zone, in which Chinese high-tech industries would be located - from microelectronics to bio and nanotechnology. However, to this moment the "Great Stone" performs more offshore zone toolled for China's needs: visa-free entry for Chinese workers (Chinese companies do not hire Belarusian workers), exemption from income tax for ten years, exemption from payment of property tax and land tax for 50 years, exemption of goods from VAT and import duties, salaries from income tax and etc.<sup>17</sup>

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**14** <https://www.euromeatnews.com/Article-Belarus-is-promoting-its-meat-and-dairy-products-on-the-Chinese-market/561>

**15** <https://ncmps.by/pages/belarus-kitay-dialog-razvivaetsya/>

**16** <https://eurasia.expert/vygodno-li-belarusi-sblizhenie-s-kitaem/>

**17** Russia Today, Vadim Dolinin, "V roli «butylochnogo gorlyshka»: stanet li Belorussiya torgovym platsdarmom Novogo sholkovogo puti", as of January 20, 2018; <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/article/472429-belorusia-kitay-sklad-produkciiia>

As of March 2020, 58 residents are registered here, the amount of declared investments is \$ 1.2 billion. 35 credit agreements were concluded with financial institutions of the PRC in the amount of about \$ 8.4 billion, 22 projects were funded for \$ 4.1 billion. The project portfolio includes the construction of a national football stadium, an international standard pool, social housing, support and development of the Great Stone industrial park and others.<sup>18</sup>

## KAZAKHSTAN

Today, China is one of the largest foreign trade and economic partners of Kazakhstan. At the end of last year, the volume of trade between these countries amounted to about \$ 14.5 billion. And in recent years, the growth in trade has been calculated in double digits. In 2018, the growth rate was 11.5%, in 2019 - 23%. China is a traditional consumer of Kazakhstani energy resources, and in recent years there has been an increase in the supply of Kazakhstani deep-processed goods.<sup>19</sup>

The volume of freight traffic along the China-Europe railway corridor passing through Kazakhstan reached a record of 3,000 trains in 2019, and the total number is more than 10,000. More than ten cooperation projects in the field of production capacities, including modernization, were completed and put into operation. Shymkent Oil Refinery, Kyzylorda Cement Plant, Kyzylorda Glass Plant, Nur-Sultan City Ring Road, Almaty Solar Power Plant, etc. A number of Chinese banks started operating in the International Financial Center of Astana; a special exchange sector of the Belt and Road market was created on the AIFC Exchange. Kazakh companies signed contracts worth more than \$ 160 million at the Second China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

In the framework of the EAEU and SREB conjunction, Kazakhstan has a specific state infrastructure development program called "Nurly Zhol" for 2015-2019 which allows to increase cargo turnover 1.6 times and transit cargo transportation volume two times to 2020.<sup>20</sup> The central link of the transport corridor should be railways and highways passing through the territory of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. At the same time, the China - Kazakhstan section was built in 2016. It passes through the border crossing with Kazakhstan, Khorgos, the cities of Urumqi, Lanzhou and Zhengzhou, then reaches the coast of the Yellow Sea in the city of Lianyun-

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-rasschityvaet-narastit-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitaeem-384460-2020/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://zonakz.net/2020/05/01/kazaxstan-nacelen-na-sozdanie-novyx-vzaimootnoshenij-s-kitaem-tokaev/>

<sup>20</sup> Ministry for Investments and Development, Republic of Kazakhstan, Transport Infrastructure Development In The Frame Of «Nurly Zhol» State Program, <http://mid.gov.kz/en/pages/transport-infrastructure-development-frame-nurly-zhol-state-program>

gang. The length of the highway is 3425 km. Its full commissioning, according to the “Report on the EAEU-2019 transport corridors”, will be carried out no later than 2020.<sup>21</sup>

The top priorities for Kazakhstan are rail and road transit corridors, because the share of both types in transit is 90–95%. Possibility of transportation capacities not only to expanding bilateral trade volumes, but also provide opportunities to increase the transit of Chinese cargo into the EAEU and European countries. The “Nurly Zhol” project promotes production and investment cooperation, including the promotion of high-quality construction and operation of 55 investment projects; expands the scope of bilateral trade, improves the quality of the structure of bilateral trade, strengthen cross-border transport cooperation and interconnections. China is ready to put forward even more Kazakhstani high-quality goods for import, giving Kazakhstan the opportunity to use Chinese ports, which will help Kazakhstani products enter the Asia-Pacific market; deepen cooperation in the fields of energy, finance, agriculture and livestock, contribute to the qualitative development of economic cooperation between the two countries for the benefit of our countries and peoples.<sup>22</sup>

In connection with preferential customs regulations for cargo clearance in the “land port” of “Khorgos” another problem arose. According to the public fund Transparency Kazakhstan, which studied mirror customs statistics of Kazakhstan and its trading partners for 2013-2017, only 45% of imported goods passing through Khorgos are subject to customs duties, and from 60% to 90% in trade with China goods smuggled.<sup>23</sup>

Another problem that exists in bilateral cooperation between Kazakhstan and China is an increasing Sinophobia in the Central Asian country. Occasionally occurring protests in different part of Kazakhstan started to grow before the pandemic disease, claiming that state authorities sing international agreements with China with obviously unfavorable conditions for Kazakhstan, and it might lead to growth of external debt to China, Chinese expansion.<sup>24</sup>

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**21** <https://www.ritmeurasia.org/news--2019-12-21--blagodarja-odnomu-pojasu-odnomu-puti-kazakhstan-poluchil-vygod-k-morskim-putjam-46637>

**22** <https://news.myseldon.com/ru/news/index/221621480>

**23** <https://www.ritmeurasia.org/news--2019-12-21--blagodarja-odnomu-pojasu-odnomu-puti-kazakhstan-poluchil-vygod-k-morskim-putjam-46637>

**24** <https://zonakz.net/2019/09/12/otkuda-beretsya-sinofobiya/>

## KYRGYZSTAN

**122** For Kyrgyzstan, China is one of the most important economic partners. There are 397 Chinese enterprises in Kyrgyzstan and another 170 joint Kyrgyz-Chinese enterprises. Tax revenues from large enterprises with Chinese investments in 2018 amounted to 3.8 billion soms (showing an increase of 20% compared to 2017). The main goods supplied from China are finished products: primarily shoes and fabrics and accessories for the clothing industry. China also supplies some types of machinery and equipment. Mostly raw materials and agricultural products are supplied. The largest volumes of products coming to China from Kyrgyzstan are in ores and concentrates of precious metals (gold).

China is the largest investor in the Kyrgyz economy - in 2018, the share of China amounted to 43.1% of the total investment. However, according to the press service of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, Chinese investments in 2018 decreased by 19% compared to the previous year. Besides investments, China is the main Kyrgyz creditor - more than 43% of the country's total external debt belongs to China.

The bulk of investments are made in only a few industries. Chinese investments in the Kyrgyz oil and gas industry at the end of 2018 amounted to about \$ 2.89 billion. For example, Zhungneng Co. Ltd is engaged in exploration of the oil field in the Batken region. The Chinese have built two oil refineries: in Tokmok and Kara-Balta (Dzhunda). Oil refineries provide Kyrgyzstan's fuel demand by only 20 percent, the rest (80 percent) is imports. Moreover, according to the existing obligations of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU, by 2021, oil refineries should produce fuel equivalent to the K-5 standard. It means that plants should conduct modernization.<sup>25</sup>

A promising area of cooperation was the laying and modernization of roads in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan is the transshipment base of Chinese trade in Central Asia, and it is for this reason that China is most active in shaping the modern logistics and transport infrastructure in the republic. By 2019, China has provided Kyrgyzstan with loans worth about \$ 1.69 billion for transport projects. Beijing has already implemented such major infrastructure projects as the rehabilitation of the Bishkek – Naryn – Torugart highway connecting Kyrgyzstan with China (total investment is \$ 600 million) and the construction of the North – South highway.

Two of the three main priorities were related to transport infrastructure: the construction of the China – Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan railway, which has not yet been agreed. Previously, Beijing presented its version of the railway construction project with a Kyrgyz section of 268 km, while the Kyrgyz project

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<sup>25</sup> [https://www.gezitter.org/economics/70221\\_neftepererabatyivayuschie\\_zavodyi\\_kyirgyzstana\\_nerentalbelnyi/](https://www.gezitter.org/economics/70221_neftepererabatyivayuschie_zavodyi_kyirgyzstana_nerentalbelnyi/)

was 112 km longer. The Kyrgyz side explained this by the fact that the road would go around the mountains without necessity to build additional tunnels, which will significantly reduce costs. The second Chinese construction option did not suit Bishkek with the track gauge adopted in China (1435 mm), since in Kyrgyzstan, like in Uzbekistan (the third participant in the project), a track gauge of 1520 mm is used.

Within the framework of the Kyrgyzstan-China business forum conducted in 2019, 24 documents worth more than \$ 7 billion were signed on the margins of the official visit. Several main areas of deepening cooperation were identified:

- In the processing and mining of gold and precious metals;
- In the transport and logistics sector;
- In agriculture;
- In the financial and insurance;
- In mining;
- In oil refining;
- In the field of construction and construction materials;
- In the industrial sphere.

Since May 2019 the Central Asian Digital Asset Exchanges (CADEX) has started operating. On this trading platform one can buy and sell securities (stocks, bonds, etc.) and foreign currency, and digital assets (bitcoins, ethereum, etc.), and tokenized (digitized using Blockchain technology) securities (securities-tokens), bond-tokens, etc.), and even commodity and raw material resources, including agricultural.<sup>26</sup> As part of a pilot project, CADEX has developed and presented a unique QR code that will be associated with a blockchain record associated with the Kyrgyz rainbow trout of the pilot fishery. Thus, consumers of Kyrgyz rainbow trout are able to scan the QR code on the product they are about to buy and see where it was before it fell into their hands. It will be easy to find out if the fish is environmentally friendly, quality and legal. CADEX is the project implemented in the form of Chinese investments, the total amount of which is \$ 20 million.<sup>27</sup>

Regarding transport and logistic center near the Kyrgyz-Chinese borders, one Chinese investor was interested in further development of this project. The company intended to invest \$ 280 million in the construction of the future At-Bashi industrial trade and logistics center. The organization had to allocate this money from its own resources, not under the guarantee of the government, and it took all the risks. During the construction of the logistics center and with the beginning of its operation, according to the most conservative

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.kp.kg/daily/26986/4046954/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://kabar.kg/news/v-bishkeke-otkrylas-birzha-teifrovikh-aktivov-summa-investicii-20-mln/>

estimates, at least 15 thousand employees were required, and several billion soms would be received in budgets of different levels in the first 8 years only in the form of taxes and deductions from wages. As well, the personnel department of the company prepared plans for organizing the training of required specialists from among local youth, and also began to compile a list of At-Bashi young people to be sent to study at foreign universities in which they would study modern professions at the expense of the investing company. However, a negative attitude towards the project has developed among At-Bashi residents, which was expressed in protests early winter in 2020. Due to disgust among local population, the Chinese investor decided to withdraw the project for the construction of an industrial, trade and logistics center, and a lease agreement for a 200-hectare site for a period of 49 years was terminated.<sup>28</sup>

Distrust to Chinese efforts are growing, the same dissatisfaction by Kyrgyz government's behavior in this case is growing from Chinese side. Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan made an official statement about the attack of residents of several villages of the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan against employees of a Chinese mining company working at the Solton-Sary gold ore deposit, where they asked Kyrgyz side to "severely punish the perpetrators, fairly and appropriately resolve the incident".<sup>29</sup>

## RUSSIA

Russia and China are two big countries, and each of them has strong influence on their neighbors. As of 2019, China became the main source of investments for Russian economy. Moreover, in 2019 Russia and China singed an intergovernmental agreement on the switch to settlements in national currencies. One of the options could be the creation of "gateways between the Russian and Chinese counterparts of SWIFT (Financial Message Transmission System and China International Payment System (CIPS)".<sup>30</sup> First of all, the largest companies with state participation from the traditional sectors of Russian export, producers of energy resources and agricultural products, will switch to payments in national currencies. It is assumed that settlements in rubles and yuan will be made, including on contracts already concluded in dollars.

Bilateral trade in 2018 increased by almost a quarter, reaching a record \$ 108 billion. Cooperation in the energy sector has become strategic. Priority bilateral investment projects with a total estimated value of \$ 120 billion are being developed and implemented, industrial cooperation in high-tech

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<sup>28</sup> <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/logisticheskiy-kompleks-at-bashi-stroit-ne-budut/30439850.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://kg.china-embassy.org/rus/zxxfb/t1686600.htm>

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.znak.com/2019-06-28/rossiya\\_i\\_kitay\\_otkazalis\\_ot\\_dollara\\_i\\_pereshli\\_na\\_raschet\\_v\\_na-cvalyutah](https://www.znak.com/2019-06-28/rossiya_i_kitay_otkazalis_ot_dollara_i_pereshli_na_raschet_v_na-cvalyutah)

industries (space, civil aviation, nuclear energy) is deepening, and agricultural trade volumes are growing. The main articles of Russian exports to China are hydrocarbons, wood and wood products, chemical products and fertilizers, metals and metal products. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the supply of Russian agricultural products to China.

The main objects of Chinese financial investments in Russia are fuel and energy enterprises, agriculture, construction, the timber industry, light industry, the production of household electrical appliances, and the service sector. Russian investments in China go mainly to the manufacturing and construction sectors, the development of transport services.

The closest to China Russian territory is Far East. The cooperation development program in this region sets new goals – to double the volume of trade and continue expanding investment cooperation with China by 2024. A definite breakthrough has taken place over the past five years, and the projects discussed for many years have finally begun to be implemented in 2019.

There almost fifty projects with investments from China are at different stages, the construction of two bridges between China and Russia is being completed: in the Amur Region - between Blagoveshchensk and Heihe, in the Jewish Autonomous Region - between Nizhneleninsky and Tongjiang.<sup>31</sup>

According to the Russian deputy minister, over the years, employees of the ministry and subsidiary development institutions have learned how to work with large Chinese corporations. In particular, a number of large projects were implemented by the China National Corporation for the Production of Grains, Oils, and Food (COCFO), including the supply of drinking water to China and the production of food products. With the participation of Chinese partners, aquaculture is being developed, processing and other industries are being created to significantly expand the structure of Far Eastern exports and increase the share of processed and high-tech products.

The Russian-Chinese Investment Fund (RCIF) was created by the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) and the China Investment Corporation. One of the supported by this fund projects was the Far Eastern Center for Advanced Processing of Wood in the Khabarovsk Territory. It is created by the RFP Group (the former Soviet "Dallesprom"), combining the assets of 25 timber enterprises. Currently, the company supplies to China about 20 percent of the total Russian timber exports.

There is a significant current investment cooperation in the number of projects in the agricultural sector, given the shortage in the Chinese food market due to the ongoing trade war with the United States. China became one of the main export markets for agricultural products from Russia<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> <https://rg.ru/2019/11/04/rf-i-knr-uvelichili-investicii-v-proekty-na-dalnem-vostoke-i-v-arktike.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://rg.ru/2019/11/04/voprosy-sotrudnichestva-rf-i-knr-stali-ostree-v-svete-novyh-vyzovov.html>

A significant contribution to this area of cooperation and its product line was made by soybeans. The PRC Main Customs Directorate has promised to expand sources of soybeans imports throughout Russia and developed shipping routes to improve transport conditions. In July 2019, Chinese companies imported 4,400 tons of soybeans from Russia by sea.

Regarding infrastructure projects within BRI in Russia, the construction of a high-speed railway from Moscow to Kazan on the condition that the rail line would be later expanded to Beijing. A memorandum of understanding has been signed. The original plan was that the rail line between Moscow and Beijing would pass through Yekaterinburg, Astana, Irkutsk, Ulan-Bator and Khabarovsk. Later, it was announced that from Astana the line would instead go through the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region into Chinese territory, cutting travel time between Moscow and Beijing from six to two days. The approximate cost of this project will be \$245 billion. However, in 2019 Russian government started to declare about impracticability of the high-speed railway Moscow-Kazan as from returns of investments as from passenger throughput. At the end of 2019, it was declared that "the design of the Moscow-Kazan high-speed highway continues; no decision was made to refuse construction".<sup>33</sup>

As well, this stretch of road is discussed to be part of greater project, a high-speed railway Eurasia (Eurasia HSR), which was presented by the Russian company "Russian Railways" to the International Railways Union High Speed Highway Project in 2017. The Eurasia HSR project will connect Europe and China with the total length of the highway 9 thousand 447 km (distance Beijing - Moscow - Berlin), of which 2 thousand 366 km across the territory of the Russian Federation with route Krasnoe (border with Belarus) - Moscow - Kazan - Yekaterinburg - Chelyabinsk - Zolotaya Sopka (border with Kazakhstan). As well, it is possible to place in operation different high-speed sections at different times.<sup>34</sup> The Chinese side noted the Eurasia HSR project as a promising large-scale project and expressed support for the development of cooperation to study its economic and technical parameters.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

As the analysis shows, cooperation between EAEU member-states and China is done mostly on bilateral basis. In 2015 a tripartite cooperation agreement between Free Economic Zones (FEZs) "Vitebsk" (Belarus), "Naryn" (Kyrgyzstan) and "Kashgar" (People's Republic of China) was signed, thus laying the foundation for the future formation of regional value chains in

**33** <https://www.tatar-inform.ru/news/transport/26-12-2019/kazanskoe-otdelenie-gzhd-zaverilo-chto-proektirovaniye-vsm-moskva-kazan-prodolzaetsya-5713452>

**34** <https://eabr.org/press/news/vsm-evraziya-dlya-vsm-evraziya-trebuyutsya-investory-i-podryadchiki/>

the region. However, one cannot say that any project was realized within this agreement.

Those projects that were discussed several years ago and there were plans to start their realization at the soonest, became obsolete or receded into the background. One might see that more or less cooperation with China is observed with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, and with almost zero changes in cooperation with Armenia. Further relationships between China and Kyrgyzstan are open to debates, according to the latest events. The fact that pandemic disease has started in China might strengthen Sinophobia in Central Asian countries, hereby making the situation worse.

The recent agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the member-state of the Eurasian Economic Union and China shows that some institutional cooperation has already started, which might lead to further cooperation, removing technical barriers, sanitary and phytosanitary measures etc. However, the process will not be rapid, and it is hardly believed that the EAEU member-states would ever agree to have preferential duties for imported goods and services from China.

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# The Eurasian Economic Union. Member states benefits

**SUMMARY:** I. General considerations II. Trade benefits III. International power IV. Republic of Armenia V. Republic of Belarus VI. Republic of Kazakhstan VII. Kyrgyz Republic VIII. Russian Federation IX. Bibliography

## I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The important factor of the Eurasian integration processes is inalienable historical and cultural unity of the EAEU Member States. Notably, in addition to shared perception of the peoples' affinity, the Soviet period was highlighted by the formation of a powerful and complex system of labor division, production specialization and cooperation between the republics. Along with the establishment of independent statehood in the post-Soviet period, co-operative production chains were violated, and the young economies were forced to lay the foundations of their own systems of development institutions, including those supporting aggregate supply, and determine the course of international cooperation corresponding to strategic priorities in a tight timeframe. Violation of the reproductive circuits, covering the entire production cycle from the supply of raw materials to final consumption product, affected all the Union republics' economies: none of them was self-sufficient since ensuring effective specialization requires labor division. The degree of economic degradation following the breakdown of cooperative ties was proportional to the number of the chain links to be restored, and thus was deeper in the republics that were embedded in more complicated stages of production processes. Subsequently, the losses stemming from high-tech industries decay have been the most evident in Russian Federation, where in

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<sup>1</sup> Head of Economic Policy Strategies Section at the Eurasian Economic Commission Macroeconomic Policy Department, associate professor at Financial Management Department, Russian Customs Academy. PhD in Economics/Finance

<sup>2</sup> Consultant to Economic Policy Strategies Section at the Eurasian Economic Commission Macroeconomic Policy Department, professor at World Economy Department, National Research University "Higher School of Economics".

the mid-1990s; the share of raw materials and energy products in total exports was similar to that in the Central Asian commodity economies.

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In this vein, the Eurasian integration has provided an opportunity to accelerate the process of restoring destroyed (rather than establishing new) production chains (Glazev, Chushkin, & Tkachuk, 2013, pp. 102-114). Primary advances in negotiating favorable trade and investment regime, coordinated policy in logistic infrastructure development have been considered a way to renew both sustainable supply of raw materials and components and access to larger market demand. Further integration stages, in their turn, could provide an opportunity to reestablish qualified personnel exchanges and, as a result, revive effective labor division.

Provided these considerations, the signing of the treaty “On the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community” (2000) appears a strategic decision; still, it remains questionable whether this first substantive step towards the integration was timely or late. Nevertheless, along with the strengthening of independent statehood and the alienation of the former soviet republics, there has been growing the credibility of additional arguments against integration. Oligarchy-led extractive institutions, which took precedence in virtually all the Member States, put a priority on the internal privatization processes and focused on the supply of imported equipment and components. For national producers of middle and highly value added goods it led to sharp increase in costs and / or closure of their business. Besides, the observed insufficient progress in establishing democratic institutions undermined the countries’ confidence in the counterparts’ prospects of eliminating corruptive practices in customs proceedings. Finally, having embarked on the WTO entrance procedure, the states might deem it inexpedient to develop preferential trade agreements for fear of complicating negotiating process (Glazev, 2019, pp. 579-676). The occurrence of the multiple bilateral relations and preferential trade agreements; the appearance of the concept of Eurasianship in the heads of states’ rhetoric<sup>3</sup>; first ‘master’ agreement “On the Creation of the Economic Union” (1993) and their further transformation in the real action despite all the negative factors – all this highlights that the benefits of integration have been considered to outweigh the defaults. Notably, by the moment of establishing what has in 2011 transformed into the Commonwealth of Independent States’ Free Trade Area, there has been adopted more than 100 bilateral trade facilitation agreements, here including numerous free trade agreements.

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<sup>3</sup> Note. Since the Eurasian integration idea has for the first time been communicated in the speech of the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, HE Nursultan Nazarbayev, in Lomonosov’s university in 1994, it has been re-stated by all the EAEU heads of states. For more detailed information on the chronology of their communication, see Glazev, 2019, pp. 579-676.

Provided the mentioned impediments and despite the Global financial crisis, in the first two decades of the new millennium, the Eurasia has undergone three core stages of integration: the Customs' Union (CU; 2008-2011), the single market (Common Economic Space, CES, 2011-2012) and the Economic Union (since 2012).

Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russian Federation have fully participated in all the three integration formats, nevertheless the importance of preparatory work undertaken by Republic of Armenia and Kyrgyz Republic long before 2015 should not be underestimated. Kyrgyz Republic has been a party to the Eurasian Economic Community, but has taken additional time not being in a position to join the CU from its outset. In 2011, when the decision on the Kyrgyz Republic accession has been adopted by the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community, the entrance procedure had yet to be developed. In the years to follow, there has been elaborated an action plan (a roadmap) focused, above all, on harmonizing technical regulations and enhancing the quality of customs infrastructure including the objects of sanitary and veterinary control in accordance with the Eurasian requirements. The implementation of the letter target has been an inalienable condition that needed to be complied with prior to the accession, which has been reinforced in 2015 (EEC, 2018b).

The entrance of the Republic of Armenia has based on the procedures tested by Kyrgyz Republic. The road map for Armenia accession to the CU and CES has been adopted in 2013 and comprised 267 steps primarily aimed at legislation harmonization; along with the rearrangement of form of integration, the responsible implementation of the roadmap has become a lever of entrance to the EAEU. Moreover since October 2013, Armenia has benefitted from an opportunity to observe the activities of the CU, the CES and their supranational bodies from the inside via participating in the open meetings of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (EEC, 2018a).

The fact that the Eurasian Economic Union has followed the standard trade-driven path of development highlights the economic nature of Eurasian integration. What is more, interesting to note that the ambitiousness of the goals of economic development incorporated in the Treaty "On the Eurasian Economic Union" (2014) appears to have improved the understanding the roll of the integration. Instead of according the attitudes and eliminating minor trade formalities, the EAEU has set an ambitious target to improve the quality of life of its population. It implies the creation of the common market of volume of 180 mln people and joint GDP of USD 2.2 trln, increasing and diversifying production, improving efficiency and leveraging the economic potential of the Member States' economies.

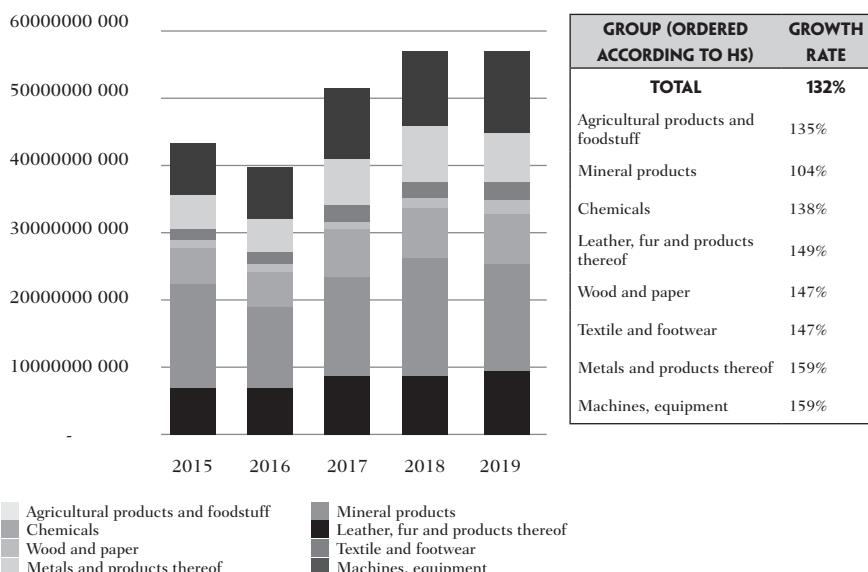
## II. TRADE BENEFITS

Before launching the advanced stage of Eurasian integration, the Member States should have put considerable effort to ensure eliminating trade barriers and simplifying customs procedures, it comes logical that the mutual intra-Union trade has enjoyed the first benefits of the cooperation. The figure to follow depicts that not only did the Intra-EAEU export undergo a growth in value since 2015, but it also has been accompanied by changes in structure. Breaking the trade volume down into extended commodity groups, one can observe that the it has been intensified in all the dimensions, but the increment has been the most substantial in the spheres that generally correspond to the highest value added share in the final product price. Hence, the growth in total trade volume (+32%) has been largely outstripped by that in machines and equipment (+59%). Meanwhile, although mineral products have retained the highest share in the exports structure (27.9% in 2019), this category's share in trade has been the only one growing slower than the total trade volume.

The trade benefits have been shared among the Member States unequally. On the one hand, these have not been only the major economies that have experienced the increment in the highest value added exports: the graph

**DYNAMICS OF INTRA EAEU TRADE IN EXTENDED COMMODITY GROUPS, 2019 VS 2015**

Intra-EAEU export by extended coomodity groups (USD)

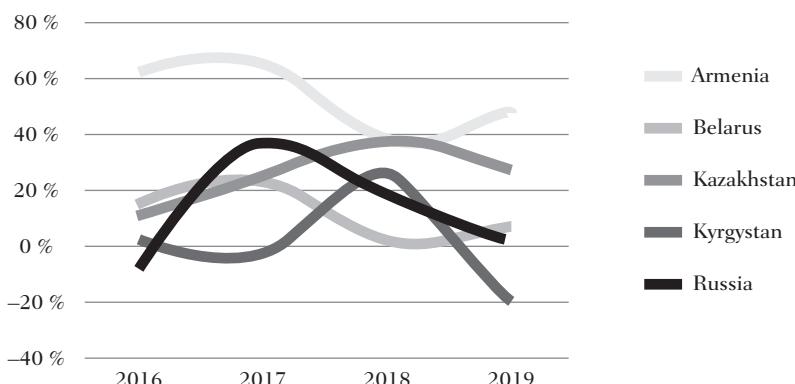


**SOURCE:** InTraCen, authors' calculations.

**SOURCE:** EEC, authors' calculations

demonstrates that the growth rates in the segment of machines and equipment have been positive in all the Member States but Kyrgyz Republic and reached the highest values in Armenia and Kazakhstan.

INTRAEAEU EXPORT IN MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT GROWTH RATES



SOURCE: EEC, authors' calculations

On the other hand, it may be revealed that the way the Member States have capitalized on the free trade advantages have differed significantly. Generally, the liberalization of trade is profitable for both inclusive and extractive institutions<sup>4</sup> whereas the former get an opportunity to leverage the potential of producing industries, which get competitive advantages while entering the new markets, the latter transmit the spur to rent-seeking activities, thus, stimulating re-exports. Such a dichotomy is clearly observed based on the example of Armenia and Kazakhstan, which have benefitted from the free trade in high-value added segment to a comparable extent. The major drivers of the Republic of Armenia's export growth in the category under consideration comprised insulated wire and cable, electrical converters and transformers directed primordially to Russian Federation: in all these positions the country has been a net importer. Meanwhile, in Kazakhstan the growth in high value added trade volume with all the Member States has been driven by lead-acid accumulators: the latter are employed in the hybrid-type vehicles' engines and produced domestically by the enterprises of

<sup>4</sup> Note. In the present context, the notions of inclusive and extractive institutions should be interpreted as stipulated by Natkhanov and Polishchuk (2017). In this vein, inclusive institutions are developing the regulatory practice being guided by social interest: thus, the social optimum is achieved via providing stimuli for producing industries and productive labor employment. In contrast, the policy elaborated by extractive institutions is favoring the narrow elite groups, who are interested in the improvement of rent-seeking activities' profitability, which might be attained at a price of decreasing productive industries margin. Whereas the former are promoting the long-term welfare, the latter stay focused on the short-term priorities.

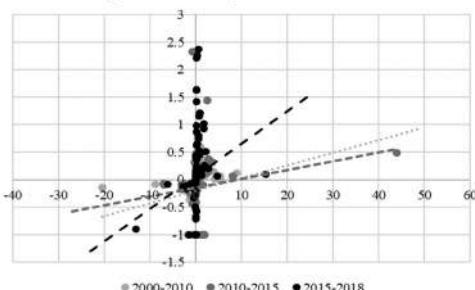
Taldykorganskiy plant. These two examples reveal that the free circulation of goods within the EAEU has been leveraged by the Member States as both a spur for the national producers expanding the geography of business and an opportunity to extract the rent from re-exporting activities benefitting from logistical and transit advantages.

Whereas the implications of liberalizing trade procedures on the intra-integration group trade is evident, neither must be neglected its propensity to influence the competitiveness of the domestic producers on the external markets. Benefiting from the improved access to the raw materials used in production and supplied by the integration unit counterparts, the Member States might enhance the efficiency of labor division and rearrange the value chains so as to strengthen their comparative advantages on the markets of third countries.

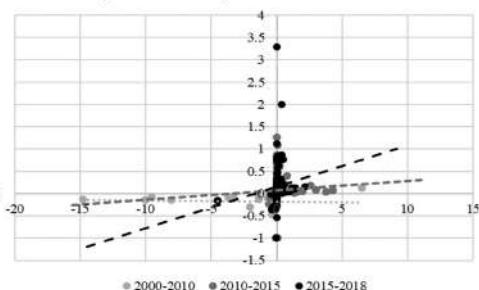
The graphs to follow depict the interdependence between the increments in the revealed comparative advantage index (RCA)<sup>5</sup> (abscise axis) and exports growth rate (ordinate axis) for 2-digit HS commodity groups calculated for the EAEU Member States in 3 time periods: prior to the establishment of the Customs Union in 2010; between 2010 and 2015, when the EAEU has been created; after 2015. The country's progress in the exports of the commodities for which the RCA have been detected appears to indicate to the efficient and rational trade strategy; hence, the increase in sensitivity of the exports growth rate to the changes in RCA (depicted as a growing slope of the trend line corresponding to the time period) should be interpreted as the sign of progress in leveraging the Union's competitiveness.

#### INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN RCA AND EXPORTS GROWTH RATE IN THE EAEU MEMBER STATES

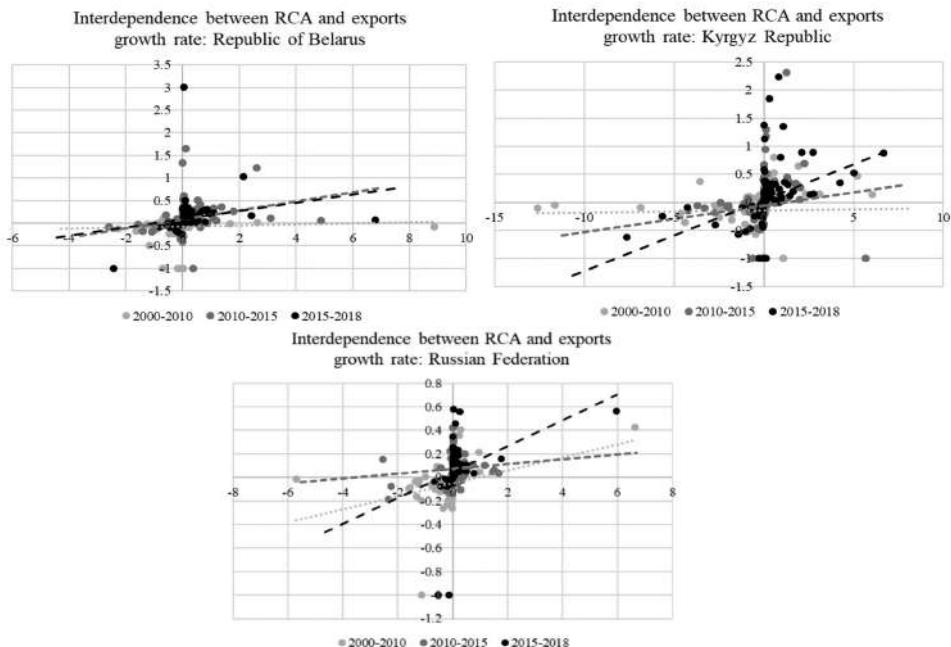
Interdependence between RCA and exports growth rate: Republic of Armenia



Interdependence between RCA and exports growth rate: Republic of Kazakhstan



5 Note.  $RCA_p = \frac{Ex_{pi}/Ex_L}{Ex_{pw}/Ex_{wL}}$ , where the exports of the product is denoted by p, the country under consideration – by i, the world – by w.



**SOURCE:** InTraCen, authors' calculations.

As can be observed from the graphs, prior to 2010, the exports growth rates have been insensitive to competitive advantages in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic. Since then, in these countries, the sensitivity has grown considerably. Notably, despite both Belarus and Kazakhstan have been parties to the Customs Union, the former has improved its exporting strategy intermittently, while in the latter, it has undergone steady development reacting to the integration deepening in 2015. In Russian Federation and Armenia, where the interdependence between the two variables has been considerable prior to 2010 as well, it has been subject to a slight deterioration after the establishment of the Customs Union, still, in the most recent years, it has increased. Therefore, trade liberalization within the EAEU has provided the Member States an opportunity to get acquainted with their comparative advantages, and the implications of the value chains restoration have been evident in their more profound strategies in external trade.

### III. INTERNATIONAL POWER

What is more, the thesis that the EAEU appears to be more than the sum of its components is proved by the improved opportunities the Member States benefit from the perspective of joining the international organizations and mega-regional initiatives.

Since the establishment, the EAEU has signed free trade agreements with Viet Nam, Singapore, Serbia, the interim agreement leading to formation of a free trade area with Iran, agreement on economic and trade cooperation with China. The negotiations are being held with Egypt, Israel, India. In 2019, these 8 countries have accounted for 19.6% of the EAEU external trade turnover.

However, the scope of the EAEU activities in the domain of international cooperation has not been limited to trade intensification. In addition to the clauses expressing the attitude to share experience and best practices in economic and trade policy, the prospects of establishing cooperative ties have been embedded in the EAEU Memoranda of Understanding with the associations of regional integration, including ASEAN, Andean Community, African Union, Latin American Economic System, as well as Declaration on Partnership with the Pacific Alliance. Not yet formally designed, the contacts have been established with MERCOSUR, APEC, East African Community, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Of special importance for the EAEU Member States is the intersection of interests with the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

More recently, the EAEU has embarked on the conjugation of Eurasian integration initiative with the “One road – one belt” project. Whereas the expansion of trade and investment cooperation, the implementation of joint industrial initiatives, the boost of logistical and infrastructural capacity, transport system development under the umbrella of conjugation are beneficial for all the Member States. The most superficial explanation stipulates that this is the free circulation of goods and services and joint effort to enhance customs infrastructure that determines the potential of the EAEU economic space. The establishment of trans-Eurasian transport corridor bringing together China and Europe is inexpedient but if all the countries along the path are accepting the participation in the project.

The paragraphs to follow comprise the information on the peculiar benefits each of the Member States can derive from the Eurasian integration initiatives.

#### **IV. REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

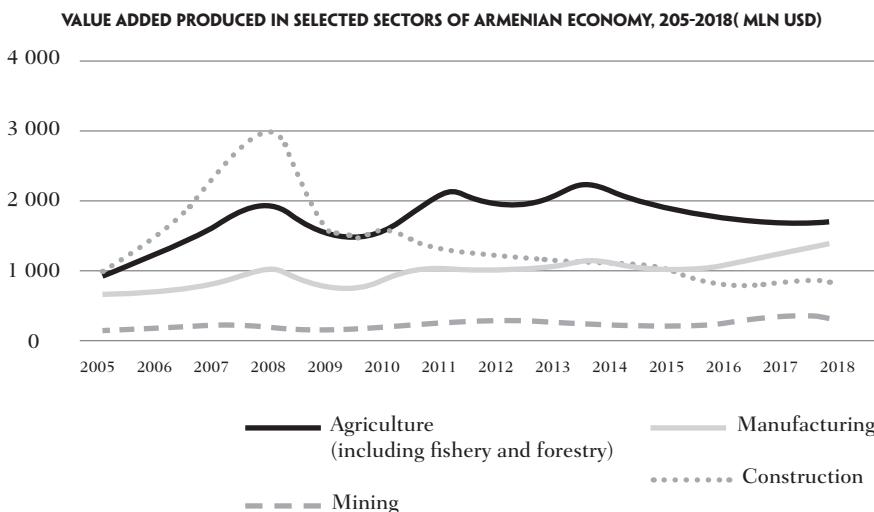
In Armenia, the decision to embed in the Eurasian integration processes has been, perhaps, the most sensible. According to the widely cited statement made by the then President of the Republic of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, at the announcement of the decision to join Customs Union in 2013, “It was unfeasible and inefficient to stay away from the relevant geo-economic area. It is a rational decision and it is in the interests of the Republic of Armenia” (The official website of the President of the Republic of Armenia, 2013).

In five years since the Armenia's accession to the EAEU, the country's interests are evident indeed.

### MACROECONOMIC STABILITY

After the painful recovery following the global financial crisis (real GDP contracted by 14.1% in 2009), the Eurasian integration was considered as a prerequisite for internal economic and, thus, political stability.

Although in 2015, negative external economic conjuncture engendered by unfavorable dynamics on the oil markets and sanction policies against one of the major trade partners and principal source of migrant remittances, Russian Federation, affected the Armenian economy severely, the resumption has been achieved in rather concise time period. As early as in 2016, the growth rates in not all but the most important economic sectors have reached positive area: the agriculture, industry and services have contributed 2.4, 1 and 0.7 percentage points respectively to the total yearly GDP growth. Despite the importers of Armenian products in Russian Federation have suffered decreasing purchasing power following ruble depreciation, export in both intra-EAEU and extra-EAEU trade has increased (by 53.7% and 13.7% correspondingly), which primarily indicates to improved competitiveness of the exported products. What is more, the ability to compete on external markets might have been a signal of the enhanced industrial readiness reacting to the creation of the distorted production chains (EEC, 2018a). To support the argument, in 2016, the share of manufacturing value added in GDP has reached 10.3%, which is 1.08 percentage higher than in 2015 and 0.6 percentage points above the pre-crisis period.



SOURCE: EEC

More recently, whereas agriculture has contributed to the total value added more than industry, the latter appears to have reaped the major benefits of the Eurasian integration. Between 2015 and 2018, the growth in industrial production constituted 44.8%, and the retail sales have grown by 22.2%, which might be interpreted as a progress in capitalizing on the revealed advantages Armenian industry possesses.

### IMPLICATIONS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION

The effect the elimination of tariffs within the Union has had over the national exporters and importers is evident. To illustrate, the withdrawal of duties on natural gas, petroleum products and rough diamond originated principally from Russia has resulted in the discount for Armenian importers totaling to roughly USD 200 mln yearly. What is more, the tariffs applied to Armenian products prior to the accession have been considerably higher than the ones imposed by Armenia: whereas the weighted average of the WTO-bound tariff level in Russia, which has been taken as a basis for the Customs' Union tariff, has been close to 9.9%, in Armenia it has not exceeded 3.6%. In this vein, the reproach to the joint tariff has driven Armenian exporters more competitive on the EAEU markets and, on the other hand, has favored the imports from the Union's counterparties decreasing the margin of trading with the third countries. Notably, the Treaty of Accession of Armenia to EEC has envisaged more than 900 exemption (Ter-Matevosyan et al., 2017) that have prevented the import tariff escalation from being translated in the households' purchasing power downturn. Furthermore, the adoption of the joint tariff has acted as an injection in Armenian budget: for instance, in 2017, the proceeds of customs duties have increased by 31%.

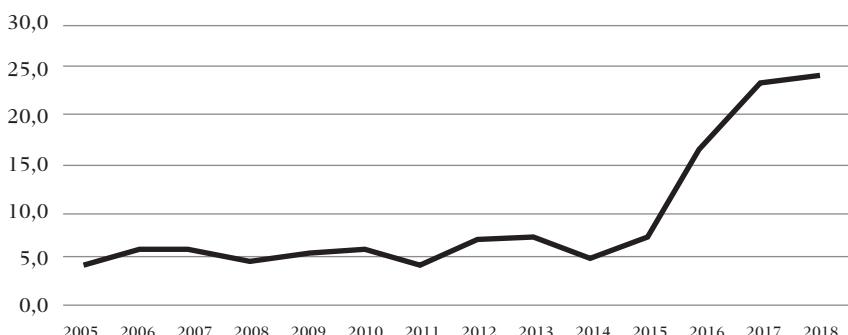
### CUSTOMS AND LOGISTICS INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT

The geopolitical conjuncture in the South-Caucasus region has conditioned the partial isolation of the Republic of Armenia of the transit roads. Only two out of four of the Armenian national borders (Iranian and Georgian frontiers) are accessible for transit shipments; there is no checkpoints on Turkish border, and the checkpoint with the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) does not allow transit freight to Azerbaijan. Provided limited logistical potential, the Republic of Armenia is still an important 'knot' binding the Caucasus region to the Western Asia and, thus, Middle East. Hence, impeccable functioning of the customs infrastructure appears vital in a view of geographic impediments.

Expectedly, the enhancement of customs procedures quality has been defined as a matter of highest priority on the agenda of Armenian accession to the EAEU. Statistics testifies the impressive progress achieved by Armenia in

this direction. The simplification of the customs procedures, the liberalization of the road haulage and the reinforcement of the transport control mechanism have allowed to decrease the time cost of customs procedures from 50 to 3 hours (EEC, 2018a). At the same time, the indicated measures along with the launch of the concessional transit through an international checkpoint Larsi on the Georgia-Russia border have resulted in a substantial increase in the volume of freight by automobile transport, which more than doubled in 2016.

**VOLUME OF FREIGHT BY AUTOMOBILE TRANSPORT: REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, 2005-2019 (MLN TONNES)**



SOURCE: EEC

Although the other modes of transport have not yet demonstrated comparable growth in freight volume, their performance might as well be spurred by the Eurasian integration. JSC “Rossijskije zheleznije dorogi” [Russian railway], a concessioner of South-Caucasus railway, has already embarked on the project of launching Armenia-Georgia-Russia route and announced the plans to invest RUR 15bln in the initiative. This transport direction, as well as Iran-Armenia section, represents the first initiative in the South-Caucasus region targeting the interests of Eurasian integration (Dzhivanyan, 2015). As aforementioned, fully realizing its connective and transit potential, not only can Armenia leverage its exporting potential activating trade with the neighboring states, but it can also turn its geographic deadlock into advantage becoming the EAEU corridor to the Middle East. Armenia has already put effort to intensify collaboration with Iran. In addition to the already functioned free economic zone “Alliance”, since 2015, Armenia has launched two additional zones on the Iranian border: “Meridian” and “Meghri”.

#### COST OF ENERGY IMPORT

Within the Soviet Union, the Republic of Armenia has been an important knot of the energetic system of South Caucasus. Several thermal power plants and Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant have processed combustibles

forthcoming from the other republics (including Azerbaijan) and powered as Armenia, so the other region's republics. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the conflict in Artsakh have undermined the country's energetic security. Therefore, diminished cost of energy import has been among the crucial benefits Armenia has inferred from the Eurasian integration. Subsequently to Armenian accession, the price of gas exported from Russian Federation to Armenia has decreased from USD 190 to USD 165 per thousand cubic meters.

Importantly, the energetic sector in Armenia provides an illustration of the way Eurasian integration fosters intra-Union business cooperation projects. Russian state corporation "Rosatom" has been engaged in the project on modernizing and prolonging the term of exploitation of the Armenian Nuclear Plant. The implementation of the initiative will allow improving efficiency of the power unit in operation by 10-15% (Official website of the state corporation "Rosatom", 2019).

### MIGRANTS' INVESTMENT

The large diaspora of Armenian living abroad represents an important source of injections into domestic economy. Whereas the remittances of the labor migrants are important but unsustainable source of income of Armenian households (in particular, personal remittances from the EAEU Member States to Armenia account to about 10% of GDP yearly), the contribution to national economy provided through investment channel should neither be neglected.

Armenian businesspersons are actively exploiting the opportunities provided by the EAEU common economic space. According to Forbes.ru, in 2017, 7 among 200 richest people in Russia were Armenian.

The evidence is ample that the expats have strong ties with the home country. To illustrate, Russian diaspora is the major investor to "All Armenian Fund"; Murad Muradyan, the founder of construction "Company" has invested USD 130 mln into the Armenian economy; Samvel Karapetyan, head of industrial-construction unit "Tashir Group" repurchased all the "Electric networks of Armenia" shares from "InterRaouEes" portfolio. Philanthropist and venture investor, Ruben Vardanyan, has financed a number of educational projects in Armenia, including "Tatev Revival" (tourist project) and the establishment of the Dilijan International School (Ter-Mat- evosyan et al., Ibid).

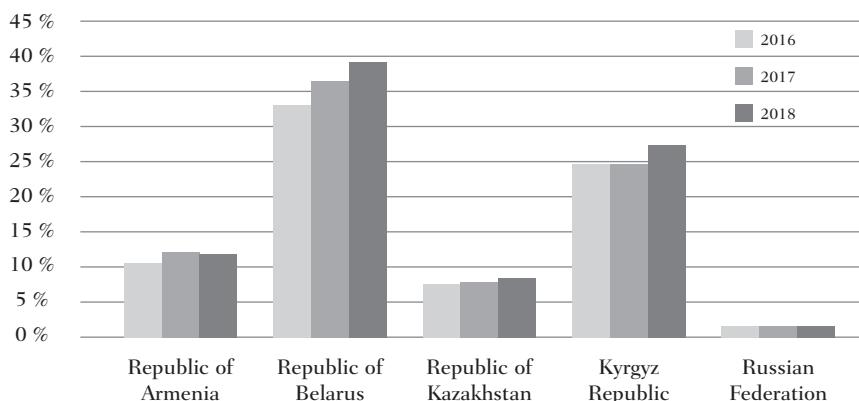
## V. REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

### INTRA-EAEU TRADE

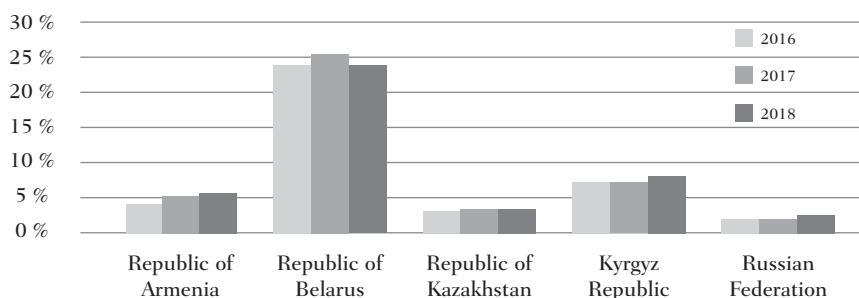
Belarus appears to have been the major beneficiary of the trade liberalization within the EAEU. Both import and export of the Republic of Belarus in the

intra-EAEU trade have constituted considerably higher share of GDP than in the rest of the Member States. However, it worth noting that despite the fact that the Republic of Belarus has been a net exporter in trade with Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, in total intra-EAEU trade, it has remained a net importer due to substantial deficit in trade balance with Russian Federation (which has accounted for more than 90% of Belorussian export to and more than 99% of import from EAEU).

INTR- EAEU EXPORT BY EAEU MEMBER STATE, 2016-2018(%GDP)



INTR- EAEU IMPORT BY EAEU MEMBER STATE, 2016-2018(%GDP)



SOURCE: EEC, authors' calculations

The Republic of Belarus is an example of the accurate employment of the country's comparative advantages as a tool of trade diversification and industrial renaissance. The nomenclature of the country's exports to the Union's counterparties is rich; even the commodities characterized by the highest share in the total export – curd and cheese, trucks – have not accounted for more than 7% of the total trade flow (EEC, 2019). Belarus has proved as a

supplier of high-quality dairy products. However, the scope of its trade coverage has extended far beyond the foodstuff. Whereas the principal component of the country's imports is crude oil, i.e. the product that virtually does not undergo processing, the exporting niches of Belorussian businesses comprise higher value added items, including (apart from foodstuff) machinery and equipment, textile, products of chemical industry. Focusing on the sector of energy production, Belarus extracts value added not only from the re-exporting activities, but largely from processing oil and trading in the preparations thereof (medium and heavy distillates). Belarussian experience is a perfect illustration of how the country can capitalize on sustainable supply from the Union's counterparties so as to leverage its industrial potential.

### CHAINS OF VALUE ADDED

The experience of the Republic of Belarus in benefitting from building cooperative ties with the Union's counterparts has not been limited to vertical collaboration, but included numerous horizontal partnerships as well. As the accumulation of the expertise of several Member States appears to be the most expedient in the more complex production processes, it comes naturally that joint enterprises have been present in the more technologically advanced sectors. Several examples of Russia-Belorussia companies of joint capital include JSC "Brestgazoapparat" (gas stoves production), Closed JSC "Osipovichskij vagonostroitel'nyj zavod" [Osipovichy Railway Vehicles Building Plant], LLC "Mozyrskij neftepererabatyvajushhij zavod" [Mozyr oil refinery], "LLC IteraBelstroj" (construction of residential and administrative settings), "Junimilk-Shklov" (dairy production). Overall, as of 2018, there has been registered 1397 joint Russian-Belorussian enterprises (Integrated foreign economic information portal, 2018). Despite the geographic remoteness, Belarus has managed to establish joint companies with Kazakhstan as well: JSC "Agromashholding" [Holding of Agricultural machines] has acted as a platform for partnering in agricultural machines production; in a free economic zone "Astana – new city", there has been launched assembling of trucks "MAZ" and heavy duty vehicles "KazBelAz" (Shamshur, 2019). The establishment of the cooperative enterprises assists the Republic of Belarus in more efficient labor division, improvement of value added chains efficiency, enhance the national producers' competitiveness.

### COMMON MARKET OF ENERGY RESOURCES OF THE EAEU

The Republic of Belarus is one among the world's most dependent on energy supply countries. Therefore, the establishment of the common market of energy resources implying the guarantees of market pricing and elimination of all types of trade barriers hindering trade in energetic products (the con-

cept of which has been approved in 2016) appears to have been among the most appealing implications of Eurasian integration. Following the decision on the establishment of the Common Economic Space in 2010, Russia has abolished the export duty on oil directed to Belarus; in its turn, Belarus has committed to reimburse the duty levied on the refinery products to Russian budget. Further, the terms of cooperation have been repeatedly reconsidered: the adjustments included the introduction of premium for Russian suppliers, partial waiver of exports duty reinforcement. All the changes have been a matter of intensive discussion, which have become the most vivid lately, that the tax maneuver in Russian Federation has been initiated: the change in legislation stipulated the substitution of oil export duty by extraction tax, which would increase the purchase price for Belarus resulting in total losses of roughly USD 10bln. The conditions of trade in energetic products still appear to be susceptible to the prospective changes. However, it cannot be denied that in the previous years, Belarus has already reaped the benefits from favorable energy resources prices; when the roadmap on the creation of common energy markets is agreed on, Belarus will perhaps be the major beneficiary.

## VI. REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

### SHARED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AS A SPUR FOR COOPERATIVE BUSINESS STRATEGIES

The Republic of Kazakhstan's economy structure is comparable to that of the Russian Federation, which conditions certain researchers to apprehend that deepening integration might result in synchronization of business cycles in the two economies, therefore, increasing the vulnerability faced against the crisis and spurring "recessions export" (Hartwell, 2013). However, on the positive side of the corner, structural homogeneity determines the similarities in the two countries' technological development targets and patterns, which establishes a prerequisite for prospective creation of production chains. Kazakh and Russian enterprises appear to have already experienced the advantages of designing joint rather than independent value creation processes. To illustrate, the most evident implications of cooperation have been registered in the sector of energy production. The principal share of uranium (extracted by the state enterprise "Kazatomprom") is enriched by Russian state corporation "Rosatom". An important investor into Kazakh economy, JSC "Lukoil" is an active participant in mining operations in Tengiz, Karachaganak, Kumkol', as well as in the projects of Caspian Pipeline Consortium. In 2019, the company has launched a plant of lubricating oils in Kazakhstan possessing a productive capacity of more than 100 thsd tones yearly.

Other spheres of joint entrepreneurial initiatives include helicopter and railway car engineering, pharmaceuticals (in cooperation with Russian Federation<sup>6</sup>), rail tank-car construction (jointly with the Republic of Belarus) (Kirkham, 2015). What is more, although the industry modernization programs have been elaborated by the Member States independently, they provide noticeable opportunities for as horizontal, so vertical mergers (Tkachuk, 2014).

In the multilateral dimension, due to its Kazakhstan appears to be among the major beneficiaries of the joint Belarus-Kazakhstan-Russian initiative to launch railway corridor from China to Europe. The project is being implemented by the tripartite via the coordination of Joint transport-logistical company "Eurasian railway alliance". The road is to traverse Kazakh special economic zone "Khorgos", which has already undergone necessary refurbishment allowing improving the efficiency of container transit via decreasing the time cost of documentary checks and cargo rearrangement to 40 minutes per train. In comparison, the shortest time of operations on the other Chinese checkpoints totaled to 4 hours (Official website of "Қазақстан temirholshysy" gazette, 2019).

### FREE CIRCULATION OF LABOR FORCE

Considering the indirect implications of Eurasian integration on the prospects to achieve the established national priority to ensure innovative and technological development of Kazakh economy, free labor force circulation appears to provide the stimuli for the country's human capital development. The benefits of people exchange for Kazakhstan differ from those in as smaller economies of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan capitalizing on the remittances of migrants employed in (primordially) construction, so Russian Federation optimizing the cost of labor. Kazakhstan has declared its plans to leverage the potential of attracting the specialist of higher qualification to contribute to the country's development.

### CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Whereas due to geographical reasons, Kazakhstan used to be an important trade partner for both Russian Federation and Kyrgyz Republic since the establishment of statehood, trade liberalization appears to have provided specific spur to cross-border trade. Expectedly, this phenomenon is especially evident from the perspective of relations with Russian Federation: Kazakh-Russian land frontier is the longest in the EAEU. As of 2018, cross-border trade has accounted for roughly 70% of Russia-Kazakhstan trade turnover in 2018 (and slightly inferior to 20% of trade turnover between

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<sup>6</sup> Note. The total number of Russian-Kazakh enterprises of joint capital totals to roughly 6 thsd, as of 2017.

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). Importantly, the trade nomenclature has not been limited to agricultural products or resources extraction, but included: nickel products, railroad track, fertilizers, plastics etc., as well as educational and recreational services (EEC, 2019).

## VII. KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

### ADOPTION TO HIGH-QUALITY STANDARD OF TECHNICAL REGULATION

Despite the fact that Kyrgyz Republic has been at the outset of the preferential trade agreements of the CIS, as of 2010, when the Customs Union has been established, the country has not been able to fully leverage the advantages of the free trade because of technical barriers: the national sanitary, phyto-sanitary, veterinary and technical regulations have not complied with the stricter ones practiced in the Customs Union. Therefore, the exporters of Kyrgyz Republic needed to undergo expensive procedures of certification and testing and, thus, have been less competitive in both intra-CU and extra-CU markets; undoubtedly, this costs have been the most noticeable for the smaller businesses. What is more, for a particular list of items, exporting practices have become unachievable as the certification tests have revealed their incompliance with the quality standards. Alarmingly, the ‘non-tradable’ commodities have comprised the items of the spheres the most oriented towards exports: 66% of the garment industry enterprises have declared facing difficulties. In this vein, the adjustments to the technical regulations, implemented under the EAEU accession, have been an imperative for the restoration of the Kyrgyz Republic comparative advantages.

### RESTRUCTURING OF EXPORT FLOW

Prior to the EAEU accession, Kyrgyz Republic’s external trade strategy has been focused on re-exporting commodities from China. However, as the adoption of the common tariff has resulted in the increase of the import duty level, therefore, decreasing the opportunities of rent extraction, the comparative margin of the real sector businesses has improved. In this vein, the tougher trade policy conditions have provided a spur to the Kyrgyz industry and agriculture, enabling the economy to break the vicious circle of dependence on re-export. The statistics proves that Kyrgyzstan has managed to identify its comparative advantages and re-orient both intra- and extra-EAEU trade so as to leverage them. Recently, the share of the country’s traditional major exporting commodity, gold ore, in both trade outflows has decreased, whereas the supply of numerous textile industry items has skyrocketed. To illustrate, between 2016 and 2018, the delivery of female blouses has increased by USD 86 mln corresponding to more than 10 times growth in total and 6.5 times increment in intra-EAEU trade. Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan

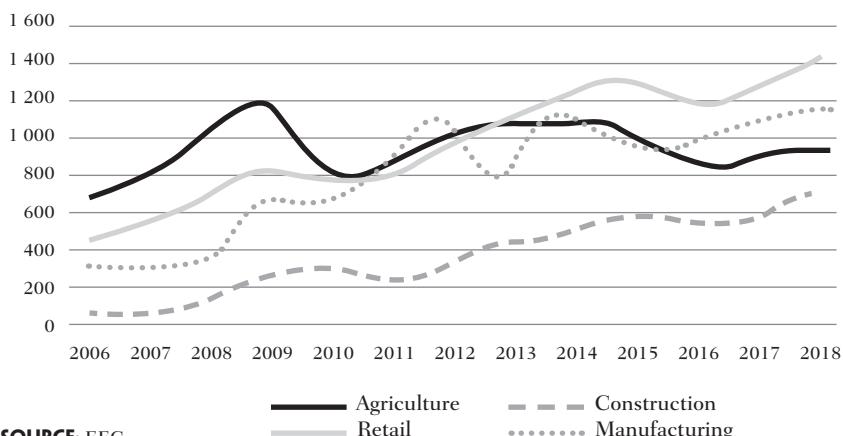
has embarked on the exports of higher value-added items that used to be absent on the nomenclature, including, nickel alloy plates, channels of iron and non-alloy steel, aluminum doors, windows, frames and sills.

#### INVESTMENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ENHANCEMENT

In the year of the accession to the EAEU, Kyrgyz Republic has experienced a robust growth in foreign direct investment from as the Union's counterparties, so the third states. The capital inflow has boosted the attractiveness of business and investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan, therefore, resulting in economy diversification and improved competitiveness. The EAEU counterparties have been the stakeholders of the improvement of quality of infrastructure, and more specifically, of customs infrastructure, as the Kyrgyz checkpoints connect the EAEU to the Central Asian republics. The foreign investors, in their turn, appear to have interpreted the EAEU accession as a shift towards stability, and enhanced investment ambiance. As early as in 2015, net FDI inflow in Kyrgyz Republic has increased by 12.6% in year-on-year terms; meanwhile, investment from Russian Federation has doubled.

For the purposes of Kyrgyz Republic adaptation to the EAEU Membership, there has been established Russia-Kyrgyz Fund. The favorability of loan provision conditions has had a stimulating effect on entrepreneurial initiative in Kyrgyzstan. What is more, in order to ensure that the quality of customs institutions and the control procedures corresponded to the EAEU requirements, the Union's counterparties have provided Kyrgyz Republic financial support. To illustrate, Russian Federation has allocated more than USD 6.5 bln for veterinary laboratories installation and USD 200 mln for checkpoint modernization. In its turn, the Republic of Kazakhstan has committed to allocate USD 100 mln for the purposes of infrastructure enhancement. Since

VALUE ADDED PRODUCED IN SELECTED SECTORS OF KYRGYZ ECONOMY, 2005-2018 (MLN USD)



SOURCE: EEC

the accession, there has already been refurbished two Kyrgyz checkpoints on the Chinese, and three – on Tajik and Uzbek frontier (Cherevyk, 2017).

Less explicitly, improved favorability of doing business in Kyrgyzstan appears to have provided the incentives necessary to spur the taxpayers to come out from the shadow economy. Whereas prior to the accession, the share of shadow economy accounted for, according to different estimates, 53%-60% of the country's GDP, becoming the EAEU member, Kyrgyz Republic has managed to decrease the indicator to 39% of GDP (*Ibid.*).

Despite the fact that Kyrgyz Republic has 'exported' recession following the imposition of sanctions against the Russian Federation in 2015, its economy has recovered in a concise term: since 2016, the growth rates of value added created in manufacturing, retail, construction and industry have been steadily positive.

#### FREE CIRCULATION OF LABOR FORCE

The Kyrgyz Republic has also benefitted from the free circulation of labor force along the EAEU. The elimination of barriers for migration has led to the decrease in illegal migration to Russian Federation: whereas in 2014, the number of cases of migration regulations breach totaled to 194 thsd (corresponding to 39% of the total number of migrants employed in Russian Federation), in 2015, it decreased to 118 thsd, and in 2017, to 77 thsd.

What is more, for Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation is an important employer and, therefore, source of substantial remitted income, empowering to lift certain households out of poverty. As of 2017, the number of Kyrgyz migrants employed in Russia constituted roughly 600 thsd, accounting for about 10% of the country's total population. Despite the declining number of arrivals to Russia from the other CIS states (but Armenia), the flow of migration from Kyrgyz Republic has amplified; the remittances injected in the home economy have been considerable even amidst the recession of 2015. The guarantees of equal rights for all the EAEU workers resulting in higher chances of employment and increased income of labor migrants in the countries of destination translating into higher living conditions of their families in Kyrgyzstan acted as a tool of poverty reduction.

### VIII. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

#### CULTURAL ASPECT: PROSPECTS TO DESIGN A NEW MACRO-REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The paragraphs above have largely demonstrated that Russian Federation has played an important role in the bilateral relations with each of the EAEU Member States. Nevertheless, for Russian Federation, the multilateral format of Eurasian integration is a matter of specific importance. The development

of the country appears to be fostered by the activation of the integration building; meanwhile, the country takes on the role of the integration locomotive. Economic and political primacy of the Russian Federation in the EAEU is objective and inarguable fact as in 2018, the country accounts for 84.9% of the Union's real GDP PPP, 79.6% of population and 84.4% of the total surface. The Eurasian integration provides Russian Federation a chance to restore its role of the global center of emergence of a new balance of power, new global financial, trade and economic architecture based on the principles of justice, harmony and cooperation among the Eurasian nations. Recalling the lack of progress in the integration initiatives implemented without the participation of the Russian Federation<sup>7</sup>, it can hardly be questioned that this role of the core of cooperation, at least as of now and at least due to its large territory, cannot be undertaken by any other Eurasian country (Glazyev, 2014).

Nevertheless, in contrast to the Customs Union's Commission, where the Russian Federation's voting power corresponded to its share in the Union's budget and constituted 57%, the Eurasian Economic Commission has subscribed to the principle of equality and despite contributing 88% of the supranational body's budget, Russia enjoys 20% of the votes. However, the Russian Federation's leading role in the EAEU was both its advantage and deficiency; diminishing voting power might have hindered the rapidness of decision-making process, but it undoubtedly ensured the counterparties' mutual confidence, which appears to increase the probability of undertaking more ambitious projects and bear fruits in the long run period.

### VALUE CHAINS RESTORATION

As afore discussed, Russian Federation has experienced the most considerable losses from the disruption of production cycle in the aftermath of the Soviet Union fall. The establishment of free movement of people, goods and capital over the EAEU has resulted in robust growth of joint entrepreneurial initiatives and vertical cooperation ties. The paragraphs above have listed examples of the joint enterprises and business initiatives launched by the Member States in cooperation with Russian Federation; to illustrate the intensity of cooperation more vividly, we refer to the evidence from cross-border regions, which appear to be the most susceptible to regulation simplification.

In Tavush region of the Republic of Armenia, there has been launched a 3 Ha vegetable garden, and the project on flour mill construction is under implementation.

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<sup>7</sup> Note. The cases of initiatives excluding Russia comprise hardly remembered associations, such as GUAM (composed of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova and, initially, Uzbekistan) and the Organization of Central Asian Cooperation (including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

In the Republic of Belarus, the joint enterprises operating in Gomel region are focused on construction activities, in Vitebsk and Mogilev regions – light industries (uniform tailoring and other garment). In Bryansk region, the joint Russian-Belorussian project on the corrugated cardboard articles has created 900 jobs; meanwhile, bicycle production has been launched.

Russian Altai region enterprises are the suppliers of materials for the production of electric stations, railway cars, geological prospecting equipment in Kazakhstan's Pavlodar region. Volgograd's "Volgogradneftemash" plant has produced 14 centrifugal oil pumps to be equipped in Pavlodar oil and chemical plant. Chevrolet NIVA assembling kits produces at Tolyatti plant (Samara region) are being supplied to Kostanai region for mass automobile production.

In Kemin region of Kyrgyz Republic, there has been launched the joint Russian-Kyrgyz production of single crystalline bars and solar panels that are being sold in Russia.

The demonstrated diversification of specialization of joint entrepreneurial initiatives launches by Russian enterprises in cooperation with the EAEU Member States highlights the benefits different sectors' businesses might infer from participating in intra-Union value chains.

### FREE CIRCULATION OF LABOR FORCE

Apart from the advantages Russian Federation infers from the decreasing incidence of illegal migration and reduced labor cost along with the steady increase in the share of EAEU-originated immigrants, it must not be neglected that the country capitalizes on the inflow of qualified workers as well. The educational system attracting the Member States' talents combined with the eliminated employment barriers results in opportunities to leverage the expertise of the Union's counterparties, which becomes particularly important provided the 'demographic pit'<sup>8</sup>. To illustrate, in the academic year 2018/19, as compared to 2013/14, the number of students arriving from Kazakhstan to pursue the higher education degree in Russia has increased by 43.6%, from Kyrgyz Republic – by 72.9%.

### TRADE EXPANSION

Albeit the share of both intra-Union exports and imports in the total external trade volume in Russian Federation is significantly lower than in the other EAEU Member States, in absolute values, Russian Federation's economic agents account for the greatest share of the both trade flows. What is more, Russian Federation appears to be the major EAEU trade partner for virtually

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<sup>8</sup> Note. In Russian Federation, negative natural population growth has been observed each year between 1995 and 2012 and returned into negative area again since 2016. Between the years 2009 and 2017, the country's population increased due to migration inflow.

all the world states and for all the countries that have concluded free trade agreements with the EAEU. As of 2019, six world economies, for which export from Russia has been inferior to that of any other EAEU Member State comprised Andorra, Reunion, Fiji (partnering with the Republic of Belarus), Afghanistan, Brunei, San-Marino (cooperating with the Republic of Kazakhstan), accounting in aggregate to less than 0.2% of extra-EAEU exports. Correspondingly, on the one hand, Russian Federation appears to bear the major benefits of the EAEU trade expansion strategy, including the conclusion of free trade agreements with the third countries. Notably, whereas Russian Federation's trade nomenclature remains to be dominated by hydrocarbons, the most rapid growth rates have lately been registered in the non-extraction segments. To illustrate, between the years of 2016 and 2018, the export of arc-welded longitudinal pipes for oil and gas pipelines with flux has increased 4.6 times, nickel supplies matte – 3.3 times, electrodes – 3.3 times. On the other hand, the elimination of the trade barriers in the intra-EAEU trade is as well the most evident for the totality of Russian Federation businesses: faced with the competition from the Union's counterparts in the sectors other than extraction, country's exporters seem to have obtained an opportunity to identify their revealed comparative advantage more precisely. To prove this thesis, intra-EAEU trade is less oriented towards the raw-material exports than extra trade is: in 2018, raw oil and refinery products have accounted for less than a third of Russian Federation exports to the EAEU countries and virtually a half of extra-EAEU exports (EEC, 2019). It might be therefore concluded that the exporters that are not, as yet, in a position to compete on external markets, tend to percept the common market as a platform to test and improve their competitiveness.

#### LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT

The geography of the Russian Federation conditions its status of a beneficiary of the transit and infrastructural potential development projects. Being a connector bringing together through land transport corridors all the Member States (but the Republic of Armenia), Russian Federation benefits from infrastructural projects and checkpoints' modernization in each of the Union's counterparties. This thesis becomes even more credible now that China has become Russian Federation's major trade partner having outstripped Netherlands: deepening trade and infrastructural partnership with China, employing, *inter alia*, the instruments of "One belt – one road" initiative. What is more, taking into account the mega-regional scope of the initiative, its benefits are to be translated in improved access not only to Chinese market, but to Central and South Asian markets as well. Finally, as the cooperation with China requires the infrastructural projects to be primary

implemented in the far-Eastern regions of Russian Federation, mega-regional initiative might act as a spur for equalizing the levels of economic development among the regions of Russian Federation (Skriba, 2016).

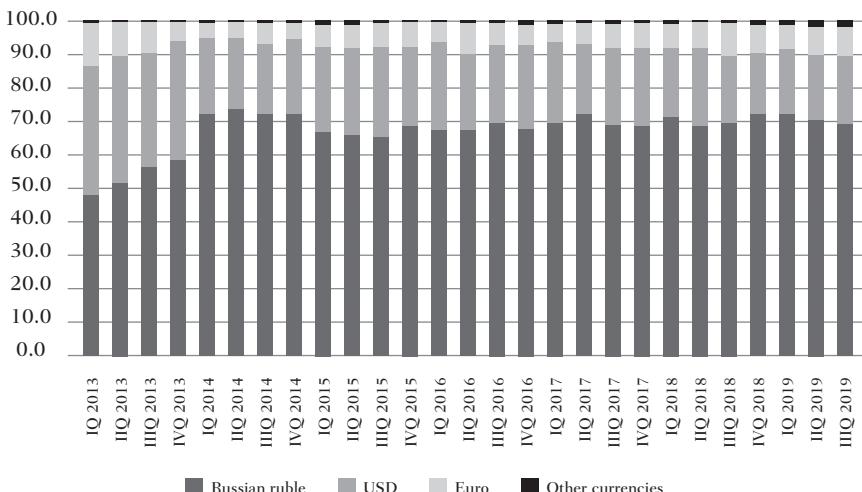
## RUBLE SETTLEMENTS PROMOTION

Being the Union's largest economy and the only Member State having positive balance in intra-EAEU trade, Russian Federation experiences the most evident effect from the ruble use expansion. Share of rubles in intra-EAEU trade settlement has reached a plateau at nearly 70% after having experienced a robust growth by more than 20 percentage points in 2013. In external trade, share of ruble has also tended to increase, however, at a far slower rate, which mirrors higher extra-EAEU trade specialization on raw oil usually traded in US dollars.

According to the experts survey carried out by Eurasian Development Bank (2018), apart from trade expansion, growth in ruble transactions is explained by improved access to ruble loan finance, activated cross-border cooperation and the establishment of the EAEU common capital market. What is more, in 2016, EADB has launched credit lines in national currencies and has proposed market-maker services for ruble-tenge pair.

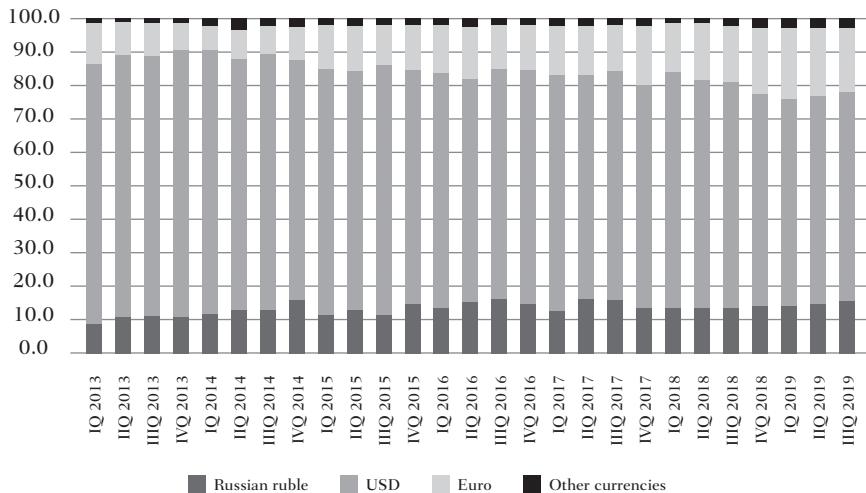
In its turn, the growing role of ruble in settlements and dedollarization of economy spurred by intensified cooperation with the EAEU Member States improves the efficiency of national monetary policy via enhancing the signal transmitted through central bank's transactions to the money market rates, which results in more predictable and sustainable macroeconomic environment (Kuznetsov & Ivanova, 2018).

**STRUCTURE OF CURRENCIES USED IN MERCHANTISE TRADE SETTLEMENT IN INTRA-EAEU**



## STRUCTURE OF CURRENCIES USED IN TOTAL EXTERNAL TRADE TURNOVER

152

**SOURCE:** the Bank of Russia.

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The historical experience has demonstrated that the major benefit provided by the Eurasian integration, i.e. the chance to restore the cooperation ties and build joint value creation chains, is diluting along with the ‘demurrage’ in implementation of pro-active integration initiatives. Insufficient intensity of cooperation processes results in ‘qwerty effects’ of increasing cost of changing the established supply chains, transit goods and trade deals. On the positive side of the corner, the heterogeneity of the Union’s economies and the unity of the national strategic priorities provide a clear path for continuing reaping benefits from the integration processes. However, the extent to which the effects are to be tangible appears to be functionally dependent on the progress in full-scale implementation of the integration initiatives: introduction of coordinated industrial policies, development strategies; harmonization and development of technological base; improvement in innovative activity and technological readiness.

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Asia Central y la Unión  
Económica Euroasiática.  
Una visión latinoamericana



# Asia Central.

## El poder de la geografía o la geografía del poder

**SUMARIO:** I. Introducción II. El poder de la geografía III. La geografía y la historia IV.Roma y China, imperios distantes V. Los mongoles y el dominio de la geografía VI. Rusia y su relación con Asia Central VII. China y su relación con Asia Central VIII. China y Rusia. La vecindad incómoda IX. Asia Central y el Gran Juego del Poder X.La reconstrucción geopolítica de Asia Central XI.Comentarios finales XII.Bibliografía consultada

### I. INTRODUCCIÓN

Desde el inicio de la historia la región de Asia Central se ha destacado por ser una zona geográfica de características únicas que han contribuido de manera significativa a la definición de los eventos geopolíticos euroasiáticos. El territorio que ahora se reconoce como Asia Central, integrado por cinco países: Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán, Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán, por sus condiciones geográficas en general y orográficas en particular, ha venido acompañando desde siempre el relato histórico de la humanidad y de sus imperios más trascendentes.

En su lindero Suroeste, fue testigo cercano del nacimiento de las primeras organizaciones sociales del mundo (4000 a.C.), surgidas en las planicies mesopotámicas entre los ríos Éufrates y Tigris: los sumerios, caldeos y babilonios, entre otros. Con el tiempo también pudo observar la transformación del mundo antiguo a través de los imperios Persa (S.VI a. C), Macedonia (S.IV a. C), Romano (S. I a. C.), árabe (S.VII), etc. Fue parte de la cuna que empoderó los linajes mongoles y el marco geográfico obligado de los imperios ruso y chino, etc. De manera directa o colateral, Asia Central ha participado reiteradamente en el gran juego de los imperios.

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<sup>1</sup> Académico del Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, UNAM y Vicepresidente del Instituto para el Desarrollo Industrial y el Crecimiento Económico (IDIC).

El análisis de Asia Central, en el marco del gran escenario euroasiático,<sup>2</sup> por la importancia de su geografía (75% de la población mundial, 60% del Producto Interno Bruto y tres cuartas partes de los recursos energéticos del planeta),<sup>3</sup> ha sido una tarea que ha convocado en el tiempo a múltiples especialistas. Mackinder y Spykman, desde luego; pero desde Heródoto en su tiempo y en los tiempos modernos Morgenthau, Hodgson, McNeill, Diamond, Maçães, Kaplan, Frankopan, entre muchos otros, son parte de una corriente interesada en estudiar al factor geográfico como un elemento estratégico del acontecer geopolítico de los países, de las regiones y de los continentes.

La Unión Económica Euroasiática de 2015 (UEE), ligada a los procesos de asociación de la Comunidad de Estados Independientes (CEI) de 1991 y la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai (OCS) de 1996; junto con la creación de los BRIC de 2009, el Nuevo Camino de la Seda de 2013 y la Asociación Económica Integral Regional (RCEP por sus siglas en inglés) de 2020, entre otros, se presentan como parte de un proceso de reconstrucción geopolítica del *continente* euroasiático, que tiene como uno de sus pivotes centrales la región de Asia Central, y como actores principales a Rusia y a China, en su calidad de hegemones regionales históricos.

Asia Central, una región olvidada por el tiempo occidental, tiene ahora la necesidad de ser *redescubierta*, a pesar del papel relevante que ha tenido siempre a lo largo de la historia de la humanidad.

## II. EL PODER DE LA GEOGRAFÍA

A finales del siglo XVIII, una de las estadistas más relevantes de la historia de Rusia, Catalina la Grande, advertía que quien tenga el control de Siria podría dominar el Medio Oriente, en una apreciación histórica sobre un flujo de encuentros y desencuentros entre Europa y el continente asiático. Lo anterior era válido bajo la visión de una enorme puerta rusa, casi siempre cerrada, apoyada en su orografía por los Montes Urales que dominaban la

**2** Eurasia o Euroasia es el gran continente formado por las regiones históricas, también denominadas continentes de Europa y Asia. Hay criterios que también suman la placa continental de África para hablar de Eurafasia (Mackinder). En general, Europa y Asia han sido consideradas como continentes separados a lo largo de una línea que inicia en los montes Urales, río Ural, mar Caspio, las montañas del Cáucaso, el Mar Negro, el estrecho del Bósforo, los Dardanelos y el Mar Egeo (Concepto definición, febrero, 2021). Como también lo apunta Tzili, “Eurasia” se refiere al concepto acuñado, en primer término, por el geólogo austriaco Eduard Suess en 1885 para describir las conexiones geo-gráficas entre Asia y Europa. Dicho concepto fue retomado después por el geógrafo inglés Halford Mackinder, considerado el padre de la geopolítica clásica, para sustentar su “teoría del área pivote” o *Heartland*, de 1904. Hasta este punto, “Eurasia” era un término de dimensión geográfica, pero con implicaciones geopolíticas. Más tarde, el mencionado concepto fue usado por intelectuales de la Rusia imperial para la construcción de una identidad nacional y de una filosofía política para promover un movimiento “euroasianista” (Tzili Apango, Eduardo (Coord.), *Eurasia, aproximaciones a nuevas configuraciones glocales*, 2020, pág. 17-18).

**3** Kaplan, Robert D., *La venganza de la geografía*, 2014, p.111

frontera Noroeste de Asia con el contacto europeo; la cual continuada por las aguas del Mar Caspio, la difícil región del Cáucaso y su clima extremo, representaban en conjunto una sólida barrera de dominio ruso que sobrevive a la fecha.

En ese sentido, la posición de Siria y la propia Turquía, como países bisagra entre dos mundos, siempre han representado más que una frontera de contactos; han sido un cruce de caminos y la fuente de un debate que se continúa hasta nuestros días respecto de donde comienza Asia y donde termina Europa; el cual no solo alude a sus límites geográficos sino que trasciende al fondo de sus líneas culturales; partiendo del importante hecho histórico del origen del pensamiento filosófico grecolatino que en su etapa axial, tuvo una significativa influencia de una amplia corriente de pensadores de Mileto, ubicado en la Turquía de hoy, donde nacieron los primeros filósofos presocráticos como Anaximandro, Anaxímenes, Tales, etc. ; en Éfeso, en la Costa occidental de Asia Menor, donde se origina el importante pensamiento de Heráclito; el de Diógenes, en Sinope, Turquía; el de Anaxágoras, que nace con Clazómenas en Jonia, Turquía; Leucipo también en Mileto, Turquía y muchos otros que desde entonces nos hablan de una comunión de culturas. Incluso Heródoto, el gran decidor y padre de la historia moderna es originario de Halicarnaso, que actualmente es parte de Turquía.

Después de esa primera barrera continental euroasiática, dominada por el mundo de las percepciones,<sup>4</sup> el tema civilizatorio en su dimensión de ida y vuelta se enfrenta con una segunda puerta, Asia Central, la cual convertida en una severa aduana geográfica, ha venido decantando los diversos flujos bilaterales del poder, el comercio, la fe, la cultura, la guerra, etc.

La visión general de Asia Central se percibe actualmente a través de la integración geográfica de los cinco países ya señalados (llamados *stans* por su terminación), que ocupan una superficie estratégica de 4 millones de Km<sup>2</sup>. Autores como Hambly incluyen dentro de esta región a la República Popular de Mongolia (Mongolia Exterior) y las tres dependencias de China que actualmente se conocen como Región Autónoma de Mongolia Interior, Región Autónoma de Xinjiang, así como la Región Autónoma del Tíbet.

Partiendo de la primera acepción, que es el criterio que se sigue en este ensayo, se subraya la complejidad geográfica de una zona alejada de las costas marinas, que la convierte en un territorio aislado y desértico que limitó las posibilidades de un sedentarismo temprano. Su orografía, territorio de las cadenas montañosas más altas del mundo, le proveyeron de un cinturón que

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**4** La diferencia entre Oriente y Occidente- pensaba Edward Gibbon-, es arbitraria y varía alrededor del globo. Sin embargo, agrega Holland, tal diferencia existe, es decir que Oriente es Oriente y Occidente es Occidente, se cuenta entre las suposiciones más antiguas de la historia, y es mucho más antigua que las cruzadas que el Islam y que la cristiandad (Holland, Tom, *Fuego persa. El primer imperio mundial y la batalla por Occidente*, 2019, pág.19).

a manera de barrera de contención, restringió el flujo y la comunicación entre las diferentes civilizaciones de su tiempo.

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Su frontera meridional está marcada por un interminable cordón montañoso de 6,500 Km de longitud que va desde el Oeste chino hasta el Mar Negro, provocando una barrera que limita el acceso del Este y el Sureste Asiático; de igual modo que en sentido inverso, fue una de las causas del aislamiento atávico de China y Asia del Este. Dentro de esta barrera destacan las cadenas montañosas de Nan Chan, Altyn-Tagh, Karakórum, Hindú Kush, el Paropamisus, el Elburz y la cordillera del Cáucaso, los cuales se superponen de Este a Oeste. Todas estas montañas a lo largo de la historia han generado una barrera natural que ha dificultado significativamente el flujo de intercambios euroasiáticos debido a su grado de dificultad, que en algunos puntos se vuelven impenetrables, como en la zona de Kunlun, que se extiende más de 300 km. sobre el borde occidental de China, al lado de la cordillera del Pamir, alargándose hacia el Este y convirtiéndose en la frontera Norte del Tíbet. Al Sureste de estas formaciones destaca el Himalaya, que es una cordillera que aloja al techo del mundo, donde hay más de cien cimas que superan los 7,000 metros de altura y catorce de ellas rebasan los 8,000 metros, las cuales se extienden a través de Bután, Nepal, China, India y Paquistán. Este escudo orográfico se continúa en el Sur de Asia Central con sus límites con Irán, por los montes Kirthar y Suleimán, y al Suroeste por los Zagros.

MAPA 1. OROGRAFÍA ASIÁTICA



FUENTE: Sociales J-A

Asia Central bajo esta orografía aparece como una isla árida cruzada por dos de sus ríos más importantes, el Amu Daria (llamado Pamir u Oxus por los griegos) y el Sir Daria (llamado Orexartes o Yaxartes por los griegos); como un territorio rodeado en su mayor parte por una cadena impresionante de montañas, donde destacan como ya se dijo, el Hindú Kush, que se prolonga a los Himalaya y se extienden hacia el Norte hacia la cordillera del Pamir, la cual se prolonga en Asia Central hacia las montañas de Tian Shan, que se ubican en la región fronteriza entre Kazajistán, Kirguistán y de manera relevante con la zona estratégica de Xinjiang.

Escondidos entre sus nudos montañosos y la travesía de sus ríos se extienden sus llanuras de Bada Kshán y Fergana, las cuales también desde siempre se significaron por albergar lo más representativo de la zona como sus rubíes y turquesas o sus famosos *caballos del cielo*, que tanto fueron deseados por las diversas sociedades de su tiempo, entre ellas, las importantes dinastías chinas Han y Tang.

Junto con su impresionante orografía, a Asia Central la complementa la múltiple presencia de sus desiertos, que de igual modo contribuyen a la dificultad de su tránsito. Ust-Urt, entre el Mar Caspio y el Mar Aral; el de Karakum, entre Kopet Dagh y el río Amu Daria; el Kyzyl Kum, que separa los cursos inferiores del Amu Daria y el Sir Daria; el semidesierto de Betpak Dala; el gran Desierto de Gobi que separa la Mongolia exterior de la interior; y el famoso desierto de Taklamakán, al Sur de las montañas chinas de Tian Shan, cuyo tránsito fue un reto permanente para los viajeros y comerciantes de la Ruta de la Seda.

Resumiendo esta particular diferenciación geográfica con la importancia geopolítica de la zona, Hambly comenta “Asia Central ha realizado dos funciones distintas y en cierto modo contradictorias en la historia de la humanidad. Por una parte, como resultado de su enorme extensión, en la que predomina la aridez y la ausencia de ríos de comunicación (la mayor parte de sus cuencas fluviales vierten en el Océano Ártico), su principal función ha sido la de separar a las civilizaciones establecidas en su periferia (China, India, Irán, Rusia, etcétera). Por otra parte, Asia Central ha resultado ser un eslabón frágil, pero casi nunca roto, por medio del cual esas mismas civilizaciones periféricas adquirieron un conocimiento limitado acerca de sus vecinos, además de unas mercancías valiosas, que de otra manera les hubieran resultado inalcanzables o, por lo menos, mucho más difíciles de obtener.”<sup>5</sup>

### III. LA GEOGRAFÍA Y LA HISTORIA

Vivimos un universo de alrededor de doscientos Estados, apuntan Burbank y Cooper, donde el mundo de Naciones- Estado que hoy conocemos apenas tie-

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<sup>5</sup> Hambly, Gavin, *Asia Central*, 2019, pp. 6-7

ne sesenta años de edad. En torno a ello, la vida de los imperios es la realidad que ha prevalecido a lo largo de la historia<sup>6</sup>; y dentro de ésta desde el principio de los tiempos el principal debate es el que se ha escenificado dentro de la región de Asia Central en su importante papel de *cuna de la humanidad*.

Las primeras civilizaciones fueron en su momento hegemonías o imperios asiáticos que contemporizaron con los primeros Estados griegos de la época, así como con una organización política romana en gestación que poco a poco se fue transformando de monarquía (S. VIII a. C.) a imperio (27 a.C.), en el cruce de una era antigua a una era moderna. Tanto China como India obedecieron al determinismo de su geografía construyendo sus fundamentos civilizatorios y su realidad geopolítica, en lo que corresponde a Asia Oriental y Asia del Sur respectivamente, en el marco de lo que sería su propia circunstancia. En Asia Central y Asia menor, por otro lado, organizaciones políticas adelantadas como el imperio persa, desde el siglo VI a. C., lograba un dominio del mundo antiguo que en su mejor momento abarcó en el Oeste desde las fronteras con Grecia, hasta las poblaciones limítrofes de Sogdiana y Gandhara en la región Noroeste de la India, pasando por los territorios meridionales de Asia Central de Aracosia, Bactria, Partia, entre otras.

El imperio persa, un pueblo de las llanuras montañosas de Irán, tuvo el acierto de convertirse en el primer gran imperio de la historia y encumbrar a Jerjes, uno de sus primeros reyes, como uno de los hombres más poderosos del planeta. Persia, apunta Brown, era ante todo una *potencia asiática central*; el primer eslabón entre Oriente y Occidente<sup>7</sup>.

La fortaleza y dimensión del imperio persa fue bien documentada por una narrativa occidental encabezada por Heródoto, así como por una Grecia que le tocó resistir el primer *choque de civilizaciones* entre Europa y Asia; en esta ocasión en el papel de un defensor heroico (Maratón, Termópilas, etc.) que con su gesta rescató los prolegómenos axiales de Europa y la cultura occidental. ¿Por qué -se pregunta Heródoto desde hace más de dos milenios- a los pueblos de Oriente y Occidente les resulta tan difícil vivir en paz?, contestándose a manera de lo que le respondían a su vez los griegos y los fenicios: que acaso hubiera sido el incendio de Troya. Holland agrega, "...si los orígenes del conflicto entre Oriente y Occidente ya parecían perderse en el mito, no ocurría lo mismo con sus efectos, que pronto se hacían evidentes de un modo trágico. La diferencia había engendrado la sospecha, y la sospecha engendraría la guerra."<sup>8</sup>

Frente al primer imperio asiático de dimensión euroasiática que fue el persa, surge en el siglo IV a.C., en el Noroeste de Grecia, el primer imperio

<sup>6</sup> Burbank, Jane; Cooper, Frederick, *Imperios. Una nueva visión de la Historia universal*, 2011, págs. 13-23

<sup>7</sup> Brown, Peter, *El mundo de la antigüedad tardía*, 2021, pág. 202

<sup>8</sup> Holland, Tom, *Ibídem*, pág. 19

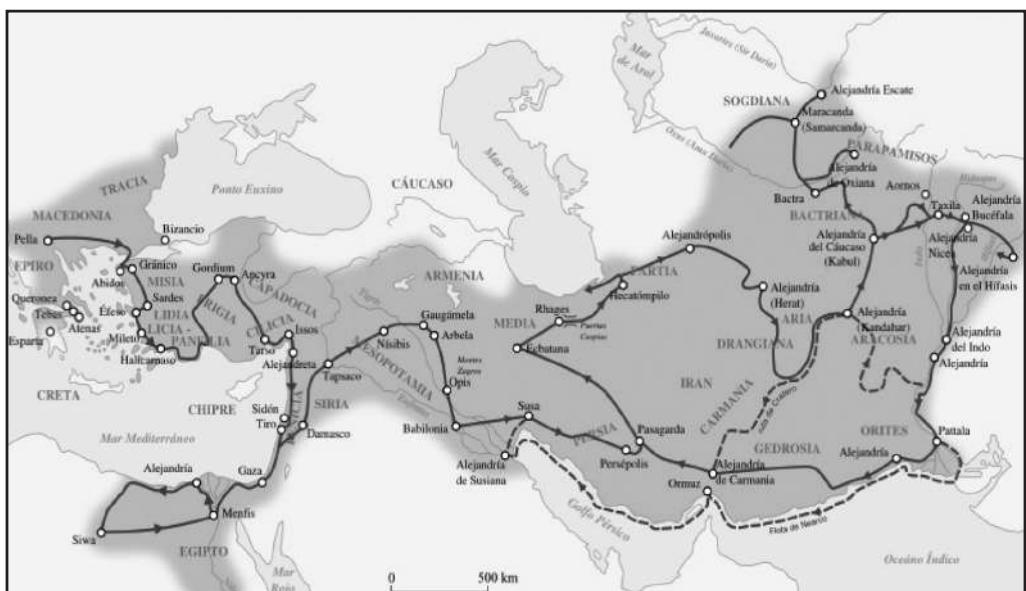
occidental que fue el macedonio, escenificando *un segundo choque de civilizaciones* del mundo antiguo que dispara una era de intercambio cultural entre los continentes europeo y asiático.

Si bien el imperio persa aglutinó la mayor parte del mundo antiguo de su época, salvo sus amargas derrotas en las guerras médicas con las ciudades-Estado griegas; los triunfos de Alejandro el Magno a partir de 336 a.C. que asume el trono, poco a poco se fueron subrogando sobre el imperio persa a través de sus grandes triunfos del Gránico, Tiro, Issos y de manera especial Gaugamela, donde el triunfo macedonio se impuso de manera contundente a las fuerzas superiores de un Darío III, en el 331 a. C. Esta hazaña de Alejandro representaría la primera victoria en la historia de un incipiente Occidente respecto a una Asia más grande y desarrollada.

Alejandro dominaría el mundo griego de su época, ocuparía los amplios territorios persas y prolongaría su campaña hacia el Este euroasiático, dejando registros de sus triunfos por medio de la fundación de una amplia cadena de más de 19 ciudades desde Turquía, hasta la India, pasando por Egipto, Irán, Paquistán, Afganistán y la región de Asia Central.

El imperio de Alejandro el Magno, de apenas 12 años de duración a causa de su muerte prematura, es el más claro ejemplo de un encuentro -choque de civilizaciones- entre dos continentes que nacen juntos, pero que también desde su nacimiento marcaron una frontera virtual sobre una posible unidad geográfica.

MAPA 2. RUTA DE CONQUISTA DE ALEJANDRO MAGNO



FUENTE: Historair

El imperio macedonio sigue siendo un ejemplo en la actualidad en múltiples dimensiones. En primer lugar, su triunfo abre una amplia avenida cultural donde el saber civilizatorio se desborda en ambas direcciones como nunca lo había hecho, llegando el conocimiento grecomacedonio a rincones asiáticos insospechados; al igual que el saber oriental es absorbido con mayor libertad por el conocimiento helénico. Los deseos universalistas de Alejandro, discípulo de Aristóteles, también marcan un antecedente para el mundo, al tratar de fusionar bajo una idea de *hermandad* a la cultura helenística con los pueblos asiáticos derrotados. La idea de una moneda y un gobierno común; de fusión de etnias a través de matrimonios mixtos; de una igualdad de razas, son antecedentes directos de una Unión Europea que apenas logra algunos de estos objetivos en el siglo XX.

Otro de los grandes méritos del macedonio fue que con sus escasos recursos tuvo la inteligencia y el valor de dominar a una geografía que ya desde entonces intimidaba a los actores políticos de la época. Sin embargo, ante el reto de vida que le asignaron desde el momento de nacer, como hegemón de la *ecúmene* de su tiempo, Alejandro se sintió obligado a marchar hacia el Este y no al Oeste, en la medida que el peso de la civilización y la riqueza de su tiempo se ubicaba en el continente asiático, frente a un Occidente que en esos tiempos, salvo el ascenso etrusco de Roma y la Grecia ya dominada, se dibujaba salvaje y bárbaro frente a la ilustración oriental.

Los comandantes griegos (macedonios), comenta Frankopan, miraban hacia el Este con una combinación de miedo y respeto, buscando aprender de las estrategias persas en el campo de batalla y de su *tecnología*. En las Bacantes de Eurípides (405 a.C.) se lee en sus primeras líneas que Dionisio exclama que vienen de la fabulosa y acaudalada región del Este; del lugar dónde lucen las planicies persas y las ciudades bactrianas son protegidas por murallas; el lugar donde Dionisio decidió *danzar* mucho tiempo antes que con los griegos<sup>9</sup>. Incluso para Heródoto en su gran epopeya del mundo antiguo narra que “El principal escenario de los acontecimientos históricos se encontraba mucho más hacia el Este, entorno al mar Egeo...”<sup>10</sup>

Alejandro fue el primer hegemón que decidió enfrentar los grandes retos geográficos de Asia Central. Abandonando las planicies de Susa y Persépolis, sube hasta las zonas meridionales de Partia y Bactria, llegando hasta las lejanas tierras de Samarcanda, fundando en su punto más alto a la ciudad de Alejandría Escate (la más lejana), que se ubica en lo que es ahora Tayikistán, cercana a la frontera con Uzbekistán y Kirguistán, las cuales representaban, junto con Kazajistán, la frontera Norte de Asia Central. También descendió

<sup>9</sup> Frankopan, Peter, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*, 2015, pág.3

<sup>10</sup> Albaladejo Vivero, Manuel, *La imagen de los pueblos lejanos en la obra de Heródoto*, 2007, pág.277

al importante valle de Fergana, en el lado Sur del río Sir Daria, en donde venció a los escitas y masagetas, habitantes nómadas de la zona.

Sus triunfos y avances en la hoy todavía remota región septentrional de Asia Central, lo llevaron a dominar los caminos que rodean la complicada orografía de los Hindú Kush, el Pamir y el Karakorum para llegar finalmente a las fronteras del Indo. Su deseo de seguir conquistando el mundo de su época, los *nebulosos reinos* más allá de las montañas, fueron cancelados por la renuncia de sus generales macedonios que cansados y temerosos se negaron a seguirlo en la aventura. Alejandro moriría en Babilonia de manera prematura en el 323 a. C., pero a pesar de la corta duración de su imperio, su huella geopolítica y civilizatoria sigue siendo un tema vivo en la historia de Euroasia.

Los dos imperios relevantes que siguen a la muerte de Alejandro, Roma por el lado occidental, y China como representante asiático, no obstante su importancia y dimensión histórica, no pudieron extender sus dominios más allá del nudo orográfico de Asia Central.

#### **IV. ROMA Y CHINA, IMPERIOS DISTANTES**

##### **CHINA**

Sobre los imperios romano y chino, Burbank *et al.*, comentan “Ambos imperios surgieron más o menos al mismo tiempo-entre el siglo III a. e. V. y el siglo III e.V. en dos extremos opuestos del continente euroasiático. Los productos chinos, comercializados a lo largo de rutas terrestres transcontinentales, llegaron al Mediterráneo, pero ninguno de los dos imperios supo nunca mucho uno de otro y ambos creyeron que regían el mundo entero.”<sup>11</sup> Frankopan, coincidiendo al respecto agrega “Aunque China tuvo contactos directos con Roma, el conocimiento de la región del Mediterráneo sobre el mundo que existía más allá de los Himalaya y del Océano Índico fue limitado.”<sup>12</sup>

La *intuición del otro* entre Roma y China estuvo presente en los momentos estelares de su naciente vida imperial, no obstante, ambas hegemonías nunca intentaron llevar a cabo una expedición militar respecto al otro más allá del intercambio comercial en el que participaron de manera indirecta a través de la Ruta de la Seda; pero de manera general su relación estuvo determinada por la distancia y la geografía de Asia Central.

La primera dinastía china nace en 221 a.C. gracias al talento militar de su primer emperador Qin Shi Huang, quien logra dominar a los siete reinos combatientes y hasta 206 a.C., que termina su dinastía, consolida un Estado poderoso que se expande principalmente hacia los territorios del Sur, llegando incluso a la ahora Vietnam. A diferencia de Roma, las diferentes dinastías

**11** Burbank, *et al.*, *Op. Cit.*, pág. 85

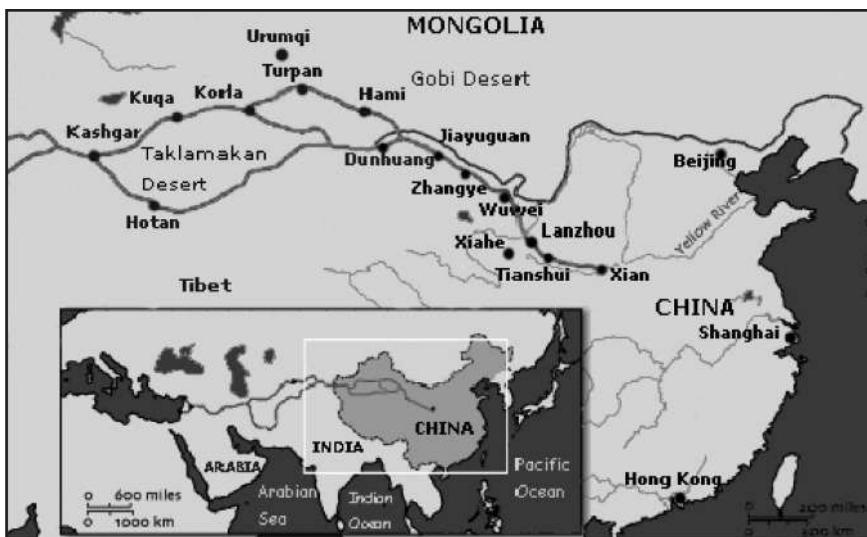
**12** Frankopan, *Op.Cit.*, pág.20

chinas se prolongan en un tiempo milenario hasta 1911, cuando fue depuesto el último emperador chino.

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El interés y expansión de China respecto al Oeste asiático llega con la dinastía Han (206 a.C.-220 d.C.), la cual en un largo reinado de más de cuatro siglos, lanzó su mirada hacia esta otra lejana y difícil geografía. El trayecto lo llevó a cabo desde su capital Xi'an (Antes Chang'an, que en sus momentos de apogeo llegó a sumar más de dos millones de habitantes), prolongándolo a lo largo del amplio corredor de Gansu, en el cual iba sumando al control chino las importantes ciudades de Lanzhou, Wuwei, Zhangye y el importante centro estratégico de Dunhuang, punto previo al cruce del gran desierto de Taklamakán, al final del cual se ubicaba la que sería la puerta china de Asia Central, la ciudad de Kashgar, en las faldas de las importantes montañas chinas de Tian Shan y limítrofe del nudo orográfico del Pamir, Hindú Kush e Himalaya.

MAPA 3. RUTA DE XIAN A KASHGAR



FUENTE: <https://semanarioprenslibre.wordpress.com>

Las primeras oleadas Han llegaron a la provincia de Xiju (región del Oeste, ubicada en lo que hoy es Xinjiang) enfrentándose con las belicosas tribus nómadas del Norte asiático de Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, etc., caracterizándose en su momento principalmente por los Yuezhi, Xiongnu (esta tribu tenía fama de comer carne y beber sangre humana), Escitas, etc., con los cuales los intereses chinos de expansión tuvieron que luchar y conciliar, llegando incluso a pagarles tributos de *no agresión* a cambio de permitir la estabilidad de la expansión China. Las sumas pagadas a cambio de la paz eran

substanciales. En el siglo I a.C., por ejemplo, China pagó a los Xiongnu cerca de 30 mil rollos de seda y una cantidad similar de otras mercancías, así como 370 piezas de diferentes tipos de ropa, buscando con ello además de pagar la paz, introducir el mundo chino.<sup>13</sup>

Conforme el imperio Han se fue afianzando, la posición China de Asia Central fue ganando en fortaleza; consolidándose en el año de 119 a.C., cuando culminaron las campañas militares que le dieron el control del importante corredor de Gansu y la ciudad de Kashgar. En este momento comenta Frankopan, China abrió para el mundo el importante corredor transcontinental, de igual modo que fue el momento histórico del nacimiento de la Ruta de la Seda.<sup>14</sup>

Así como la epopeya helenística-macedonia descubre para Europa la visión de una Euroasia ampliada, China desde Asia del Este hace lo propio abriendo a través de Kashgar una puerta euroasiática a través de la cual circularía a manera de una caravana de la seda, todo el cúmulo de conocimientos civilizatorios entre ambos mundos; un proceso que a pesar del tiempo transcurrido no se agota.

A través del emperador Wu Di, de la dinastía Han (141 a.C.-87 a.C.), uno de los monarcas más reconocidos de la historia china, el país asiático se abocó al crecimiento y consolidación de los territorios imperiales en todas las direcciones (Corea, Vietnam, Cantón, etc.). En lo referente a Asia Central, atravesando el paso de Kashgar, se adentró por la región del Pamir hasta el importante valle de Fergana, después de derrotar a los nómadas Xiongnu y aliarse con los Yuezhi y Kangju, llevando a la recién instalada civilización confuciana hasta el centro mismo de Asia Central y sus importantes vecinos regionales.<sup>15</sup>

A final del primer siglo d.C., el general chino Ban Chao (32-102) encabezó diferentes expediciones hasta el Mar Caspio, llevando a China una mayor información de la región, entre ella, la de una *grande y destacada* población-imperio en el Oeste a la que llamaron Da Qin -el gran Qin-, refiriéndose al imperio romano, del cual se dijo tenía grandes reservas de oro, plata, piedras preciosas y era fuente de un abasto abundante de maravillosos y raros objetos.<sup>16</sup> No obstante, su mayor trato y comercio se centró en el valle de Fergana, así como con los herederos del imperio persa, con quienes comerciaron múltiples caravanas de bienes chinos a cambio de perlas, jade, lapislázuli y bienes comestibles como cebollas, pistaches, albaricoques pepinos, etc., a los que en China se llamaban *bienes persas*.

**13** Frankopan, *Op.Cit.*, pág.10

**14** *Ibidem*

**15** Tucker, Spencer, *A Global Chronology of Conflict: From the Ancient World to the Modern Middle East*, 2009, págs.110-111

**16** The Silk Road, *Insight Guides*, 2017, págs.46-47

La historiografía china de la época, abundante en cifras y conceptos, registró como en su momento lo hizo con Corea, Japón, Vietnam, etc., las primeras reseñas de la zona. Sima Qian (145 a. C.-90 a. C.), considerado el fundador de la historiografía china, describe parte de la historia, costumbres, economía, fuerza militar, etc., de los pueblos del valle del Indo, Persia y Asia Central; a ésta última la refería como una región débil, pobre en armamento y en uso de las armas; aunque agregaba que los pobladores de la zona eran muy astutos para el comercio. Sus descripciones las plasma en su gran obra llamada *Memorias Históricas*, conocida también como *Shiji o Recuerdos del Gran Historiador*, compuesta entre los años 109 a. C. y 91 a. C., en la cual intenta narrar 2500 años de historia china.

También sobre el tema destaca una colección de 35,000 textos del pueblo de Xuanquan, ubicado en el corredor de Gansu y cerca de la ciudad de control del comercio de Dunhuang, los cuales registran las operaciones diarias del comercio chino con Asia Central. En estos registros realizados en tabletas de bambú y madera se llevaba el control de toda persona que entraba a China, con un asentamiento a detalle del dinero que llevaban, donde lo gastaban, al lugar al que se dirigían, su ciudad de origen, del comercio realizado etc.; ratificando con ello la idea de la meritocrática y *moderna* administración pública con la que China ha contado desde el nacimiento de su imperio.<sup>17</sup>

Este encuentro de China con la región euroasiática a través de la puerta geográfica de Asia Central, se mantendría con intermitencias de acuerdo al pulso y vitalidad de cada dinastía en arreglo a su circunstancia histórica.

### CHINA Y EL CAMINO DE LA SEDA

En el marco del dominio chino de Asia Central, el emperador Wu Di encargó al Embajador Zhang Quian que se internara en la difícil geografía de la región en busca de información, expansión y comercio. En ese momento China venía, como ya se dijo, de presumir la fundación del primer Estado moderno, al mismo tiempo que inauguraba los primeros trabajos de unificación de la ahora muralla china, como defensa ante los bárbaros del Norte, en especial de los Xiongnu y otros pueblos de Asia Central.<sup>18</sup>

En el cumplimiento de su misión, el Embajador Zhang traspasó la puerta asiática y acudió a las tribus enemigas de los Xiongnu para construir un frente militar contra este acecho. Zhang Qian fue un Embajador joven que en busca de su cometido se introdujo hasta la actual Tayikistán. No obstante, en

<sup>17</sup> Frankopan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.12

<sup>18</sup> La Muralla China se inicia por el Primer Emperador Qin en el siglo III a. C., al expandir y unificar una red de fortificaciones que existía previamente y que habían establecido los Estados de Qin al Noroeste, de Zhao al Norte y de Yan al nordeste. (Relinque, Eleta, et. al. *La construcción del poder en China*, 2009, pág.146-152)

su primer acercamiento a la región fue hecho prisionero y pasó once años como pastor en la zona de los Xiongu. Escapando a su cautiverio arribó al importante Valle de Fergana, en ese entonces en poder de los Dayuan. De regreso a China fue capturado nuevamente, aunque pudo regresar a Chang'an después de 13 años de viaje y cautiverio. En 115 a.C., en un segundo viaje, el Embajador Zhang regresa a Asia Central, dando continuación a un intercambio cultural y comercial entre el Este Asiático y la Asia Central que no se ha detenido.<sup>19</sup>

El camino de la seda, en su origen, es un primer encuentro entre Occidente y Oriente a través de las presunciones, las mercancías y las especias. En el inicio del camino la contraparte occidental del segundo imperio chino era el imperio romano, el cual sabía desde Alejandro, que más allá de Antioquía (Siria) y de Persia (Irán), existían grandes reinos que nunca quiso explorar para no exponer la estabilidad del imperio. China hizo lo propio, a pesar de haber lanzado y protegido una caravana de la seda que le abrió comercio con pueblos lejanos y desconocidos. A pesar de que se afirma que desde Tiberio (370 d.C.) se conocían los vestidos de seda y que China sabía de Roma, lo cierto es, como ya se adelantó, que los antiguos imperios de Occidente y Oriente no se conocieron;<sup>20</sup> que los romanos creían que la seda crecía en los árboles y solo hasta 652 d. C., unos monjes nestorianos introdujeron a Europa capullos de gusano de seda escondidos en el interior de una caña de bambú.<sup>21</sup>

China se conformó con saber de Asia Central y Roma no quiso ver más allá de Antioquía, en un primer encuentro Oriente-Occidente donde se supo del otro pero no hubo una voluntad política de expansión. Dentro de estas intuiciones, la caravana de la seda funcionó como un testigo *del otro* evidenciado por sus mercancías, que en el caso de China eran encabezadas por la seda y se multiplicaban en porcelana, maderas preciosas, metales preciosos, gemas, especias, animales, etc. Desde luego la diplomacia china desde entonces se hizo presente, como un arma estratégica de hacer negocios:

“Las palabras de los chinos fueron desde siempre suaves, sus contenidos siempre débiles. Con sus palabras suaves y sus contenidos débiles, así se dice, los chinos atraen a los pueblos que viven lejos...”

(Inscripción en turco antiguo, Mongolia, Höllmann, 2015)

**19** Para mayor información sobre el tema consultar: Insight Guides, *The Silk Road*; Peter B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History*; Chun-shu Chang, *The Rise of the Chinese Empire: Frontier, Immigration, and Empire in Han China, 130 B.C.-A.D.157*; Sima Qian, *Las Memorias Históricas (Shiji)*; etc.

**20** Decía Séneca “Estos trajes de seda son adquiridos a un enorme precio a pueblos que no son conocidos por su comercio: solo para que nuestras mujeres dejen ver de ellas tanto en público como a los adulteros en el dormitorio” (Höllmann, Thomas, *La Ruta de la Seda*, 2015).

**21** Polo, Marco, *Los viajes de Marco Polo. Relatos por el mismo*, 2014.

Pero también la Ruta de la Seda fue una arteria abierta entre las civilizaciones de Oriente y Occidente, a través de la cual transitaron las religiones<sup>22</sup>, los movimientos insurgentes, las invasiones, los esclavos, el oro, la plata, la guerra, etc. De igual modo, se abrió una ruta civilizatoria donde se filtró la cultura *del otro*, la cual tuvo una intermitencia determinada por el ciclo geopolítico del momento, de gran florecimiento, por ejemplo, en la era Han, pero dominada por los Kushans en el siglo III d. C. Relanzada con la dinastía Tang y defendida durante la Pax Mongólica (siglo XIII), colapsa junto con el imperio mongol. El surgimiento del imperio Otomano (1299-1922) vuelve a emplazar su operación y motiva la inauguración de una Ruta Marítima de la Seda que surge junto con la innovación de barcos e instrumentos chinos de los siglos XIV y XV que partía desde Nan King (China), pasaba por el Suroeste de la India (Calcuta), y llegaba a Ormuz (mar de Arabia) y a Malindi, en la actual Kenia. Su expresión más audaz la tuvo en 1405 cuando se llegaron a fletar más de 300 barcos en los que se contaban 72 para el transporte de mercancías. Sin embargo, por razones aún polémicas, los emperadores chinos Ming decidieron cancelar la ruta marítima, dejando solo tramos cortos, motivando el quiebre de su flota en un momento en que el mundo debatía su futuro geopolítico en los mares. En el siglo XIX la Ruta de la Seda se vio definida por la influencia rusa. En los siglos XIX y XX se da el declinamiento del imperio chino, que pierde capacidad de protección respecto a sus viajeros y comerciantes. El renacimiento occidental y el declinamiento de China motivan el inicio del olvido de una figura milenaria que paradójicamente se le reconoce históricamente como *La Ruta de la Seda* por el geógrafo Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen hasta 1877.<sup>23</sup>

**22** La ruta de la fe, dentro del Camino de la Seda, fue un tema de la mayor relevancia en el intercambio euroasiático. El taoísmo y confucianismo del lado de Oriente; el budismo e hinduismo de parte del Sur asiático; el zoroastrismo e islamismo de Asia del Suroeste y Asia menor; nestorianismo, judaísmo y cristianismo de Asia Occidental, son algunas de las expresiones religiosas o *cuasi* religiosas que viajaron junto al camino de la seda. Como ejemplo de lo anterior, se calcula que por lo menos 54 monjes budistas chinos, empezando por Zhu Shixing (260), hasta el monje Wukong, que estuvo en India por más de 40 años (789), realizaron el difícil y peligroso viaje entre China, Asia Central e India, en busca de las *escrituras budistas*. Xuanzang (596-664), fue uno de los monjes más conocidos y respetados de la época y su vida dio pie a la famosa obra “The Journey to the West”, que narra vicisitudes del monje en su viaje al reino de Magadha (Bodhgaya), para lo cual tuvo que cruzar parte del *camino de la Fe* entre otras, las ciudades de Turfán, Darashar, Tashkent, Samarkanda, Bactria, Kapisa, Kashmir, etc. (*The Journey to the West*, Volume I, traducción de Anthony Christopher Yu, 2012, págs 1-4).

**23** Sobre el Camino de la Seda, Pérez García apunta que es un concepto vago y poco claro, que se usa con cierta parcialidad. Que Li Bozhong ha sostenido que el *Camino de la Seda* es un concepto y una *ilusión* de naturaleza abstracta, que terminó en 1524 cuando el emperador Ming Jiajing cerró el comercio entre China y las regiones occidentales. Que tiempo después durante la dinastía Qing hubo ciertos períodos de puertas *abiertas* que sucedieron en el reinado del emperador Kangxi, aunque en general el comercio oficial internacional de China fue muy limitado. Que este comercio circuló durante el periodo del emperador Qianlong, que fue el que estableció el sistema *cantonés* de regulación de comercio internacional. Aunque agrega finalmente que “El Nuevo camino de la Seda”, implementado en 2013, junto con el concepto de *características chinas* y las políticas neoconfucianas, son las estrategias chinas más importantes

Es ahora, en pleno siglo XXI, que China decide al amparo de su propia resurrección hegemónica, echar mano nuevamente de una alternativa de origen milenario que le da historia, sentido y rumbo a sus nuevos objetivos comerciales y geopolíticos con cerca de 70 países (49 países de toda Asia) en razón de que en alguna medida, todos ellos comparten en el recuerdo una larga historia de pertenencia y de rumbo. China como Thomas Friedman, cree que la tierra es plana y se alía con países asiáticos que el mundo global no recordaba y los invita a un gran proyecto económico. A través del BRI (*Belt and Road Initiative*) o Nuevo Camino de la Seda, China rescata a la zona del olvido y la pone de nueva cuenta en el mapa geopolítico como un *hub* estratégico de infraestructura, materias primas, gas, petróleo y poder global.

Ahora China, frente a la complejidad de Asia, en su nuevo emplazamiento económico-político, tendrá que lidiar con los problemas internos de Iraq, el relanzamiento iraní, los movimientos revolucionarios de Kirguistán (2005-2010), los problemas civiles-religiosos de Pakistán, la guerra civil en Siria, la presencia de ISIS en gran parte de Asia, la violencia en Tayikistán, el conflicto Kurdo, el regreso de los Talibanes en Afganistán, etc; los cuáles serán tan solo algunos de los temas que la retarán para llevar a buen puerto la audaz iniciativa del Nuevo Camino de la Seda.

## ROMA

Roma, surgida bajo el mito de su fundación en el 753 a.C., aparece como un crisol de pueblos sabinos, latinos, vénetos, oscos, etc., de innegable influencia griega y etrusca, en un debate permanente sobre sus orígenes orientales (Ducati, Blich,etc.), con lenguaje y ascendencia indoeuropea. Después de Alejandro, el imperio romano se convertiría en la expresión más lograda de la hegemonía occidental hasta su caída en el 476 d.C., en Occidente; y el 1453 en el Oriente con la toma de Constantinopla.

Durante su periodo de mayor éxito, con uno de sus mejores emperadores, Trajano, llegó a acumular un imperio de 5 millones de Km<sup>2</sup> y el 35% de la población mundial. En el caso de China, durante la dinastía Qing (S. XVII), el imperio asiático llegaría a extenderse hasta 14 millones de Km<sup>2</sup> con un control de 381 millones de personas (36% de la población mundial de su momento).

Roma se desarrolla de manera sorprendente y poco a poco va dominando a las potencias militares de su tiempo. Antes del cambio de era, ya controlaba los territorios occidentales conocidos y se perfilaba como Alejandro, a la ampliación de sus intereses hacia la región del Este asiático, en el cual se ubicaban las mayores riquezas de la época. Egipto, Jerusalén, Damasco, Anatolia, también las domina antes del término de la era antigua; y a Siria,

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para tener el liderazgo del poder mundial (Pérez-García, Manuel, *Global History with Chinese Characteristics*, 2021, págs 23-63).

Palestina y otras regiones asiáticas las controla en los primeros siglos de nuestra era.

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La construcción de Roma como imperio poco tuvo que ver con el control de Europa, dada la limitación de su pago de impuestos y de su desarrollo, por lo que desde Julio César y más tarde con Octavio Augusto, orienta sus estrategias hacia el dominio de Egipto y su abundante producción de granos, así como hacia las grandes riquezas que se ofrecían más allá del Este del Mediterráneo en la región persa<sup>24</sup>. En este avance exitoso del imperio, Roma conoce de la existencia de un país lejano cuyas mercancías eran muy apreciadas y que en no pocas veces debilitaban su presupuesto público a través de la compra de un solo producto que era la seda, la cual en múltiples ocasiones causó consternación entre las costumbres romanas por lo transparente y delgado de la tela, que atentaba contra la *decencia* de las matronas romanas. Plinio el viejo, ante el alto costo de los materiales, los condenó por sus precios de escándalo, los cuales eran cientos de veces más altos que su costo, lo que ocasionaba que se generaran enormes cantidades de dinero al año que se pagaban a los comerciantes asiáticos y a los fabricantes chinos. La cifra que se llegó a pagar por la compra de prendas de seda llegó a alcanzar los 100 millones de sestercios al año, lo cual significaba alrededor del 10% del presupuesto anual de Roma.<sup>25</sup>

Conscientes de las riquezas de Oriente y en la dinámica de crecimiento del imperio romano, hubo diversos emperadores que emprendieron personalmente la tarea de ampliar fronteras hacia esos territorios de riqueza y civilización desconocida. Octavio Augusto, como ya se dijo, en su visión asiática mandó expediciones a Yemen, al Golfo Pérsico, Mar Rojo, a los caminos de Asia Central y Persia; donde a través de las *estaciones partas*, en textos conocidos de la época, se comentaba que se tenía información detallada de la región del Éufrates a Alexandrepolis, lo que sería hoy la ciudad de Kandahar en Afganistán. Abundantes objetos romanos de la época han sido registrados no solo en los dominios persas, sino también en ciudades costeras de la India.

Roma intuía a la distancia la importancia de China. Algunos artistas como Horacio, motivados por la grandeza de Roma, no dudan en escribir que la dominación de Roma no solo se daba en la cuna del Mediterráneo, sino que incluía las conquistas de India y China.<sup>26</sup> El propio Emperador Trajano, en el clímax de la mayor ampliación del imperio,<sup>27</sup> encabezó personalmente las incursiones más agresivas hacia el Este, pasando del Cáucaso al curso del río Éufrates, conquistando a Nísibis y Batnae; dirigiéndose después al centro

**24** The Silk Road, *Op. cit.*, pág.47

**25** Frankopan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.18

**26** *Ibíd*, pág.20

**27** Roldán, José Manuel, *El Imperio Romano Tomo II*, 1989, pág.201

del imperio persa de la época dominando Adenystrae, Babilonia, Seleucia y Ctesifonte, lo cual motivó que el Emperador mandara a acuñar las monedas *persia capta* (Persia ha sido conquistada). A pesar de sus importantes triunfos, Trajano muere en el camino de regreso a Roma. En 260 a. C. el emperador Valeriano también intenta personalmente incursionar por el imperio persa y es tomado prisionero y ultimado de manera violenta.<sup>28</sup>

El interés por avanzar en el dominio del reto asiático va disminuyendo conforme se va debilitando el imperio de Occidente. Sin embargo, en 330, justo en la frontera donde Europa y Asia se encuentran, el emperador Constantino decide buscar la continuación del imperio romano; no hacia Occidente, que pudo haber sido la protección de la historia, la geografía y la distancia, sino que se dirige hacia el Este, a la cuna de las civilizaciones donde Roma, bajo el Imperio de Oriente fincando en Constantinopla, continuaría su diálogo abierto con las importantes culturas de Asia por poco más de un milenio.<sup>29</sup> Desde el primer momento, la cultura cortesana del imperio de Oriente reflejó no sólo su herencia latina y su situación en el mundo griego, sino también la influencia de otros Estados con los que había venido chocando desde hacía siglos, especialmente el imperio de los persas sasánidas.<sup>30</sup>

Señala O'Donnell que "El imperio que Augusto habría solidificado estaba asentado en el Occidente latino, pero el grueso de su población y prosperidad se hallaba en el Este griego."<sup>30</sup> Roma se consolida con la riqueza asiática y declina con su debilitado control de la zona. Aun así, intenta a través de las campañas personales de algunos de sus emperadores ampliar su poder y hegemonía en la región; aunque nunca llegan a alcanzar el éxito económico y político de Alejandro.

Roma cambió su percepción sobre Asia en el momento que transformó su República en imperio. Para Constantino y el imperio romano, el cambio le significó también encontrar la fe; y esa fe también la encontró en el Este asiático.<sup>31</sup>

## V. LOS MONGOLES Y EL DOMINIO DE LA GEOGRAFÍA

La demografía de Asia Central siempre ha sido prolífica. Dentro de los pueblos que más han incidido en su historia a lo largo del tiempo aparecen los uzbekos, uigures, dunganos, kazacos, mongoles, tibetanos, tajiks, turcomanos, kirguises, karakalpaks, etc., todos ellos dedicados al nomadismo, pero como advierte oportunamente Hambly, el historiador que considere al nomadismo como una actividad inferior a la agricultura probablemente no podrá

**28** *Ibidem*, pág.278

**29** Burbank, *et al.*, *Op. Cit.*, pág. 96

**30** O'Donnell, J., *La ruina del Imperio Romano*, 2010, pág.223

**31** Frankopan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.26

comprender el pasado de Asia Central, puesto que seguramente no llegará a apreciar el immenso prestigio, basado principalmente en la superioridad militar que el nómada tuvo entre los habitantes de la zona.<sup>32</sup>

En Asia los nómadas orientales jugaron un papel central, desde los famosos Xiongnu que fueron la amenaza permanente para la China Han, antes y después de la era moderna; pasando por los hunos de Atila, grupo protomon-gol o prototurquico que a mitad del siglo V lograron un imperio que desde las estepas de Asia Central llegaba hasta la frontera actual de Alemania, llegando incluso a rivalizar con el imperio romano.

Asia Central no tuvo mejores hegemones que el aglutinamiento de las tribus mongolas, las cuales por sus habilidades y características, durante casi quince siglos lograron resolver el poder orográfico de la zona, en relación directa al dominio de sus civilizaciones periféricas.

Atila, como representante de una corriente del nomadismo curtida en las dificultades geográficas de su región, fue un antícpo de lo que siete siglos después sería una época dominada por los mongoles, la cual rebasaría a los imperios antiguos que le precedieron. El éxito de este poder mongol en la región euroasiática, en su expresión más amplia, puede explicarse a través de su dominio sobre el nudo geográfico de Asia Central, a diferencia de imperios anteriores que muchas veces se rindieron ante la adversidad de sus montañas, de su clima y de sus desiertos.

“El caballo y su domesticación-dice Attali- le dio a Asia Central el poder frente a Mesopotamia...”<sup>33</sup> Hambly agrega que “... las condiciones en Asia Central y sus bordes durante su vida eran singularmente favorables para un conquistador que surgiera de la zona de la estepa.”<sup>34</sup> La destreza ecuestre de los ejércitos mongoles no tuvo problema en transitar de ida y vuelta por un territorio lleno de retos que le permitió tomar poder y control de las hegemonías persas, indias, rusas, chinas, etc., de su tiempo. Su ordenada organización militar, su estrategia y acumulación de información, los estribos cortos de sus monturas, llegar a detentar la mitad de los recursos ecuestres de su época, les brindó un valor diferencial que les llevó a ser uno de los imperios más grandes de la historia. Este dominio de Asia Central y de los imperios que nacen en sus cuatro puntos cardinales no se ha repetido a la fecha por hegemonía alguna.

En su inicio los Mongoles eran un pueblo más que orbitaba en la región Norte de lo que hoy se conoce como Mongolia (Sureste del lago Baikal), que en el Este convivían con los Tártaros, en el Sur con los Merkitas y en el Oeste con Keraitas, Uigures y Naimanos, entre muchos otros, los cuales con el

<sup>32</sup> Hambly, *Op. Cit.* pág.14

<sup>33</sup> Attali,Jacques, *Breve historia del futuro*, 2006, pág.78

<sup>34</sup> Hambly, *Op. Cit.*, pág.99

tiempo fueron dominados por los mongoles a manera de una confederación de tribus nómadas “Todas estas tribus, que serán colectivamente designadas con el nombre de *Mongoles*, estaban emparentadas entre sí por la raza y por la lengua, y también estaban relacionadas, aunque de una manera lejana, con los Turcos y los Tunguses.”<sup>35</sup>

Después de los hunos de Atila, el pueblo Mongol encuentra su mejor expresión en el liderazgo de Gengis Kan (Temujin), quien en 1206 es nombrado Gran Kan y hasta 1227, año de su muerte, construye un imperio que en su momento de mayor esplendor, en el siglo XIII, llegó a sumar más de 24 millones de Km<sup>2</sup>.

En su etapa de mayor expansión, su frontera asiática en el Este llegó hasta el Pacífico, dominando a Corea y a la misma China. La expedición marítima contra Japón fracasó por cuestiones climáticas. En el Sur sus hostilidades alcanzaron las fronteras de Vietnam, y el Sureste chino. En Asia Central estableció total dominio por medio del kanato de Chagatai. En el Suroeste tomó cuenta de la dominación de los territorios de lo que hoy es Irán e Irak, venciendo a Bagdad y al Califato Abasí en 1258.<sup>36</sup> En el Oeste sus triunfos se extendieron a las tierras de hoy Bulgaria, Polonia y Hungría, pasando por el Cáucaso, la Rus de Kiev, Ucrania y lo que actualmente es Moscú. El gran imperio chino que le antecedió en Asia del Este, fue vencido en 1234 y 1279 con la derrota de sus dinastías Jin y Song respectivamente. En la India, el propio Gengis Kan en la batalla del Indo, a semejanza de Alejandro, en 1221 derrota a Jalal al-Din, hijo de Mohamed II. De igual modo su influencia en el tiempo, en 1525, derivó en que Babur, descendiente de Tamerlán (Tamerlán), uno de los últimos grandes líderes militares mongoles, fuera fundador del imperio Mogol que prevaleció por más de 250 años en la India. En el Oeste, su imperio no tuvo rival en Europa del Este y bajo la Horda de Oro influyó decididamente en lo que en el tiempo sería el imperio ruso.

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**35** Hambly, *Op. Cit.*, pág.87

**36** La derrota persa por los árabes en la batalla de Nihavand en 642, abre una etapa de penetración árabe en Asia central cuya influencia permanece en la actualidad, al mostrarse como una región mayormente islámica, con una escuela preponderante Hanafi, de pensamiento sunita, con las características particulares de la zona. La derrota de los Tang en 751, en la batalla de Talas, por parte del imperio árabe, facilita también la consolidación de esta fuerte influencia en Asia Central. La debilidad del Califato Abasí inicia en el siglo X con su división, y concluye en el siglo XIII ante la presencia del poderío mongol, que en 1258 capture y destruye Bagdad, dando término a su etapa dorada en la región. La conquista árabe-islámica del corazón euroasiático, señala Starr, suele tomarse como una influencia política y cultural del Oeste al Este Asiático, que se detona en Asia Central. Pero realmente lo que se dio fue un choque cultural de fuerzas contrarias surgidas del centro asiático, como un centro histórico de culturas, hacia el Oeste árabe. Así como Qutayba y su ejército, agrega, destruyen grandes tesoros de la civilización del centro de Asia, al mismo tiempo fueron transformados por una sinergia cultural y política que prevaleció de la misma zona. Estas influencias se trasladaron a la nueva capital de Bagdad, que también estuvo muy compenetrada por la cultura persa sasánida (Starr, S. Frederick, *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane*, 2013, pág.125).

El imperio Mongol se prolonga en el tiempo con la descendencia del Kan, de manera especial con su nieto Kublai Kan, que logra el control total del Gran Imperio Chino, instaurando lo que se conoció como la dinastía Yuan en 1271, la cual culminó en 1368 cuando fueron expulsados por la dinastía Ming.

Las dimensiones del imperio en su momento de mayor triunfo obligan a su división administrativa y militar. La parte China se organiza bajo la dinastía Yuan; en Asia Central, en el Kanato de Chagatai; la Horda de Oro o Kanato Cumano en el Oeste y Noroeste, y el Kanato persa (Ilkanato) en Irán e Irak. Dinámica en todo momento, esta organización se convirtió en un verdadero puente entre culturas y civilizaciones que permitió, dada la idiosincrasia mongola, el libre flujo de creencias, conocimientos, mercancías, etc., que como nunca, durante poco más de un siglo permitió que Eurasia conociera sus antípodas, las cuales habían estado inhibidas ante el poder geográfico no resuelto de Asia Central.

La Ruta de la Seda, por ejemplo, por primera vez pudo transitar bajo un solo control político y militar, desde Chang'an en China, hasta Antioquía (Siria), aproximadamente del siglo XIII al XV y XVI, significando una de sus mejores épocas.<sup>37</sup>

La posibilidad de una *Pax Mongola* de tan amplio espectro, conseguida y protegida por un único y poderoso soberano -Gengis Kan-, fue una de las contribuciones de los mongoles a la inauguración geopolítica de Asia Central con sus cuatro puntos cardinales. Una vez obtenida la victoria, más allá de la ferocidad mongola, los caudillos permitieron a la gente seguir practicando su propia religión y confiaban a las autoridades locales buena parte de las tareas de gobierno. Administradores sofisticados ocupaban puestos de relevancia en los centros más importantes de los Kanatos. El conocimiento fluyó como nunca en una Asia central que solo entonces permitió el diálogo de culturas de sus cuatro puntos cardinales. El tiempo mongol fue corto, pero como apunta Burbank, "Aunque los imperios mongoles no tardaron en fragmentarse, la unificación de Eurasia dejó su impronta en los Estados posteriores."<sup>38</sup>

Atendiendo al poder de la geografía, el Kanato de Chagatai, con base en la ciudad de Samarcanda (ubicada actualmente en Uzbekistán), junto con la Horda de Oro, fueron los últimos Kanatos en disolverse ante el debilitamiento del imperio mongol. Además de la protección geográfica de Asia Central, el Kanato de Chagatai contó, como ya se dijo, con la participación de uno de los últimos grandes líderes del imperio Mongol, un estratega nacido en Kesh, la actual Uzbekistán, y aunque no era descendiente directo del gran Kan, su reinado se desarrolla en el marco del imperio mongol y la geografía del centro de Asia. Sus conquistas fueron de Delhi a Moscú, de la cordillera del

<sup>37</sup> The Silk Road, Op. Cit., pág. 64

<sup>38</sup> Burbank, et. al., Op. Cit., pág. 164

Tian Shan hasta los montes Tauro en Anatolia. Venció a los Estados musulmanes más importantes de la época; conquistó el Turkestán; incorporó a Irán oriental (Jurasán) y el Cáucaso; venció a Irán occidental e Irak; triunfo en Egipto y Siria. Dentro de la dinámica hegemónica del imperio Mongol, si bien Tamerlán es uno de los últimos grandes líderes del nomadismo asiático, representa también la versión más cercana a un imperio nacido y auspiciado desde el núcleo de Asia Central, con una movilidad hegemónica hacia los cuatro puntos cardinales y civilizaciones que la rodean. Muere finalmente preparando una expedición para recuperar China, y así como nace cerca de Samarcanda, muere en 1405 en Otrar, a orillas de uno de los ríos emblemáticos de Asia Central que es el Sir Daria, en la ahora Kazajistán.

En lo que hace al papel de China durante el imperio Mongol, después de la rendición de Pekín, Gengis Kan se llevó como asesor al poeta chino Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, "Y pronto quedó impresionado por su habilidad administrativa así como por su gran pericia como astrólogo. Este representante de la cultura y de la tradición burocrática china logró enseguida un gran ascendiente sobre Gengis Kan y llegó a ser el principal funcionario de la administración del imperio mongol. La conquista de los mongoles por China había comenzado."<sup>39</sup>

## VI. RUSIA Y SU RELACIÓN CON ASIA CENTRAL

Uno de los grandes especialistas sobre Rusia, H. Billington, comenta que la geografía y no la historia habían determinado la idiosincrasia y el destino del país ruso<sup>40</sup>; opinión que ha sido compartida por otros autores como Lincoln, quien ampliando este comentario señala que la conquista que definió la grandeza de Rusia se llevó a cabo en Asia y no en Europa<sup>41</sup>; en un largo recorrido que pasando por Mackinder, Spykman y otros, nos orientan hacia un entendimiento ruso que parte de su pivote geográfico asiático<sup>42</sup>.

Rusia surge en los límites de dos fuerzas civilizatorias, Occidente y Asia, que desde su origen se asumieron como rivales. Bajo la protección de los ríos Dniéper y Volga nace en la región de Kiev (S.X), para trasladarse poco a poco hacia el Este asiático, hacia una Moscovia (S.XIV) que en ese momento la ubicó como un habitante protegido de la estepa europea por los montes Urales.

**39** Hambly, *Op. Cit.*, págs. 95-96

**40** Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, pág. 208

**41** *Ibidem*, pág.220

**42** En 1600, la superficie rusa era de 5.4 millones de km<sup>2</sup>. En 1678, después de iniciar su marcha hacia el Este, más allá de los Montes Urales, llegó a los 16 millones de km<sup>2</sup>. En 1750, en pleno auge del imperio llegó a sumar 22 millones de km<sup>2</sup>. La conquista moscovita de Siberia define David Christian—fue rápida y similar a la expansión europea en América del Norte. Pero la gran diferencia fue que la expansión europea creó un imperio en el exterior, mientras que el ruso causó la extensión y engrandecimiento de un mismo imperio (David, Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, Vol. II, 2018, pág. 213).

Hasta los siglos XIV y XV apunta Burbank, fue tomando forma un Estado ruso en una región sin nombre por la que ninguna gran potencia sentía demasiado interés.<sup>43</sup>

Hasta ese momento la historia del mundo se había estado escribiendo en sus fronteras meridionales, abajo de la Rus de Kiev, de la Moscovia; precisamente al Sur del Cáucaso y de los mares Negro, Caspio y Aral; debajo de los agrestes territorios de su vecino sureño Kazajistán, y en el largo horizonte de su frontera oriental, la gélida Siberia. En el Norte lo protegían las inclemencias de una región, el Polo Norte, al que solo se llegó hasta la primera década del siglo XX.

La aparición hegemónica de Rusia en la región de Asia Central es una expresión tardía, postmongola, que fue antecedida por imperios endógenos y exógenos que como hemos advertido, desde el siglo V a.C., ya se disputaban el poder del mundo en el marco de la vecindad y trascendencia del centro asiático. Parte del atraso en la aparición del imperio ruso, al cual se le puede ya considerar en el siglo XVII con la llegada de los Románov al poder, fue causado por imperios asiáticos que lograron dominar el mundo de su tiempo a partir del control de la geografía, vista esta como el obstáculo físico del poder entre Europa y Asia; así como de los propios imperios asiáticos.

En su relación con el imperio Mongol, le corresponde al hijo mayor de Gengis Kan, Dietchi, la zona que se encontraba al Oeste de Irtysh (la actual Kazajistán) junto con Siberia occidental y Jorezm. Dentro de este Kanato quedaron comprendidos pueblos como los cumanos, los búlgaros y de manera importante los principados rusos. A la muerte de Dietchi, el nieto de Gengis Kan, Batú, hereda el Kanato de su padre concluyendo el control de la zona, para lo cual conquista el Kanato búlgaro y domina a los rusos en 1240, al asegurar su principal ciudad que era Kiev. Polonia y Hungría también conocerían la misma suerte.

En una continuidad determinada por las circunstancias, Batú detiene su campaña hacia otros países europeos y a orillas del Volga y al Sur de Moscú, funda la ciudad de Saray, que en el tiempo se convierte en la capital de la Horda de Oro, que así se reconocería el Kanato mongol de Occidente. La fusión de los mongoles, como pueblo crisol de las tribus nómadas asiáticas, al convivir y fusionarse con los habitantes de la región, de manera especial con los de Dasht-i Qipchaq, se convierten en el tiempo en la fuerza Tártara de tiempos posteriores.<sup>44</sup>

Una Rusia que apenas se organizaba; que en vecindad con el importante imperio Romano de Oriente, estructuraba su primera institucionalidad con el aprendizaje religioso y administrativo de Bizancio, se ve interrumpida por un poder de guerra superior que se establece en su zona geográfica con gran suficiencia, limitando su expansión y multiplicando sus haberes civilizatorios

**43** Burbank, et. al., *Op. Cit.*, pág.258

**44** Hambly, *Op. Cit.*, pág.119

a través de un puente indoeuropeo del conocimiento que iba del Mediterráneo hasta el Pacífico chino.

Batú, pero después Berke, Uzbeck, Janikek, Tuqtamish, Idiku, entre otros, son los Kanes de la Horda de Oro que de diferentes modos dominan a Rusia hasta 1681 donde “Los restos del viejo Kanato siberiano que sobresalieron al avance de los rusos hacia el Este fueron finalmente eliminados por la invasión de los oirates que se produjo en los años centrales del siglo XVII.”<sup>45</sup>

La Horda de Oro; el Kanato de Chagatai en Asia Central; la dimensión de Tamerlán que conquistó ocho millones de Km<sup>2</sup> de Euroasia desde su centro asiático, devastando las ciudades más importantes de Rusia a finales del siglo XIV, fue parte del precio que Rusia tuvo que pagar por casi cuatro siglos de vecindad con una región que en ese momento fue determinada por el poder mongol. Terminada la hegemonía mongola en la región, en Rusia permanecería su presencia a manera de una impronta cultural que como en el caso del Zar, Boris Godunov (1584-1613), de origen Tártaro, sería el fundador del dominio ruso en Siberia.

La prolongada y agresiva presencia de los mongoles en Rusia, que según Kaplan, fueron un factor determinante de la exclusión rusa del *renacimiento*, les proporcionó al mismo tiempo a los eslavos ortodoxos orientales un sentido de comunidad, una energía y una finalidad decisiva a la hora de liberarse del yugo mongol y hacer acopio de grandes extensiones de territorio en los últimos siglos.<sup>46</sup>

Los primeros intentos de acercamiento con Asia Central por parte de Rusia se dan con Iván IV, el Terrible, quien mandó tropas al Kanato musulmán de Astracán, que era una de las divisiones de la Horda de Oro, el cual controlaba el Volga y las importantes rutas hacia el Cáucaso, Persia y Asia Central. Boris Godunov, además de haber sido artífice del Este siberiano, incursionó también en la estepa Kazaja. Con los Románov da inicio la etapa más clara de lo que sería el imperio ruso y su vocación por el centro asiático; incursionando por primera vez en la difícil región del Cáucaso y Asia Central. En la primera mitad del siglo XIX, las tropas rusas toman las importantes ciudades de Asia Central de Shymkent (1864), Tashkent (1865), Samarcanda (1868), Kokand (1875), etc., acercándose a la milenaria Ruta de la Seda, haciendo comercio y protegiendo el camino de los mercaderes.

La presencia de Rusia en Eurasia, como el país más representativo del concepto en ambos continentes, tanto por su ubicación como etnicidad, no ha sido una distinción que se haya significado en la ruta histórica del país. La idea primigenia de Iván III de poder ser una *Nueva Roma* ante la caída de Constantinopla, ha sido una aspiración no cumplida que ha acompañado a la narrativa rusa en todo momento.

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**45** *Ibidem*, pág.127

**46** Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.208

De igual modo, la invitación de Pedro el Grande al pueblo ruso en el siglo XVII de tener una *ventana abierta hacia Occidente*, buscó la europeización del país, olvidando su origen y tradición multicultural. Herzen en el siglo XIX comentaba que “Hasta el día de hoy hemos contemplado a los europeos y a Europa del mismo modo que unos provincianos observan a los que viven en la capital, con respeto y un sentimiento de inferioridad, rindiéndonos ante ellos e imitándolos, y considerando como un defecto todo aquello que nos diferencia.”<sup>47</sup>

El origen como destino no fue una divisa que haya convencido el ideal ruso desde el Kiev bizantino o el europeísmo Románov; a pesar de que ese origen euroasiático lo atrapó, primero, dentro de un determinismo mongol que lo limitó y lo influenció durante siglos; potenciándolo hacia la creación de un gran imperio territorial ante la toma oportuna de una enorme extensión asiática que no interesó o no pudo ser capturada por imperios vecinos. No obstante, como afirma Kaplan “Rusia ha formado parte de la dinámica del poder de Asia Oriental.”<sup>48</sup>

La era Románov define mucho la consolidación de una fuerza política, económica y social que fue convirtiéndose a partir del siglo XVII en una potencia con aspiración europea pero expansión asiática. En esta *administración* de la geografía, el Cáucaso fue desde siempre una asignatura no cumplida ante la resistencia de la *gente de la montaña*. A pesar de ello, desde los Cárpatos hasta la meseta siberiana, en una amplia franja de riqueza donde se localiza el corazón continental de Mackinder, el imperio ruso tendió las redes de su crecimiento una vez que los poderes regionales se había debilitado, substituyéndolos en su horizonte hasta toparse con las realidades China, Coreana y japonesa, con las que inevitablemente tuvo que sostener un encuentro de poder de múltiples dimensiones.

De manera audaz, a diferencia de una China que hasta el siglo XX se negó a la modernidad del ferrocarril, a finales del siglo XIX Rusia ya había tendido cerca de 60 mil Kms de líneas férreas a fin de unir su vasto territorio desde Moscú a Siberia. Utilizando esta herramienta de penetración, su poder ferroviario lo derivaría hacia el Sur, tendiendo vías colindantes a las fronteras persas y afganas; conectando con Samarcanda al mismo tiempo que sus tropas actuaban en lo que es hoy Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán. Toda esta actividad imperial rusa en la planicie más grande del mundo, así como su control progresivo de Asia Central a lo largo del siglo XIX, en el marco del control hegemónico de India por parte de Gran Bretaña, es lo que llevaría a proponer la idea geopolítica del *Gran Juego* entre ambas potencias.

**47** *Ibidem*, pág.216

**48** Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, págs. 220-222

Su consolidación imperial en el siglo XIX, junto con el debilitamiento de los otros imperios de la zona, facilita que Rusia tome el control de la región central asiática. Esta toma de poder inicia en el siglo XVII y se consolida en la segunda década del siglo XX, después de la Revolución Rusa (1917), al formalizar este control a través de la constitución de cinco repúblicas socialistas soviéticas en el núcleo de Asia Central, que a la postre en 1991, después del quebranto de la Unión Soviética, se transformarían en las cinco naciones euroasiáticas ya señaladas de Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán, Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán, las cuales agrupan de manera *arbitraria* a los múltiples pueblos originarios de la zona.

#### VENTANA 1. IMPERIO OTOMANO

El imperio otomano (1299-1922), durante más de seis siglos representó una frontera militar entre Europa y Asia, funcionando como un filtro euroasiático de comunicación. Sin embargo, los otomanos no fueron una potencia *oriental* que haya chocado en Occidente; sino más bien constituyeron una formación política que supo mezclar la influencia de las culturas europea, asiática y africana, derivado de estrategias adoptadas de imperios anteriores. En su momento de apogeo, con Solimán I, el imperio otomano aspiró más a ser un sucesor de Roma, que una representación del imperio persa. Las pretensiones de Solimán de ser el sucesor del poderío de Roma-opina Burbank- eran lógicas, ya que habían vencido y sustituido a los bizantinos que regían el imperio romano de Oriente; habían conquistado gran parte del imperio del Mediterráneo de Roma y habían tomado el poder como protectores de los cristianos en los Balcanes (Burbank, *et. al.*, *Op. Cit.*, págs 182-201). Sus líneas de expansión parecen ratificar esta idea, ya que en vez de dirigir o combinar sus intereses entre el Este y el Oeste, de 1359 que apenas dominan el lado Este del Bósforo, en 1481 que toman Constantinopla, Grecia y las fronteras en el mar Negro; en 1566 que lo expanden a Palestina, Egipto y Arabia, a mediados del siglo XVI que llegan a dominar una tercera parte de Europa y la mitad del litoral del Mediterráneo; en su largo periodo imperial no intentaron una incursión más allá de los retos geográficos y civilizatorios del mar Caspio. En cuanto a Rusia, desde 1696 en Azov, demostró su superioridad militar sobre las fuerzas otomanas; superioridad que se continuó con otros triunfos a lo largo del siglo XVIII; los cuales se consolidan con el Tratado de Küçük Kaynarca, después de la guerra de 1768-1774, a través del cual el imperio ruso tomó control de la estepa Póntica, la cual se extendía por Europa Oriental desde el Norte del mar Negro y del Cáucaso hasta la frontera con Rusia y Kazajistán (David, Christian, *Op. Cit.*, pág.206).

**FUENTE:** Elaboración propia

Al respecto comenta Kaplan que Rusia empezó a consolidar su dominio en Asia Central a principios del siglo XIX, cuando en la estepa Kazaja reinaba la anarquía al desaparecer un poder aglutinador de las tribus locales; y que a principios del siglo XX los soviéticos crearon Estados individuales en las mesetas de Asia Central que no coincidían con las fronteras étnicas; ya que los soviéticos temían todavía por brotes de panturquismo panpersianismo o panislamismo, lo cual ocasionó un sinfín de anomalías como por ejemplo; que

el valle del río Sir Daria empieza en una zona de Kirguistán poblada por Uzbekos, y que atravesó Tayikistán antes de continuar por Uzbekistán y terminar en Kazajistán. Que la carretera que une la capital Uzbeka, Tashkent, con la provincia Uzbeka de Fergana, pase por Tayikistán. Para ir desde Dusambé, capital de Tayikistán a Khojent y Khorog, y poblada por la etnia Tayika, se pase por Uzbekistán y Kirguistán. La ciudad de Chimkent, cerca de Uzbekistán, que es mayoritariamente Uzbeka, forme parte de Kazajistán. La ciudad de Samarcanda, cuya población es mayoritariamente Tayika, se encuentre en Uzbekistán, etc., por lo que concluye el mismo autor que lo que se dio en Asia Central no fue el surgimiento de una geografía étnica nacionalista, sino que predominó un soviétismo como una línea de control y poder que con diversas modalidades intenta sobrevivir a la fecha.<sup>49</sup>

Las tecnologías han venido a competir con la geografía, pero no cabe duda que el origen de un país o una región y su desarrollo en la historia, siguen siendo elementos clave en la geopolítica y geoeconomía de las naciones. Rusia a lo largo de su inmensa superficie y once husos horarios, batalla todavía en definir su pivote geopolítico en un momento que se corre el equilibrio del mundo del Atlántico al Pacífico. No obstante lo anterior, la nación euroasiática sigue empujando en mayor medida hacia su fortalecimiento con Ucrania, Bielorrusia y demás vecinos de sus fronteras con Europa, en el marco de una vieja aspiración de cultura y de poder en la zona.

En cuanto al Oriente, su región más despoblada y siempre distante, mantiene su lejanía histórica, la cual sigue marcada por los resabios o cicatrices de los conflictos pasados. En cuanto a China, un imperio con el que se enfrentó desde su primera etapa imperial y se continuó en el tiempo dando lugar a diferentes encuentros y desencuentros, actualmente vive una alianza estratégica frente a Estados Unidos, en la primera mitad de un siglo altamente disruptivo que invita a los imperios del momento a revisar sus estrategias en el marco de un tiempo nuevo.

## VII. CHINA Y SU RELACIÓN CON ASIA CENTRAL

Asia Central y sus importantes implicaciones como puente geográfico entre dos mundos no fue ajeno a la percepción geopolítica china, quien desde muy temprano descubrió que del otro lado de los desiertos y los macizos montañosos se extendían otros reinos, como el *Da Qin romano*. No obstante, su presencia en la zona estuvo determinada por una geografía que la emplazaba a invertir grandes recursos humanos y materiales, y que la llevaba a mundos desconocidos sobre los que no pudo concretar un *esfuerzo mayor* de apropiación como los que sí logró con el Oriente y Sudeste asiático, donde a lo largo de casi dos milenios construyó un *Tianxia* o mundo de lo chino, en el que

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<sup>49</sup> Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, págs.236-237

China se erigió en el centro de una cosmovisión donde los demás países orbitaban respecto al Reino del Medio. A pesar de lo anterior, de manera intermitente, de acuerdo a las circunstancias de cada dinastía, pretendió poseer el dominio del Turquestán chino, tanto por razones económicas y de comercio, como de seguridad del imperio; como señala Botton, “Sin menospreciar del todo el factor económico, también hay otra razón para explicar la expansión china. Controlar el Oeste significaba limitar la influencia de los nómadas del Norte e impedir que se usara como base para futuras incursiones. Como los mismos chinos decían, era una manera de “cortar la mano derecha de los bárbaros.”<sup>50</sup>

Los bárbaros del Norte fueron los vecinos incomodos y compañeros de viaje de una China ilustrada precozmente, que batalló toda su historia con los múltiples pueblos del Norte, caracterizados por su nomadismo y eficacia militar. Los Kiongnu con los Han, desde la era antes de Cristo, fueron los primeros retos del nomadismo septentrional respecto a una China confuciana que seducía mejor con su cultura que con las armas. Al término de la dinastía Han en 220 d.C., se sucede una fragmentación del imperio en la que no estuvo ausente el componente de los pueblos del Norte. Entre otros, en 386 el emperador de Wei del Norte, Toba, representaba una mezcla de ascendencia turco-mongola. En 357-385, Fujian fue un monarca de origen tibetano que gobernó brevemente en el Norte de China. Claramente la dinastía Yuan, imposición de la corriente mongola de Gengis Kan y Kublai Kan que gobernarón China por cerca de cien años y la propia dinastía Qing, de ascendencia manchú, que por más de tres siglos rigió el destino del pueblo chino.

En esta larga historia de encuentros y desencuentros de China con sus vecinos del Norte y de Asia Central, donde su civilización y el pueblo Han, independientemente de las circunstancias, terminan por imponerse; se da este contacto de expansión comercial geopolítico y estratégico donde China desde el 60 a. C. establece un “Protectorado de las regiones occidentales”, que en sus diferentes modalidades: la dinastía Wei del Norte, Jin de Occidente, la Sui y la dinastía Tang a partir de 618 (Protectorado Pacificador del Oeste), entre otras, lo mantienen como una puerta de acceso y contención de una región occidental que desde siempre tuvo una alta prioridad para la seguridad y el comercio de China. Durante la primera parte de la dinastía Tang, con el emperador Taizong (627-649) se volvió a tener un control hegemónico en Asia Central, ampliando las relaciones diplomáticas incluso con Bizancio y Persia, lo que generó que llegaran a China múltiples misiones diplomáticas de Asia Central y del imperio Sasánida. Esta situación se suspende, como se comentó, cuando en 751 China pierde a orillas del río Talas la batalla de la hegemonía de la zona con la nueva expansión árabe.

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**50** Botton Flora, China, *Su historia y cultura hasta 1800*, 2000, pág. 129.

Para China, su frontera occidental siempre tuvo un valor diferencial respecto a sus otras fronteras. El océano Pacífico por el Este, le brindó una zona de seguridad hasta el siglo XIX y su distancia con el eje Corea- Japón fue una vecindad tributaria dada su dimensión geográfica y la corta distancia que separa a Beijing de Seúl (900 Km). De hecho, China en su larga historia nunca recibió una invasión de su frontera oriental hasta finales del siglo XIX, cuando Japón vuelto imperio la invade en 1894. En su frontera oriental, el *tributarismo chino*, tanto el civilizatorio como el geopolítico y económico<sup>51</sup>, se dieron de manera amplia en el marco de sus diferentes circunstancias. Su influencia en el Sur, también de carácter *tributario*, sobre todo en Vietnam (An Nam), Myanmar (Burma) y Tailandia (Siam), tuvo el sesgo de la ampliación de sus fronteras y de sus posiciones en la región desde el siglo III a.C., cuando se estableció el dominio Han en territorio Vietnamita.

En su zona Norte-Oeste, sobre todo en lo que hace a Mongolia, Tíbet, Xinjiang y Asia Central, con distancias aproximadas a los 4,000 Km ( Kashgar-Beijing); y de 3,600 Km (Lhasa- Beijing), el control y la influencia de China tuvieron un comportamiento diferente. En cuanto al *tributarismo chino*, si bien llegó a operar de manera oficial en sus etapas de mayor control; la distancia, la turbulencia y la idiosincrasia de la zona marcaron una diferencia de resultados con sus similares del Este y del Sureste Asiático.

La dinastía Ming buscó reconstruir el esquema tributario con los vecinos históricos; de igual modo que inició el restablecimiento de las relaciones con Asia Central. Sin embargo, es hasta la llegada de la dinastía Qing en 1644 que el dominio chino se restablece con claridad en la zona. Dentro de esta dinastía, el ciclo de tres reinados exitosos que da comienzo con la llegada del emperador Kangxi en 1662, su hijo Yongzheng que lo sucede en 1723 y su nieto, el emperador Qianlong que asciende en 1736 y termina su reinado a su muerte en 1795, representan una de las etapas más significativas de la historia de China (133 años). A los Qing les toca enfrentar durante largos

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**51** La civilización china en Asia del Este fue como un imán que aglutinó a tres organizaciones sociales que se mezclaron culturalmente incluso más allá de sus deseos políticos. De esta influencia china, pero también de su admiración por parte de Japón y Corea, de intentar aprender del referente chino, emerge una era tributaria de naturaleza civilizatoria donde el pago de aranceles era lo menos importante y donde la verdadera dependencia o tributación nacía del deseo de educarse del conocimiento del Reino del Medio en una amplia gama de modalidades que iban desde la organización política, la técnica administrativa burocrática, la organización social, el saber tecnológico, etc., los cuales llevaron a China a ser un faro de ilustración desde su fundación hasta su decadencia regional en el siglo XIX, que es cuando realmente termina el tributarismo chino. Hay autores que marcan la era tributaria de Asia del Este solo a partir de la aceptación formal de la entrega de estipendios a la nación china (Vogel, Nahm, etc.). No obstante, vincular el periodo tributario únicamente a la luz de un gesto protocolario de entrega o tutela, limitaría severamente la apreciación que pueda tenerse del intercambio civilizatorio de la región, a partir de la influencia cultural que China irradió en todo momento a sus vecinos, y al aprovechamiento evidente que estos hicieron de esta influencia de manera oficial o velada (Oropeza García, Arturo, Corea. *Una visión jurídica y geopolítica en el siglo XXI*, 2021, pág. 38).

años, en los siglos XVII y XVIII, al poderoso grupo mongol de los Zúngaros, a fin de recuperar el control del Oeste y del Centro de Asia. El éxito de estas campañas, así como en el resto de su geografía imperial, dieron lugar a la mayor expansión del imperio chino de toda su historia; incluyendo de manera importante el dominio de posesiones estratégicas como Taiwán (1683), Tíbet (1720) y Xinjiang (1755/59).

Entre 1696 y 1697 el emperador Kangxi, al mando de 80 mil hombres, en el Valle de Jao Modo, cerca de la hoy Ulán Bator, derrota al gran líder Zúngaro Galdán, rompiendo uno de los últimos eslabones de la larga cadena turquestana-mongola que había dominado bajo diferentes banderas la larga franja que iba del Volga a las estepas siberianas.<sup>52</sup>Después de esta victoria, China vence nuevamente a los descendientes de Galdán en múltiples momentos, hasta *aniquilar* al pueblo Zúngaro en 1745.

En 1759, ante el informe de la caída de Xianjiang, el emperador Quianlong declaró que las fronteras en las regiones remotas habían sido controladas, y que cada tribu viviría su vida pacíficamente. Que el poder y virtud vertidos en la región *remota*, había sido posible gracias a que se había contado con la protección del cielo y la gran bendición de los ancestros. De manera especial declaró que él había heredado ese pendiente de su abuelo y de su padre emperadores, los cuales no habían concluido la conquista, y que ahora con él quedaba terminada.<sup>53</sup>

Xinjiang, *la nueva frontera* de los Qing, conquistada de manera intermitente por los Han; paso obligado del sendero euroasiático durante miles de años por cientos de pueblos; su caída abrió nuevamente la puerta para que Asia Central mostrara su *fidelidad* al imperio Qing. Afganistán, Bukhara, los pequeños Estados del Pamir como Badajshán y Bolor; así como la mayoría de los pueblos importantes de Asia Central como los Kazakhs, Kirghiz e incluso del Kanato de Koqand, acudieron a mostrar su *lealtad* al imperio chino. Al respecto comenta Flora Botton, “Fue así como se extendió el poder de los emperadores Qing en Asia Central en un territorio más vasto del que actualmente controla China, pero que demarcó las que serían más adelante sus fronteras. El imperio de los Qing extendió su influencia y soberanía moral más allá de las fronteras antes mencionadas: Nepal, Birmania, Sian, Vietnam, Filipinas, las islas Ryūkyū y Corea fueron países que si bien no formaban parte del imperio estaban íntimamente ligados a su cultura.”<sup>54</sup>

En cuanto a la importante región de Xinjiang, que desde el emperador Wu Di se entendió su importancia geoestratégica para el imperio chino, Takahiro opina que aunque se requiere de mayores discusiones, desde la información

**52** Perdue, Peter, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, 2017, pág. 10

**53** Onuma,Takahiro, *The Qing Dynasty and Its Central Asian Neighbors*, 2014, pág. 35

**54** Bottom, *Op. Cit.*, págs.375

disponible, se puede decir que Xinjiang no solo forma hoy parte de China, sino que también ha venido siendo parte de su historia, como lo ha estado transmitiendo el gobierno de la República Popular China.<sup>55</sup>

### VIII. CHINA Y RUSIA. LA VECINDAD INCÓMODA

Cuando surgieron los primeros antecedentes rusos en la Rus de Kiev, poco antes del segundo milenio, China ya estaba ahí. Cuando inicia con la era Románov su camino hacia el imperio en el siglo XVII, China también se encontraba ya en una de sus etapas imperiales más exitosas.

Desde el tercer siglo antes de la era moderna, China ya había imaginado la conformación de un Estado organizado, a partir de la unión de los reinos que la dividían; pero sobre todo, con el fundamento filosófico, político y social de las diferentes corrientes del pensamiento que le precedieron a lo largo del primer milenio antes de nuestra era; sobre todo en la etapa de oro de su pensamiento profundo de las “Cien Escuelas”, donde destacarían las cosmovisiones confucianas, legalistas, moístas, taoístas y otras que debatieron con anticipación los términos de una civilización que en razón de su fortaleza se mantiene viva a la fecha.

En el caso de Rusia, su surgimiento tardío, bajo este marco de referencia de lo chino, se vio expuesto a diferentes influencias civilizatorias, de manera especial como se adelantó, de la bizantina-occidental, que se fue desarrollando bajo su propio dinamismo y con las influencias asiáticas que lo acompañaron desde su nacimiento. Como país bisagra de un mundo cultural euroasiático, el *ethos* ruso es una rica mezcla de conceptos y civilizaciones que desbordan en un cause particular de lo soviético.

La interacción geopolítica de China respecto a Asia Central, en términos de dominio, anteceden en casi diecisiete siglos a la posición similar que intenta Rusia a partir de la dinastía de los Románov. La llegada de china a los valles centrales de Asia como Fergana, además de ser un hito histórico, guarda la relatividad de una historia asiática en movimiento que se va escribiendo así misma ante el reto de lo nuevo. China después de su dinastía Han, a lo largo de sus siguientes reinos, en su difícil periodo de 220 a 519 de los Tres Reinos, la dinastía Jin occidental y las diferentes dinastías del Norte y del Sur; después de la dinastía Sui, Tang, y Song, intentó mantener vigente un *protectorado* con mejor y peor suerte sobre la importante región occidental. La dinastía Yuan, integrada precisamente por esa amenaza siempre temida de los bárbaros del Norte con sus diversos Kanatos, seguiría uniendo a China con Asia Central, aunque de una manera no esperada y diferente.

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<sup>55</sup> Onuma,Takahiro,*Op. Cit.*, pág.45

### CHINA-RUSIA. LA CONEXIÓN MONGOLA

El surgimiento del imperio mongol, vendría a ser el primer puente que uniría a Rusia y a China en el centro de Asia a través de la dependencia de la conquista.

La Rusia incipiente en su camino de Kiev a Moscovia sentirá la fuerza de los mongoles desde 1223, cuando a orillas del río Kalka (Ucrania), caerían numerosos príncipes rusos, sucumbiría el 90% de su ejército y en 1240 Kiev sería conquistada. China siente las primeras hostilidades de Gengis Kan desde 1208; el cual en 1213 llega a la zona central de China; consolidándose este poder en 1259 con la llegada de Kublai Kan, quien dirigiría el Estado chino hasta mediados del siglo XIV.<sup>56</sup>

La fuerza mongola, dominante en su momento desde el pacífico hasta los linderos de Europa del Este, pasando por Asia Central, empieza a perder fortaleza y unidad a partir del siglo XIV. En la segunda parte de este siglo, China da comienzo a su reconstrucción. En cuanto a Rusia, le toma más tiempo lidiar con la poderosa Horda de Oro y sus ramificaciones, y sólo hasta la segunda parte del siglo XVI, logra recuperar lo que fuera el Kanato de Astracán, uno de los últimos bastiones de los mongoles.

En la mitad del siglo XVII finalmente, se determina el rumbo de tres imperios que con diferentes argumentos se disputaron durante casi cinco siglos el dominio de Asia Central y con él, el del importante puente euroasiático.

El último bastión nómada mongol de los Zúngaros, por un lado, fue *derrotado* por los Qing en 1755-1757. China experimentaría una sucesión afortunada hasta el siglo XVII, donde no solo logró derrotar al pueblo Zúngaro, sino que pudo alternar exitosamente con un imperio ruso dirigido también por algunos de sus más destacados representantes: desde Pedro I (1682-1725), hasta Catalina II, la Grande, (1762 a 1796), quien junto con el emperador Quianlong, cierran un ciclo mongol-sino-ruso de luchas por la hegemonía de Asia Central, como un pivote euroasiático de control geopolítico.

Respecto a la presencia mongola en la historia sino-rusa opinan Burbank y Cooper, “Los dos sistemas crearon mitos para ocultar sus orígenes euroasiáticos. Los rusos no quisieron reconocer su pasado mongol, especialmente cuando la estepa se convirtió en objetivo de sus conquistas. Los soberanos chinos, incluso aquellos que se reafirmaban en su diferencia, presentaron la tradición política como un hecho más continuando de lo que había sido en realidad. No obstante, los dos imperios habían entretejido su política imperial con hilos euroasiáticos.”<sup>57</sup>

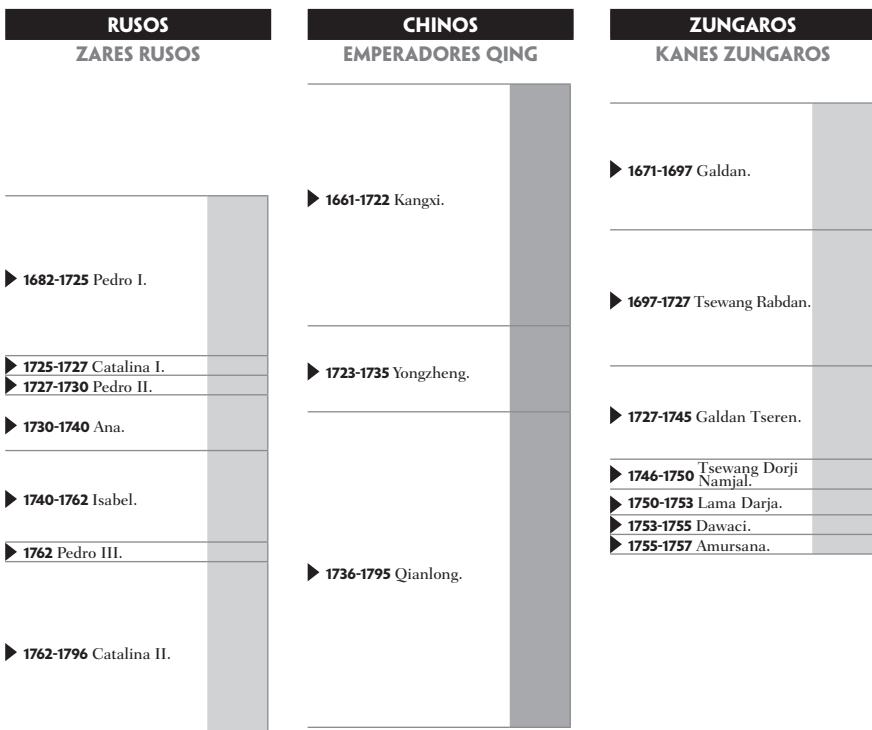
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**56** Bravo, José Jesús, *La relación sino-rusa desde una perspectiva histórica*, 2005. Págs. 152-154

**57** Burbank, et al, *Op. Cit*, pág. 301.

FIGURA 1. EL GRAN JUEGO DEL SIGLO XVII-XVIII

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**FUENTE:** Burbank, et. al, Imperios, pág. 300

### LA VECINDAD INCÓMODA

Las relaciones oficiales entre Rusia y China cobran fuerza en 1656, en la era Románov y Qing respectivamente, cuando el Zar Mijáilovich, hijo de Miguel Románov, mandó la primera embajada al entonces poderoso imperio chino. Después en 1689, en tiempos del emperador Kangxi, se firma un primer acuerdo entre los dos países, el Tratado de Nérchinsk, en el que una Zarina Sofía, menos poderosa que China, tuvo que ceder la zona Norte de la cuenca del río Amur a fin de terminar con los conflictos fronterizos que estaban ocasionando la colonias rusas y los kosakos. En 1727 se firma un segundo Tratado, el de Kyakhta, que desde entonces tuvo el objetivo de negociar fronteras y relaciones comerciales. En 1858, en plena decadencia del imperio Qing y en el marco del siglo de los *Tratados Inequitativos* que le hicieron firmar a China las nuevas potencias a partir de la Primera Guerra del Opio de 1839, se firma por China y Rusia el Tratado de Aigún, por el cual China tuvo que ceder a Rusia los territorios localizados a la izquierda del río Amur, en remedio de lo que sucedió en 1689 con el Tratado de Nérchinsk. Dos años después, en 1860, en plenas invasiones occidentales a China, se

firma el Tratado de Pekín, (uno de los tratados más desiguales aceptados por China), en el que también intervinieron Gran Bretaña, Irlanda, y Francia. En el caso de Rusia, a través de este tratado, China tuvo que cederle La Manchuria exterior, el derecho al Krai de Ussuriysk, una parte de la Krai de Primorie y el territorio que correspondería con la antigua provincia Manc-hú de Tartaria. Sobre el particular Kaplan comenta “Este proceso culminó en 1860, cuando China, debilitada por una dinastía en decadencia, se vio forzada a ceder 900 mil Km<sup>2</sup> de su territorio a Rusia, de lo que surgieron las actuales fronteras. Ahora que China es fuerte y Rusia comparativamente débil, esta frontera vuelve a encontrarse bajo presión ejercida en este caso por los colonos chinos y las compañías que quieren establecerse en el Norte para beneficiarse del petróleo, el gas natural, la madera y otros recursos que se encuentran en la región”.<sup>58</sup>

El encuentro de China y Rusia, como potencias hegemónicas, se da a partir del siglo XVII, como ya se indicó, en el marco de un imperio chino que todavía atravesaba una etapa de fortaleza con el liderazgo de emperadores notables que reforzaban su vida interior, al mismo tiempo que la llevaban a detentar la expansión territorial más grande de su historia. Rusia, por su lado, prácticamente daba inicio de la mano de los Románov a una franca etapa de liderazgo asiático, una vez resuelto el peso del imperio mongol.

Ambos imperios, en el ejercicio de su aspiración regional, dieron comienzo a una lucha abierta por el control del importante territorio de Asia Central: China con su experiencia de siglos anteriores y Rusia ejerciendo un poder visible dentro de un territorio que le vecindaba a lo largo de su infinita frontera asiática.<sup>59</sup> En los siglos XVII y XVIII el poder de China se impuso en mayor medida en la región de Asia Central, dominando a sus pueblos más importantes (Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Afganos, Nepalíes, etc.). Estos pueblos, aún en 1842, en el marco de la Guerra del Opio, todavía aparecían en la relación oficial de China de países dominados.<sup>60</sup>

Sobre esta segunda etapa de dominio chino en la región, Takahiro destaca la lealtad mostrada por la mayoría de los reinos controlados, los cuales sobre China hablaban de una *administración justa* a la cual le ofrecían reconocimiento y lealtad en medio de un islamismo generalizado. En 1758, el Rey de Khoqand escribiría al respecto “Mientras existamos, seremos amigos sinceros del emperador (Qing) como protector del mundo; nosotros nunca romperemos nuestra palabra.”<sup>61</sup>

**58** Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, pág. 222.

**59** Son 6,846 Km su frontera con Kazajistán; la línea más grande de los 16 países con los que tiene frontera. Con China tiene 3,645 Km.

**60** Mosca, W. Matthew, *China and the Asian World (1500-1900)*, 2017, pág. 10.

**61** Onuma, Takahiro, *Op. Cit* pág. 40.

Este equilibrio de poderes, dominado principalmente por el imperio chino, cambiaría significativamente ante las manifestaciones de su propia decadencia del siglo XIX; justo en el momento que las potencias occidentales completaban su arribo hegémónico tanto a China como a Japón y Corea, situación que benefició directamente al papel de Rusia, cuyo liderazgo avanzó con mayor claridad en la región.

Como un ejemplo de lo anterior, Ulises Granados comenta que “Rusia comenzó a ejercer presión desde mediados del siglo XIX, y mediante el Tratado de Tacheng de 1864 China se vio obligada a transferir el territorio noroeste de Xinjiang a Rusia; para 1871 los rusos continuaron su avance capturando el valle del río Ilí. Mientras tanto, Yaqub Beg, del vecino Kanato de Kokand, absorbió bajo su control, desde 1865, amplias zonas del Norte de Xinjiang y se proclamó gobernante de la región de Kashgaria (Hsii, 1975: 391), y no fue sino hasta que el general chino Zuo Zongtang las recuperó en 1877 que toda la zona cayó en la esfera de interés de China. Finalmente, el gobierno chino designó a Xinjiang como una de sus provincias en 1884.”<sup>62</sup>

Xinjiang, puerta mágica entre Europa y Asia; geografía en pugna desde el origen de los tiempos, no ha conocido el reposo, por lo que la pelea por la zona no se agota en el siglo XIX. En 1933, bajo influencia rusa, se declara en Xinjiang la Primera República del Turquestán Oriental; situación que se repite en 1944-1949; propuestas que no fructificaron ante el regreso de China a la escena geopolítica en 1949, donde al triunfo de su revolución auspicia la *liberación pacífica de Xinjiang*.

A mitad del siglo XX, si bien el tema de Xinjiang, Tíbet, y Mongolia se encaminan a un proceso de solución conforme a los intereses de China, en lo que hace a la región de Asia Central, Rusia no pierde su ventaja adquirida, y como se anticipó, formaliza su control en la segunda década del siglo XX al declarar a las naciones de la región como Repúblicas Soviéticas Socialistas, al propio tiempo que en 1991, después de su disolución, orienta una independencia dirigida bajo una geografía y demografía, que si bien ha contribuido a la inestabilidad de la zona, por otro lado la ha ayudado a construir una institucionalidad y un proyecto de futuro dentro del cual China y Rusia vuelven a escenificar *un tour de force* en la línea de las nuevas características que ahora las acompañan en la primera mitad del siglo XXI, dentro de los nuevos escenarios que ha generado un declinamiento occidental respecto a un ascenso de China junto con la mayoría de los países del Este y del Sudeste asiático<sup>63</sup>.

**62** Granados, Ulises, *La frontera de China: Problemas actuales y perspectivas a futuro*. 2006, pág.. 124-125.

**63** Despues de la desintegración de la Unión Soviética surgieron 14 Estados independientes aparte de Rusia, los cuales fueron de gran interés geopolítico para las principales potencias regionales y mundiales, como Estados Unidos, la Unión Europea (UE), China, Irán y Turquía. Pero, para Rusia, el espacio postsoviético siguió siendo una zona de intereses geopolíticos tradicionales. Por eso, la actividad de otras potencias en esta zona condujo a Rusia a seguir cooperando con estos países a través de acuerdos para

Rusia participa dentro del complejo escenario de la Revolución China, decantándose al final por el ganador al reconocer al presidente Mao Zedong en 1949. El acercamiento obligado al que las convocan los acontecimientos de posguerra, tanto el conflicto de Corea como el inicio de la Guerra Fría, etc., se debilitan a la muerte de Stalin en 1953, lo que se hace evidente entre otras acciones con la cancelación del programa nuclear conjunto en 1959. Diez años después estas mismas contradicciones e intereses las llevan a esenificar un ataque de parte de las tropas chinas a la guarnición soviética del Río Ussuri, donde cerca de un millón de soldados de cada bando estuvieron cerca de generar un problema militar de grandes dimensiones.

En 1979 Rusia invade Afganistán dentro de una visión histórica de una ruta al Sur, que le arroja diez años de enormes pérdidas económicas, militares y geopolíticas; en el imaginario siempre presente de una región de Asia Central ancestralmente compleja.

La idiosincrasia rusa, su cultura, su historia, su estrategia económica, etc., son parte de una compleja realidad en la que el país eslavo se ha visto involucrado en su medio milenio de vida imperial. Su verticalismo y autoritarismo político son parte del ADN ruso; la consecuencia de un cesarismo (Cesar-Zar) abreviado en Bizancio, reforzado por una cultura cerrada que predominó hasta su movimiento revolucionario en 1917, así como por una figura política central, monopólica, que de diferentes modos y formas ha sobrevivido en la mayoría de las naciones asiáticas. Su cultura, su identidad, es todavía un crisol caliente donde se cocina un mestizaje interminable de lenguas, culturas, razas y costumbres, el cual tuvo su mayor expresión durante la vigencia del imperio soviético de 1921 a 1991; de igual modo que ha sufrido su mayor desmantelamiento a partir de su rompimiento de principios de los noventa como advierte Crespo “En menos de un año buena parte del imperio creado por los zares y extendido por los soviéticos saltó por los aires. Primero las repúblicas bálticas de Lituania, Estonia y Letonia declararon su independencia en 1991. Tras el tratado varias repúblicas fueron creadas. En el sur de la Unión Soviética nacieron las naciones de Uzbekistán, Kirguistán, Kazajistán, Turkmenistán y Tayikistán; en la zona del Cáucaso, Armenia, Georgia y Azerbaiyán; en Europa oriental, Moldavia; y más al Norte dos grandes naciones Ucrania y Bielorrusia”. “En torno a un tercio del territorio del imperio soviético, la mayor parte adquirida entre 1700 y 1945, se perdió en 1991. La ruptura con las repúblicas caucásicas fue relativamente fácil, pues estos pueblos de mayoría musulmana y costumbres tan ajenas a la de los rusos ortodoxos, habrían sido los más dísculos y difíciles de integrar al

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salvaguardar su tradicional influencia y seguir siendo un líder en Eurasia (Gutiérrez del Cid, Ana Teresa, *Los intereses de Rusia en la alianza estratégica con China*, en León Manríquez et al, *Asia-Pacífico: poder y prosperidad en la era de la desglobalización*, 2020, pág. 111).

mundo ruso. Por otro lado, especialmente dolorosa para los rusos fue la independencia de Ucrania y Bielorrusia, que habrían formado parte de la vieja Rusia y contribuido a la identidad del pueblo ruso. Por otro lado, la lejana Siberia, a pesar de la distancia física que la separaba de Moscú y las diferencias de sus habitantes con las de los rusos blancos, iba a permanecer leal, mostrando así el éxito que había tenido la colonización de este extenso territorio asiático.<sup>64</sup> Ante la fuerza de su desintegración imperial del siglo XX, podemos apreciar la gran riqueza étnica y de ahí la dificultad de encontrar y definir el prototipo ruso. A pesar de la pulverización del imperio soviético, la riqueza étnica no se ha reducido. En su intento de administrar esta realidad, la constitución rusa reconoce a 83 entidades: 21 repúblicas, 9 territorios (kays), 46 provincias (oblasts), 2 condados federales, 1 provincia autónoma y 4 distritos (okrugs) autónomos. Sobre este tema agrega Crespo “La desaparición de la Unión Soviética no logró poner fin a los problemas de identidad y soberanía, que seguía siendo el país más grande del planeta. El pueblo caucásico de Chechenia aspiró a declararse independiente y la negativa rusa causaría dos guerras y un serio problema de terrorismo. Las dificultades fronterizas con Georgia iban a ser otro de los grandes ejemplos que el gigantesco imperio ruso dejaba tras su estrepitosa caída.”<sup>65</sup>

La disolución de la Unión Soviética en 1991, su profundo impacto geoeconómico y geopolítico, generan un compás de espera en las relaciones si-no-rusas hasta la llegada al poder de Putin en 1999.

Por su parte China a partir de 1949, vive con intensidad la reconstrucción del *imperio* perdido ante el liderazgo polémico del *gran timonel*, Mao Ze-dong, que transita entre éxitos y fracasos de un “Salto Adelante” a una “Revolución Cultural”; etapas turbulentas que si bien le permiten la recuperación de los territorios y el respeto perdidos, por otro lado registra más de 30 millones de fallecimientos por la hambruna de 1959 a 1961. En 1978, dos años después de la muerte de Mao, asume el poder Deng Xiaoping, quien a través de una nueva estrategia audaz de *Socialismo de Mercado* y salida inédita a la geoconomía global, logra colocar a China a inicios del nuevo milenio como un líder hegemónico creíble, a la altura de competir actualmente con la potencia número uno que es Estados Unidos.

A la tercera década del siglo XXI el regreso del mundo soviético y el acelerado ascenso del nuevo liderazgo económico chino, vuelven a reunir a dos grandes potencias de cara a los retos del 2050.

El nuevo Camino de la Seda, que es una oferta geopolítica y geoeconómica que nace de la nueva visión euroasiática de China, vuelve a congregar a

**64** Crespo, McLennan J., *Imperios*, 2012, en Oropeza García, *México-Rusia. Culturas y sistemas jurídicos comparados*, 2014, pág. 410.

**65** *Ibidem*.

las dos potencias en una cita cuyo eje vuelve a hacer el centro asiático, que ayer como hoy, sigue representando un punto axial de relevancia dentro de ese dialogo nunca concluido entre Europa y Asia.

## IX. ASIA CENTRAL Y EL GRAN JUEGO DEL PODER

Desde el inicio de los tiempos -afirma Frankopan- el centro de Asia es el lugar donde los imperios se han forjado.<sup>66</sup> Mackinder en su multicitado artículo *El pivote geográfico de la historia*, afirma que “Asia Central, al tiempo que forma parte del corazón continental de Eurasia, es el pivote sobre el que gira el destino de los grandes imperios del mundo, ya que el propio mapa de arterias naturales que atraviesan cordilleras y continúan a lo largo de valles fluviales fomenta el surgimiento de imperios, oficiales u oficiosos, en lugar de Estados.”<sup>67</sup>

Como una estrella de cuatro puntas, con los imperios chino y japonés al Este; el ruso y mongol al Norte; el hindú, persa y musulmán al Sur; y toda la amplia oferta euroasiática por el Occidente, más que un cruce de caminos, el corredor de Asia Central fue por mucho tiempo tanto un obstáculo como un facilitador geográfico de la formación de imperios. Una válvula de paso, a veces abierta y muchas veces cerrada para el tránsito no solo de los imperios, sino para todo ese bagaje de creencias, conocimientos, avances tecnológicos, guerras, mercancías, culturas, etc., entre una Europa y una Asia profunda que hasta el siglo XIX, con la llegada de las potencias marítimas a Asia del Este, lograron escenificar un encuentro pleno de civilizaciones a través del cual pudo darse un diálogo sobre el conocimiento *del otro*.

Asia Central, ahora, en plena era de una Revolución Digital que todo lo cubre y lo empieza a determinar, si bien su ubicación estratégica ha sido compensada con los avances tecnológicos en una nueva geopolítica del siglo XXI, determinada por un cambio de eras que transitan del Atlántico al Pacífico, si bien su reto ya no llama a escalar montañas o aventurar con dromedarios la dificultad de sus desiertos; el reto de ayer, hoy más vigente que nunca de conectar con fluidez y seguridad los *bagajes* de dos continentes, sigue requiriendo de la participación de un centro asiático, de ese puente geográfico-geopolítico entre Europa y Asia.

Cualquier idea sobre la exageración de la importancia de esta región, que aún ahora es desconocida nominal y geográficamente por una buena mayoría de un mundo ilustrado, se cae ante la evidencia de que el arribo hegemónico de Asia Oriental se realizó por el Pacífico y no por el centro de Asia. Incluso el de la India, en su tiempo y circunstancia, se hace a través de la llegada marítima de las fuerzas europeas en especial la inglesa. De

**66** Frankopan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.2

**67** Kaplan, *Op. Cit.*, pág.99

igual modo, el encuentro civilizatorio de China y de Asia Oriental con el Occidente ilustrado, fuera de los casos de excepción, se lleva a cabo a partir de 1839 y 1856, con la llegada vía marítima de las fuerzas militares a la realidad cultural de China y Japón respectivamente; asignatura que en razón de su encuentro tardío de ningún modo se ha agotado a la tercera década del siglo XXI.

Sería erróneo pretender que atrás del concepto de Asia Central se origina un determinismo o destino manifiesto de los principales imperios de la historia, como acertadamente se le criticó a Mackinder en su relatorías y pronósticos del siglo XX; de igual modo que resultaría una equivocación no atender, como muy bien lo defendió el mismo Mackinder, Kaplan, Frankopan, etc., que el centro de Asia ha sido y sigue siendo una aduana muy rígida en el diálogo o confrontación siempre presente entre Europa y Asia.

Aunado a lo anterior, ahora los importantes recursos naturales que revela la zona: **Kazajistán**; mayor productor de uranio del mundo y noveno país en extensión territorial; onceavo país con más reservas de petróleo; uno de los diez países con mayores reservas minerales de cobre, zinc, plomo, oro y tierras raras, etc. **Kirguistán**, que Cuenta con el tercer depósito de oro del mundo e importantes reservas de antimonio, mercurio, uranio, zinc, estaño, tungsteno, plomo y metales de tierras raras, etc. **Turkmenistán**: Con estratégicos recursos de gas y petróleo cercanos al mar Caspio; catalogado como el cuarto país en cuanto a producción de yodo y el octavo en producción de bromo, etc. **Uzbekistán**: Con grandes reservas de minerales (más de 2700 yacimientos). Uno de los diez países del mundo con más reservas de carbón, gas y uranio del mundo; e incluso **Tayikistán**, como tercer productor mundial de antimonio y undécimo productor de plomo, etc; le generan a la región de Asia central un valor agregado a su siempre valor geopolítico.

Por ello, el *Gran Juego* del que habló Conolly, Kaye o Kipling para enmarcar en el siglo XIX la lucha de intereses entre rusos y británicos por la región de Asia Central; o ahora el *Nuevo Gran Juego* al que se alude (Ahmed Rashid, 1997) en cuanto a la disputa hegemónica entre Estados Unidos, el Reino Unido y la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte (OTAN), frente al claro ascenso de China y su alianza con Rusia y la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai, no son más que la continuación de una larga relatoría que se inició hace más de 2,500 años ante el surgimiento de los diferentes imperios y hegemones euroasiáticos.

En esta nueva edición de los intereses hegemónicos, en la recomposición de un mundo global que se reinaugura incorporando aceleradamente su componente del Centro, Oriente y Sudeste Asiático, después del *paréntesis geopolítico Huntingtoniano*, es que se da el nuevo *encuentro geopolítico* entre Rusia y China.

## VENTANA 2 LA GEOPOLÍTICA DE MACKINDER

Mackinder y Spikman, promotores de la geopolítica en el siglo XX, después de múltiples debates, apologías y detracciones que se vieron suspendidos ante el avasallamiento occidental de la segunda parte del siglo XX; el regreso de un protagonismo asiático en ascenso, desempolvó sus diferentes teorías y los vuelve a traer a la mesa del *realismo* internacional. Mackinder (geógrafo inglés), famoso por su conferencia de 1904, que después se convertiría en un pequeño ensayo, titulado "El pivote geográfico de la Historia", introdujo a la geografía como una protagonista principal dentro de una lucha de imperios, que hasta ese momento simulaban poco sus verdaderas intenciones de dominio. "Región pivot", "corazón continental", "cinturón exterior", "cinturón interior", "isla mundial", etc; fueron parte de una nueva relatoría que intentó describir la realidad del momento y de manera especial generar escenarios de previsión para los Estados, especialmente para el inglés, sobre posibles escenarios futuros de confrontación geopolítica con Asia. De manera particular, dado el momento geopolítico que se vivía (El gran juego entre Gran Bretaña y Rusia), aunado a su conocimiento de la historia de los Atila, Gengis Kan, Tamerlán, Solimán I, etc, *asoladores* de Europa, lo que el pensamiento de Mackinder deja traslucir es una visión de alarma hacia un poder geopolítico asiático siempre presente, en la relación inevitable de una Euroasia siamesa. Al respecto, en su ensayo de 1904, Mackinder pregunta a sus lectores que por un momento reflexionen respecto a la historia de Europa, la cual se mostraba subordinada al desarrollo histórico de la propia Asia; que la historia de Europa en sentido *real* era el resultado de su lucha secular contra las invasiones asiáticas (Mackinder, Alfred, *The geographical pivot of history* 1904, pág.300). Al respecto comenta Rubio, "El artículo de Mackinder encierra presagios de tormenta: parece anunciararse nuevas invasiones bárbaras procedentes del Este de Europa y del interior de Asia" (Rubio Plo, Antonio, *Cien años de la geopolítica de Mackinder*, 1991, pág. 3).

Mackinder no fue el primer geógrafo en utilizar el concepto geopolítico o el determinismo geográfico, Kjellen, Mahan y Ratzel, por ejemplo, se adelantaron a ello, pero como apunta Amery "Mackinder fue decisivo en la conformación de la subdisciplina tal y como hoy la conocemos; él fue precisamente quien encajó las piezas del conjunto" (Cairo Cairou, Heriberto, *El pivote geográfico de la historia*, 2010, pág.324).Después de Mackinder, le continúa un académico norteamericano, Nicholas John Spykman, (*America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (1942), *The Geography of Peace* (1944), entre otros trabajos) que dos décadas después sigue las líneas de una política exterior orientada por la geografía; destacando nuevamente el papel trascendente de una Euroasia de dos componentes (Europa-Asia), con una visión exterior norteamericana que priorizaba al "anillo continental" sobre el "corazón continental". La geografía, señalaba Spykman, es el factor condicionante fundamental en la formulación de una política exterior nacional, porque es el más permanente (*Ibidem*, pág.326). Al respecto también agregaba, refiriéndose a la situación geográfica de Estados Unidos "La distancia oceánica genera protección, permite alguna autonomía, pero no produce aislamiento". Aunque reconocía que si bien forma parte de una disposición de fuerzas apartadas, el mundo seguía siendo un solo campo donde ellas convergían. (Spykman, Nicholas J., *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, 1942, pág. 166). Colin S. Gray, desde luego, Kissinger, Brzezinski,Kaplan,entre otros, son herederos de una geopolítica renovada que sigue considerando a la geografía y los intereses imperiales como elementos imprescindibles del análisis geopolítico internacional. El regreso de China al escenario mundial, como lo presagiaba Mackinder, así como el acompañamiento económico del Este y Sudeste Asiático que conforman lo que Mahbubani llama la nueva era del Pacífico; en relación directa a estrategias geopolíticas poderosas echadas a andar por China como el Nuevo Camino de la Seda (BRI) y la Asociación Económica Integral Regional (RCEP), que toman como punto de partida el centro y el Sudeste Asiático en la construcción de un euroasianismo económico, comercial y político;son razones que han rescatado del neoliberalismo internacionalista del fin de la historia, las figuras tanto de Mackinder como Spyckman ; que si bien el nuevo orden global y tecnológico los rebasa en el detalle, como indica Cairo " El modelo de Mackinder no sólo fue un elemento fundamental de la geopolítica naturalizadora, y contribuyó a dar un suelo firme a la geopolítica ideológica del orden geopolítico de la Guerra Fría, sino que, sigue vivo más de cien años después"(Ibidem, pág.329).

## X. LA RECONSTRUCCIÓN GEOPOLÍTICA DE ASIA CENTRAL

**198** A la caída de los Románov y con ellos el imperio ruso de los Zares, durante el siglo XX, Rusia vive una historia sin descanso en la reconstrucción de un poder político y de la tradición del pueblo ruso. Durante esta larga jornada, en la que también participa activamente en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y con posterioridad en la administración de una *Guerra Fría* frente a Europa y los Estados Unidos, termina estrepitosamente en 1991 cuando el imperio de la Unión Soviética “Se quebró sin inmutarse ante la mirada incrédula del mundo.”<sup>68</sup>

China por su parte, en 1911 sufre la caída de su última dinastía imperial e inicia un largo recorrido de descomposición social y agitación política que no terminaron hasta 1949 con el triunfo del Partido Comunista Chino. Durante casi tres décadas también viviría un fuerte reacomodo interno y externo; una guerra con Occidente en Corea y la búsqueda de una nueva identidad después del rompimiento del milenario espacio chino. Con saldos económicos y sociales enormes a la muerte de Mao en 1976, iniciaría una nueva etapa de franca recuperación a partir de 1978 bajo el liderazgo de Deng Xiaoping.

1978 para China y 1991 para Rusia, serían nuevos puntos de partida para intentar recuperar el imperio perdido y *reincorporarse* a una nueva sociedad global en el marco de su mutua confrontación con Occidente.

El camino de Rusia todavía tuvo que pasar por el trago amargo de su *apertura occidental* (Plan de los “Cuatrocientos días”), donde al término del mismo sufrió 4.2 veces la caída de su PIB, lo cual representó 2.5 veces más de lo que perdió durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, occasionando un daño económico directo al 60% de la población e incrementando la pobreza en un 40%.<sup>69</sup> La nueva Rusia realmente se inicia a partir de 1999, a la llegada de Vladímir Putin al poder.

En esta larga etapa de la era Putin, que inicia con el siglo y que con base a las últimas reformas a la Constitución rusa de 2020, su mandato podría prolongarse hasta 2036, cuando cumpla 83 años de edad; las ideas centrales de una nomenclatura histórica apoyada por las tesis de algunos pensadores como Primakov y otros más radicales como Zhirinovski, entre muchos otros, Rusia intenta volver a ese mundo ruso que ha tenido como espacio natural a Asia Central y su crecimiento hacia el Este.

En el *Nuevo Gran Juego* Ruso aparece en primer lugar una Doctrina *Putin* que se orienta al rescate de un pasado glorioso; de una época imperial donde prevalecía la idea de la superioridad del *gran ruso*, distinguido por un alma y una mentalidad rusa *superiores* que habitaban un *espacio* dominador del mundo euroasiático. Con administración firme, confianza en sí mismo y renovado vigor, tres principios fundamentales que Putin enarbóló desde

**68** O’Clery, Conor, *Moscow. December 25, 1991: The Last Day of The Soviet Union*, 2012, págs- 9-10

**69** Mengkui, Wang, *China’s Economic Transformation Over 20. Years*, 2003, págs. 18-20

su llegada al poder, ha venido reconstruyendo la estabilidad nacional, de igual modo que ha priorizado el lanzamiento de una política exterior que busca recuperar un liderazgo mundial a través de un redimensionamiento de su papel histórico en el mundo y de manera especial, de su influencia en Asia Central.

En esta línea de recomposiciones y retos nuevos; entrelazadas tanto por su determinismo geográfico como por su histórica confrontación con Occidente, Rusia y China pospusieron sus viejos agravios e iniciaron a finales de los ochenta, en los tiempos coyunturales de la Plaza de Tiananmén y de la caída de la Unión Soviética, un primer pacto de asociación a través del esquema llamado 4+1, con el objetivo inicial de reordenar el tema siempre abierto de sus fronteras, en el cual además de la participación de China y Rusia, se integraron tres de las *nuevas* repúblicas de Asia central que serían Kazajistán, Turkmenistán y Kirguistán. Este mismo esquema de entendimiento y línea de aproximación escaló en 1996 hacia una mayor formalización y agenda común a través del Grupo de Shanghai, al cual en su V Cumbre del 2000 se unió en calidad de observador Uzbekistán, enfocando este nuevo esfuerzo de asociación hacia un objetivo de alta prioridad para China y los demás países, que era el de combatir los *Tres Males* que desde siempre asolan a la región, que son *el terrorismo, el separatismo y el extremismo*; auspiciados por grupos políticos relevantes como el Partido de la Liberación (Hizb ut-Tahrir), la Sociedad Islámica (Jamaat-e-Islami), el Movimiento Islámico de Uzbekistán, el grupo Talibán, entre otros<sup>70</sup>.

En este avance de recomposición bilateral, en 2001 surge la Guerra de Afganistán, teniendo ahora como protagonista a Estados Unidos; al cual le siguió en 2003 el explosivo conflicto de la Guerra de Irak, lo cual significó un cambio de longitud en la colocación del pivote geopolítico de Estados Unidos, al trasladarlo de lleno a los linderos meridionales del centro Asiático, desplegando bases militares en Uzbekistán y Kirguistán; lo cual aceleró que en 2001 la alianza estratégica Rusia- China escalara hacia una mayor formalización por medio de la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghai (OCS), la cual desplegó una mayor cantidad de objetivos; entre otros, amplió su membresía a ocho participantes con la integración de Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Tayiquistán, Uzbekistán, Rusia y China; y con la estratégica adhesión de Pakistán e India. Esta nueva integración, además de establecer un marco

**70** El pasado mes de julio, el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores chino, Wang Yi sostuvo una reunión con una delegación de nueve talibanes afganos, presidida por uno de los fundadores de ese grupo, el mulá Abdul Ghani Baradar, con la finalidad de que China pudiera recibir garantías por parte de dicho grupo para que Afganistán no permita que se use su territorio contra China y que atajen al Movimiento Islámico de Turquestán Oriental (ETIM, por sus siglas en inglés), un grupo radical uigur al que China señala de estar activo en la región de Xinjiang y de querer perpetrar actos terroristas con el fin de lograr la independencia de ese territorio, hogar de esa minoría étnica de religión musulmana. (El País, *China y los talibanes consolidan su acercamiento*, julio de 2021).

igualitario y decisiones por consenso, aprobaron también el despliegue de maniobras militares conjuntas.

**200** Sobre los objetivos de la OCS comenta Sánchez Monroe “Con la aparición de esa problemática [ la económica] se ha empezado a hablar de la OCS como de un organismo de integración. Cosa que no nos parece tan cierto, porque los volúmenes de los intercambios dentro de sus miembros son inferiores o tienen ritmos de desarrollo más bajos que los de sus diferentes integrantes con Estados que están fuera de la organización (...) El problema está en que los proyectos que caloriza la organización, más que económicos, son de seguridad económica: energética, alimentaria, acuática, comunicacional, informática, financiera. De manera que los proyectos económicos refuerzan el carácter de la OCS como una organización de seguridad en el sentido más amplio.”<sup>71</sup>

Bajo este nuevo entendimiento sino ruso en 2009, en Ekaterimburgo, Rusia, se estableció el grupo informal de trabajo denominado BRIC, con la participación de Brasil y tres de las potencias más representativas de Asia Central: China, Rusia e India, por medio del cual se mandó un mensaje por demás simbólico del regreso de Asia al escenario global. A través del grupo BRIC, la región avisó al mundo de una nueva participación asiática encabezada por el geométrico ascenso económico de China, que ya en ese año se presentaba como la segunda economía del mundo, el primer país exportador y en 2010, como el primer país manufacturero del mundo. Como lo resume Mahbubani, “La exitosa reanudación del desarrollo de las sociedades asiáticas dará origen a un nuevo discurso entre Oriente y Occidente.”<sup>72</sup>

El surgimiento geopolítico de los BRICS (con la unión de Sudáfrica a partir de 2010), da inicio en las últimas décadas del siglo XX y se va consolidando en los primeros años del siglo XXI, derivado principalmente del *milagro económico chino*. Basado en la creciente importancia económica de estos países; Jim O’Neill, jefe de Investigación de Goldman Sachs, en un estudio de prospectiva que realiza en 2001, pronosticó que antes de 2050 el PIB de China rebasaría al de Estados Unidos; que entre 2030 y 2040 el PIB de la India ocuparía el tercer lugar después de Estados Unidos, y que Rusia para esas fechas representaría la sexta economía mundial.<sup>73</sup>

La alianza estratégica a través de los BRICS, sería una de las últimas asociaciones *visibles* que tendría el protagonismo sino ruso. A partir de 2012, con la llegada de Xi Jinping al poder y el cambio de paradigmas de sus líneas de desarrollo y relacionamiento internacional, derivado de su nueva fortaleza

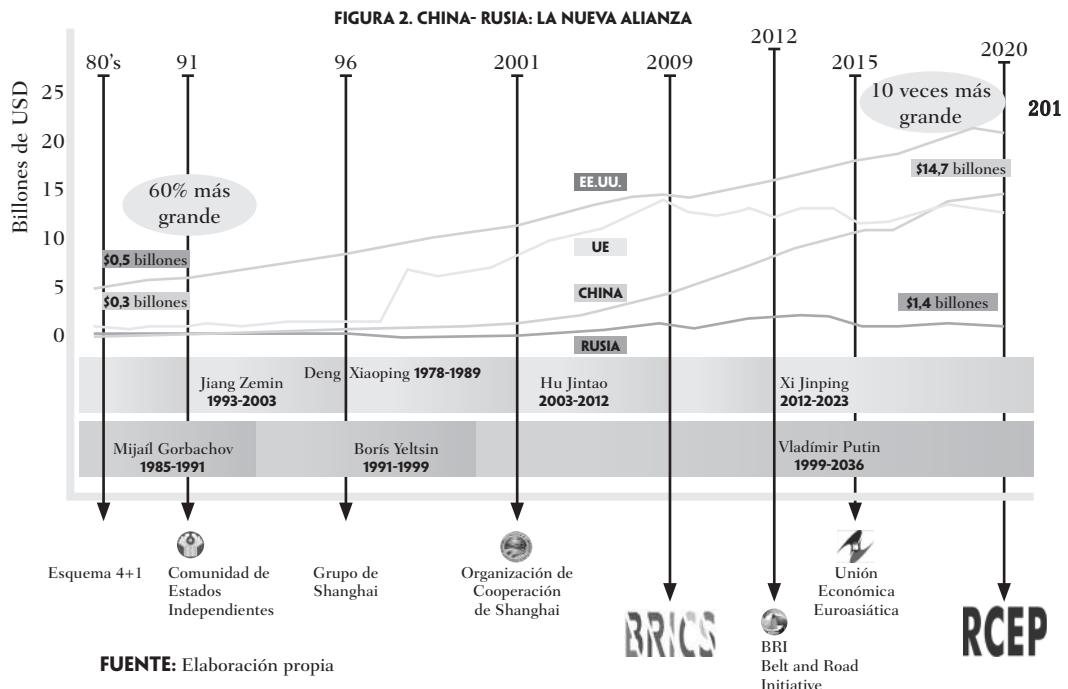
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**71** En Sunamis, Fabelo Concepción, *La alianza ruso-china en la reconfiguración de Eurasia: Entre la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghái, la Unión Económica Euroasiática y la Nueva Ruta de la Seda*, 2019, págs.40-41.

**72** Mahbubani,Kishore, *¿Pueden pensar los asiáticos?*, 2002, pág.18

**73** Oropeza García,Arturo, *BRICS.El difícil camino entre el escepticismo y el asombro*, 2011, pág.170

## ASIA CENTRAL. EL PODER DE LA GEOGRAFÍA O LA GEOGRAFÍA ...



**FUENTE:** Elaboración propia

geoeconómica y geopolítica, los nuevos lanzamientos de integración de China se enfocarían hacia escenarios más ambiciosos como el que ya se señaló del regreso del importante proyecto de la Nueva Ruta de la Seda, a través del cual, China, en la inauguración de un nuevo poder y visión global, lanzó una convocatoria de asociación estratégica a más de 70 países de tres continentes que representan aproximadamente el 70% de la población mundial y el 55% del PIB económico del mundo.<sup>74</sup>

**74** La oferta china de asociación informal lanzada al mundo y de manera particular al continente asiático, bajo el acrónimo OBOR (One Belt One Road), rompe con los paradigmas regionales establecidos a partir de la posguerra, y por su dimensión y posibles implicaciones, plantea el punto de partida de un nuevo orden global económico y político de características asiáticas en lo general y chinas en lo particular. Su instalación se explica en el fenómeno geopolítico evidenciado a principios de siglo, de una China y un Asia del Este en ascenso, y un declinamiento occidental mostrado por los principales países europeos y los Estados Unidos. De igual modo, la oferta OBOR se enmarca en el relanzamiento del proyecto económico y político de China (Segunda Apertura y Reforma), que de una política mesurada y tolerante respecto a su papel en el orden global establecido por Occidente (política Deng), a través del OBOR pasa a encabezar un papel más activo, el cual intenta en su inauguración enarbolar nuevas banderas para una globalización con características chinas (política Xi). Bajo esta perspectiva, las posibilidades del análisis de OBOR se expanden y se multiplican geométricamente, dificultando su explicación, la cual oscila desde una nueva propuesta de comercio regional, hasta la posibilidad de convertirse en una estrategia geopolítica y geoeconómica de dimensiones insospechadas, que podría tener como objetivo último el reposicionamiento de China como líder hegemónico a mitad de siglo. Asimismo, dentro de este último objetivo, podría incluirse la recuperación cultural y civilizatoria de un orientalismo siempre presente, que quedó relegado en los últimos dos siglos (pequeño paréntesis de Huntington) ante el avasallamiento occidental de las otras potencias asiáticas como China, India, Japón, etc. (Oropeza García, Arturo, *China. BRI o el nuevo camino de la seda*, 2018, pág.162 y 163).

Desde luego que Rusia participó como actor relevante del Nuevo Camino de la Seda y como socio fundador de su brazo financiero más importante, que es el Banco Asiático de Inversión en Infraestructura (BAII por sus siglas en inglés); no obstante, su participación irremediablemente se confundiría entre el ruido geopolítico que empezó a surgir entre los múltiples planes de desarrollo y nuevos socios virtuales de China, entre ellos, de manera preponderante, las cinco naciones de Asia Central.

La aparición en 2015 de la Unión Económica Euroasiática, teniendo a Rusia como principal protagonista, junto con la integración de Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Bielorrusia, y Armenia, si bien mantiene un hilo conductor con la propia Comunidad de Estados Independientes que se formó desde 1991 con diez de las Ex Repúblicas Socialistas a la caída de la Unión Soviética; la Unión Euroasiática de 1994; la Unión de Rusia y Bielorrusia; el Espacio Económico Único de Rusia con Bielorrusia y Kazajistán; la Comunidad Económica Euroasiática (1998), la Unión Aduanera de Rusia, Bielorrusia y Kazajistán (2010), y con el trayecto que en solitario Rusia ha intentado en su estrategia de integración de su tradicional zona de influencia después de 1991; su lanzamiento junto con los esfuerzos anteriores, es un intento por parte de Rusia de generar una respuesta de integración al tema de la Ruta de la Seda; de igual modo, que busca no perder su nivel de control en su zona geográfica de influencia y de manera especial en la que corresponde a Asia Central. Al mismo tiempo el esfuerzo ruso pretende que su geografía inmediata no sea absorbida por la poderosa marcha China en rescate del viejo camino de la seda.

China por su parte, con fundamento en un renovado poder económico, tecnológico y político; dejando atrás la política de Deng Xiaoping de la *Pru-dencia de los 24 caracteres*, desde el inicio de la toma del poder de Xi Jinping en 2012, lanzó por primera vez dentro de su dogmática política la idea de la construcción de un *Sueño Chino*, “El sueño más grandioso abrigado por ésta desde el inicio de los tiempos modernos.”<sup>75</sup>

Xi Jinping, en 2013, durante su primer año de gobierno, manda un mensaje de señales inequívocas sobre la importancia de Asia Central, al realizar sus primeras visitas oficiales a las ciudades de Asjabad (Turkmenistán), Tas-kent (Uzbekistán), Dushanbe (Tayikistán), Biskek (Kirguistán), y en Astaná en Kazajistán, donde en la Universidad de Nazarbáyev, el 7 de noviembre de 2013 emite desde el centro de Asia, lo que sería el *Nuevo Gran Juego* de china para el siglo XXI:

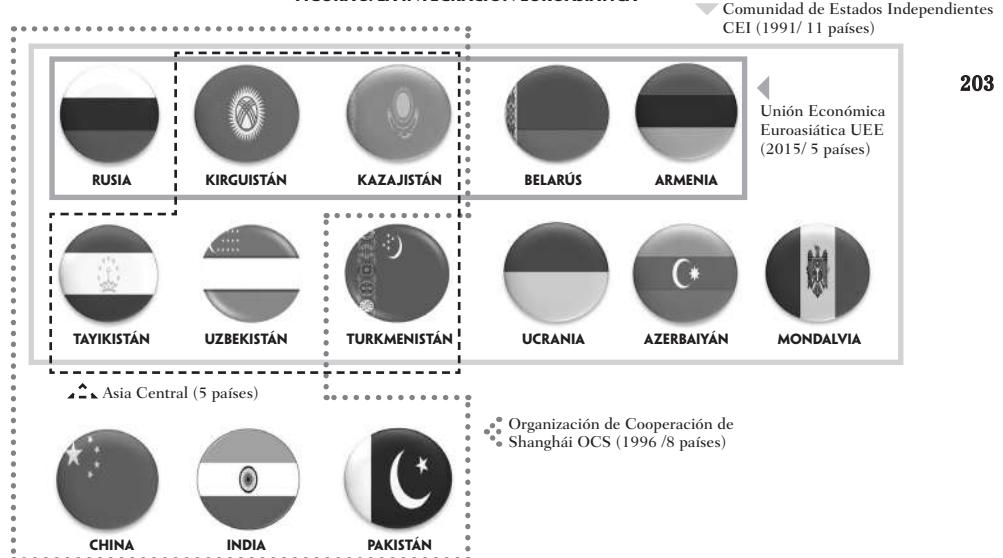
“Hace más de 2,000 años, nuestros ancestros impulsados por un deseo de amistad, abrieron las Rutas de la Seda terrestres y marítimas, con lo que comenzó una gran era de intercambios entre civilizaciones. Hoy, nos reunimos

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<sup>75</sup> Oropeza García, Arturo, *China. BRI o el nuevo camino de la seda*, 2018, pág.133

## ASIA CENTRAL. EL PODER DE LA GEOGRAFÍA O LA GEOGRAFÍA ...

**FIGURA 3. LA INTEGRACIÓN EUROASIÁTICA**



**FUENTE:** Elaboración propia

aquí para renovar el espíritu de la Ruta de la Seda y para discutir el desarrollo de la Franja y la Ruta para la cooperación internacional. Esto constituye tanto una continuación de nuestro legado compartido como una decisión correcta para el futuro. La iniciativa de la Franja y la Ruta materializa la aspiración de intercambios entre civilizaciones, el anhelo de la paz y de la estabilidad, la búsqueda del desarrollo común y el sueño compartido de una vida mejor. Nos encontramos en un nuevo punto de partida, listos para emprender un nuevo viaje juntos".<sup>76</sup>

Sobre lo anterior comenta Maçães, que las autoridades chinas han desenterrado la imagen histórica del Camino de la Seda conectando a China con Europa-el complejo laberinto de la poderosa caravana de camellos atravesando el centro de Asia desde hace cientos de años- y están promoviendo activamente su resurgimiento político y económico a lo largo de todo el supercontinente. Aunque la idea está en sus primeras etapas, muestra como China ya está viviendo en la nueva era de Eurasia<sup>77</sup>.

A la par de este lanzamiento de grandes pretensiones geopolíticas de la Ruta de la Seda, en un avance audaz de agenda propia regional y global, el 15 de noviembre de 2020, en un evento que se interpretó como una gran victoria de China, firmó con el Este y Sudeste asiático lo que se ha considerado el mayor acuerdo comercial del mundo, la "Asociación Económica In-

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, págs. 50-51

<sup>77</sup> Maçães, Bruno, *The Dawn of Eurasia: On the Trail of the New World Order*, 2018, pág. 28

tegral Regional”(RCEP por sus siglas en inglés) con las 10 economías de la Alianza del Sudeste Asiático (ASEAN), y como un hecho por demás significativo, con la participación de sus otras contrapartes de los siglos XIX y XX, Japón y Corea; así como con las adhesiones regionales de Australia y Nueva Zelanda, los cuales en conjunto representan el 30 % de la población mundial (India no firmó en el último tramo del acuerdo) y más de 26 billones de dólares del PIB mundial ( 32 % del planeta).

El esquema 4+1, el Grupo de Shanghai e incluso la organización de Cooperación de Shanghai de 2001, parten de un tiempo geopolítico donde Rusia y China, después de sus diferentes quebrantos, requerían necesariamente de una alianza para generar un frente lo menos débil posible, frente a un fin de la historia de Fukuyama, que las excluía de la prospectiva de futuro de un orden global determinado por Occidente. En ese nuevo punto de partida, la distancia económica de ambos países no rebasaba el medio billón de dólares. Frente a la tercera década del siglo XXI, el PIB chino aparece 10 veces más grande que el PIB ruso, liderando la agenda mundial del comercio, la manufactura, el crecimiento económico, y de manera relevante, peleando palmo a palmo y en ocasiones rebasándolo significativamente como el caso de la tecnología 5G, el liderazgo de la Revolución Digital respecto a los Estados Unidos.

El BRI o el Nuevo Camino de la Seda es una gran estrategia geopolítica de China que no pudo realizarse sin la asociación con Rusia. De hecho, en mayo de 2015 se emitió de manera conjunta por ambos países una declaración de cooperación en proyectos de construcción entre el Cinturón Económico de la Ruta de la Seda y la Unión Económica Euroasiática. De igual modo, las aportaciones de China en los diferentes corredores económicos internacionales del BRI que pasan por territorio ruso, han recibido las inversiones más importantes tanto de la Banca de Desarrollo de China, como de sus estratégicas empresas estatales, sobre todo en materia de energía. Sin embargo, como opina Sunamis Fabelo, “China fue uno de los mayores beneficiarios de la competencia por el posicionamiento económico geopolítico en Asia Central.”<sup>78</sup>

## XI. COMENTARIOS FINALES

Se vive un reacomodo sin reposo donde los paradigmas de ayer se van transformando poco a poco en el mundo global al que aterrizaríremos en 2050.

Los diferentes esquemas de integración de Rusia y de China seguirán mutando conforme a sus intereses y las nuevas condiciones geopolíticas y geoeconómicas que como placas tectónicas se irán reacomodando en el nuevo orden determinado por el ascenso asiático y el debilitamiento occidental.

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<sup>78</sup> Sunamis, Fabelo Concepción, Op. Cit., 2019. Pág. 34.

Sus inercias o sus reverisiones irán dando la pauta tanto de la fortaleza como de la debilidad de las asociaciones dinámicas pero inestables de hoy.

Asia Central, ratificada como el gran puente euroasiático, validado por los seis corredores económicos internacionales del Camino de la Seda que actualmente la cruzan, de manera relevante el carretero y el ferroviario, que a través de alrededor 11 mil Km unen ya de manera directa a Europa con Asia; seguirá siendo un punto de inestabilidad entre un mayor posicionamiento de las inversiones chinas en la zona (caminos, aeropuertos, puertos, fábricas, gasoductos, etc.), respecto a las limitaciones de una Rusia que no cuenta con los recursos económicos suficientes que le permitan competir en la región; por lo que tendrá que apelar a los lazos históricos culturales sembrados, sobre todo los que corresponden a su dominio de los últimos siglos.

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China ha combatido por el liderazgo de Asia Central los últimos dos milenios. Con Rusia ha rivalizado por la hegemonía de la región desde el siglo XVII, incluyendo enfrentamientos, invasiones y tratados injustos. Su reacuerdo con Rusia en estos más de cuatro siglos, más que por sus semejanzas culturales, se ha definido por su posición de fuerza del momento.<sup>79</sup>

En cuanto a su triangulación frente a Estados Unidos y Occidente, sus conflictos bilaterales llevaron a China a acercarse en los setenta a la nación norteamericana en una tacita alianza frente a Rusia. Rusia por su lado, históricamente ha tenido acercamiento estratégico con las naciones europeas más representativas, como el caso de Alemania. De igual modo, durante varias décadas más seguirá contando con un poder energético y militar, que hoy la vuelven imprescindible tanto para China como respecto a las naciones europeas más importantes, necesitadas de gas para subsistir<sup>80</sup>.

La historia en Asia Central no se repite, pero la relatoría de la formación de los grandes imperios a lo largo de los siglos nos deja grandes lecciones que hoy resultan esclarecedoras. La alianza estratégica que hoy mantienen Rusia y China, tendrá que validarse frente a ellas.

Y al final, como sugiere Kaplan, volvemos a MacKinder y Spykman:

**79** La estrategia actual de convergencia en la oposición al poder dominante de Estados Unidos puede transitar fácilmente en un conjunto diferente de imperativos estratégicos en el futuro. La falta de una “base de valores” que sustente la relación chino-rusa podría significar que, en momentos de dificultad, carece de la resiliencia para resistir contratiempos y recesiones. (Lo, Bobo, *A Fine Balance. The Strange Case of Sino-Russian Relations*, 2005, pág. 9).

**80** Mientras Washington busca una estrategia eficaz para gestionar el ascenso de China, el Presidente de Estados Unidos, Joe Biden, tiene razón al apoyarse en gran medida en una de las ventajas más claras de Estados Unidos: su red global de alianzas. Pero incluso mientras Biden construye una coalición para domesticar a Beijing, también necesita trabajar en el otro lado de la ecuación debilitando las propias asociaciones internacionales de China. No puede detener el ascenso de China, pero puede limitar su influencia tratando de alejar de China a su principal colaborador: Rusia (Kupchan, Charles, *The Right Way to Split China and Russia*, noviembre 2019).

“... el poder económico de China -cada vez más acompañado del poder militar- alcanzará un grado de tensión crucial en los años venideros. Parafraseando el razonamiento que hace Mearsheimer en *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Estados Unidos, como potencia hegemónica del hemisferio occidental, intentará impedir que China se convierta en la potencia hegemónica de gran parte del hemisferio oriental. Está podría constituir la trama más significativa de nuestra era. Mackinder y Spykman no se sorprenderían de ello.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Kaplan, Op. Cit., pág. 289.

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# La relación China-Rusia en Asia Central. Alianzas y divergencias

**SUMARIO:** I. Introducción II. El restablecimiento de la relación sino-rusa después del colapso de la Unión Soviética III. La estrategia china en Asia Central IV. La cooperación de Rusia y China en Asia Central V. El proyecto BRI VI. Problemas de la cooperación sino-rusa en Asia Central en el marco del BRI VII. Unión de la UEEA y del BRI: riesgos y logros VIII. Multipolaridad política IX. Posibles contradicciones entre los proyectos rusos y chinos X. Logros de la cooperación XI. BRI factores positivos y negativos XII. Avances de los proyectos de infraestructura en la región XIII. Las contradicciones de la Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái XIV. Conclusión XV. Bibliografía

## I. INTRODUCCIÓN

Asia Central posee abundantes recursos naturales y una localización geopolítica en el centro del heartland, según la concepción de Mackinder.

En esta concepción, Eurasia posee un significado clave y es denominada «isla-mundo», un espacio vital de la geopolítica mundial. El centro terrestre de este territorio es denominado a su vez el *heartland*, que se encuentra en contraposición al *rimland*. El *rimland* es una extensión policéntrica en forma de mosaico. El *heartland* está representado por dos potencias significativas: Alemania en el continente europeo y Rusia en la vasta región de Eurasia y el Asia Central y representa un monolito encuadrado interna y externamente por un territorio denominado «media luna» (Mackinder, 1996).

Después de la desintegración de la Unión Soviética, las cinco repúblicas del Asia Central se convirtieron en países independientes e inmediatamente representaron para las grandes potencias: Estados Unidos, Rusia y China un punto geopolítico muy importante.

Desde el momento de su independencia, Asia Central se ha convertido en la arena de competencia de intereses de grandes potencias y en una zona de procesos de integración e iniciativas como la Unión económica Euroasiática

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<sup>1</sup> Departamento de Política y Cultura, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco

UEEA y el proyecto de la ruta de la seda de China o BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) (Salitskii, 2019).

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Estados Unidos empezó a tener un gran interés en la zona y trazó una estrategia para atraer a estas repúblicas. Esta estrategia se denomina Proyecto de la Gran Asia Central, que además incluía como parte fundamental a Afganistán.

El proyecto de la Gran Asia Central promovía los intereses de Estados Unidos en la zona e intentaba crear un modelo atractivo de desarrollo para las sociedades musulmanas. Bajo esta óptica se proponía:

- Luchar contra el terrorismo, construir una infraestructura en una base nacional y regional, de manera que Estados Unidos pudiera utilizar su presencia en esta región para responder a las crisis en zonas próximas como el sur de Asia y el Medio Oriente.
- Asegurar que ningún Estado externo al área dominara la región y los recursos naturales.

Sin embargo, a partir del año 2000, Rusia inició un proceso de reposicionamiento geopolítico en esta región y China, más recientemente, con su iniciativa BRI, empezó a desarrollar relaciones con los países de Asia Central y muy rápidamente, debido a su gran potencial económico ha ido desplazando a Rusia y a Estados Unidos, pero a la vez, Rusia está presente en este proyecto y tiene una asociación estratégica con China.

En mayo de 2016 fue firmada una declaración de cooperación en el marco del BRI por parte de China y Rusia. De acuerdo con esta declaración se propone la unión de la construcción de la Unión Económica Euroasiática, en la cual participan Rusia, Kazajstán, Bielorrusia, Armenia y el BRI, consistente en un proyecto de corredores de transporte, de energía y de comercio entre países de Asia y de Europa. La Asociación Económica Eurasíática fue creada en 2001 por Rusia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán, Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán para coadyuvar a la integración regional y a la cooperación económica.

Así, la conversión de Asia Central en una zona de cooperación responde a intereses fundamentales, tanto de China como de Rusia.

## **II. EL RESTABLECIMIENTO DE LA RELACIÓN SINO-RUSA DESPUÉS DEL COLAPSO DE LA UNIÓN SOVIÉTICA**

La segunda mitad de 1990 se caracterizó por el inicio de una nueva etapa de relaciones de Rusia con regiones de Asia. La característica de este momento fue el intento de introducir en el complejo industrial ruso, tecnologías avanzadas e inversiones de Japón y China a determinados territorios rusos en Siberia, es decir, en cierta medida repetir el paradigma de las zonas económicas libres de China (Menakir, 1998).

Como es sabido, estos intentos terminaron en fracaso ya que la actividad de los sectores vinculados con el funcionamiento de estas zonas fue cooptada por el crimen organizado y por lo tanto, el paradigma de las zonas libres se desacreditó. En esta etapa, la asociación sino-rusa continuó cumpliendo un papel de orientación básica e incluso de directriz de la estrategia de Rusia en Asia nororiental.

En este contexto, en la segunda mitad de los años noventa inició una nueva etapa de esta relación, Beijing, hizo énfasis en la necesidad de energéticos y así, paralelamente a la cooperación tecnológico-militar, la base de la relación se amplió gracias al interés de China en la cooperación energética con Rusia.

La segunda etapa de desarrollo de la relación bilateral con la región del norte de Asia, que inicia en el año 2000, encabezada por el entonces presidente Vladimir Putin, puede considerarse vigente hasta la actualidad. En esta etapa, el gobierno ruso ha intentado política y económicamente regresar a la región de Asia Pacífico en general y principalmente se concentra en el vector chino. Esta política se lleva a cabo considerando determinados intereses geopolíticos y se basa en el uso de una serie de recursos, sobre todo los energéticos (Luzianin, 2008).

Esta nueva estrategia se debe a que Rusia tiene el objetivo de llegar a ser una potencia con influencia político-militar y además con capacidad tecnológico-militar en el Asia-Pacífico. Sin embargo, en este proceso de regreso de Rusia a la región de Asia Pacífico es necesario superar ciertos obstáculos internos y exteriores (Saitsev, 1999).

Los obstáculos internos en la Federación Rusa que dificultan la consecución de esta tarea consisten en el rezago tecnológico y económico del país con respecto a Japón y a China, los líderes de Asia-Pacífico. La poca efectividad de la infraestructura de la economía no autoriza a la Federación Rusa a participar más ampliamente en el comercio global y regional con mercancías con valor agregado, alta tecnología y servicios (Ickes, 2010).

El obstáculo exterior consiste en la competencia con las potencias líderes de Asia-Pacífico que no permiten a Rusia la entrada a los mercados relevantes.

Además de estos factores, la especificidad de esta etapa consiste en que el liderazgo ruso no solamente formuló un proyecto bastante ambicioso para el regreso de Rusia a la región de Asia-Pacífico, sino que inició la realización de este proyecto (A. Lomanov, 2016).

Asimismo, Rusia impulsó la asociación sino-rusa en el plano económico consistente en el aumento al doble del intercambio comercial y se convirtió en una potencia energética en la región ( Strategic Forecasting, 2005).

En un sentido específico, la estrategia hacia el oriente de Asia consiste en la puesta en práctica de tareas para la creación y desarrollo de los factores de

asociación bilateral con China, Corea del Norte y del Sur, Japón y Mongolia. Algunos de estos puntos de cooperación ya son estables como la asociación estratégica sino-rusa y otros sólo inician como la relación ruso-japonesa.

La estrategia pragmática de Rusia se construye considerando un diverso número de tareas pendientes, relacionadas con la necesidad de desarrollo de las regiones de Siberia y del Lejano Oriente Ruso (LOR).

La esencia de esta estrategia consiste en poner al servicio las asociaciones con los países de Asia del norte, sobre todo con China, de las tareas regionales y geopolíticas de Rusia, para convertirlas en la locomotora del desarrollo del LOR y de Siberia e integrar estas regiones adecuadamente al sistema económico de la región (Michael Weinstein, 2005).

Sin importar la solidez de la base jurídica de la relación bilateral con China, que data de la mitad de los años noventa, algunos aspectos de la relación se han establecido relativamente hace poco. Según expertos rusos en el tema, aún en 2003, Rusia no podía definir totalmente su relación con China y por lo tanto aún se estaba definiendo en esta época el abordaje de un complejo núcleo de estrategias hacia este país que se desarrolla de manera rápida.

Es mejor definir la relación sino-rusa en sus primeras etapas como reactiva, de parte del gobierno ruso, en respuesta a cada componente de esta relación como el migratorio y el territorial (Luzianin, 2008).

El gobierno ruso considera que existen dos factores que pueden nivelar la creciente disparidad entre el potencial de Rusia y de China. En primer lugar, la capacidad nuclear de Rusia que, desde el ascenso al poder de Vladimir Putin, se ha venido incrementando y en segundo lugar, el surgimiento de la posibilidad real de acercamiento con Japón y Corea del Sur para el desarrollo de los recursos del LOR. En caso de una masiva participación de China en este aspecto, se podrá considerar la posibilidad de integración económica de estas regiones rusas con el noroeste de China, las dos Coreas y Japón (Deliusin, 2000).

Desde el año 2006, el gobierno ruso se ha esforzado por definir con precisión el vector de su política exterior hacia China. Así, ha habido una evolución y una revalorización del factor chino en la política exterior de Rusia. En el liderazgo político ruso se decidió realizar un acercamiento global, es decir, considerando todos los elementos de la asociación, sus retos y riesgos probables y reales por una parte y por otra, las ganancias reales y potenciales.

La diplomacia rusa fue instruida con los resultados de estos análisis de los expertos en política sino-rusa, lo que trajo como consecuencia que en el plano internacional se sustituyera una relación formal y declarativa por una interacción sino-rusa de acción conjunta en el sector de problemas internacionales, desde la reforma de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU)

hasta cuestiones regionales, como la situación en Corea del Norte, Irán, Medio Oriente y Asia Central (Shirnov, 2002).

Esta nueva relación consiste en el objetivo conjunto de balance e incluso resistencia por parte de los gobiernos de China y Rusia con respecto al proyecto geopolítico estadounidense y en segundo lugar, en el frente económico, en el aumento de la interdependencia bilateral, por parte de China, con respecto a los recursos energéticos y por parte de Rusia a las inversiones y venta de tecnología china, así como de la experiencia china de integración a la economía mundial y su eficiente concatenación de enfoques de mercado y de Estado en la economía.

Rusia, a pesar de todas las declaraciones sobre el aumento de la participación de altas tecnologías y producción de máquinas-herramienta en su exportación, es evidente que tendrá que aumentar sus envíos de energéticos a China hasta sus límites máximos. Gracias a esta situación, han elevado los volúmenes de intercambio comercial de 60 a 80 mil millones de dólares desde el año 2006 y este intercambio ha venido creciendo. En 2019, China y Rusia realizaron transacciones por 100 mil 310 millones de dólares, un alza de 3.1% interanual (PrensaLatina, 2019).

El incremento del intercambio comercial de manera indirecta fue impulsado por la visita del presidente Putin a China en marzo de 2006, pero la posibilidad de que Rusia pueda aumentar el volumen de sus exportaciones por medio de artículos con valor agregado y de alta tecnología aún no puede realizarse.

Por lo tanto, en esta etapa de la relación sino-rusa, el gobierno ruso transita de una participación reactiva a una activa. Esta posición inicia con la firma del “Gran Acuerdo sobre Buena Vecindad, Amistad y Cooperación” entre la Federación Rusa y la República Popular de China, firmado por el entonces presidente Vladimir Putin y el presidente chino Yian Tsemin el 16 de julio de 2001 (Portyakov, 2010).

En este documento quedaron plasmados los objetivos geopolíticos de la relación: propiciar el establecimiento de un orden multipolar del poder mundial, prevenir la expansión del arma nuclear por medio de los apoyos a la no proliferación, contrarrestar el terrorismo internacional y también las crisis económico-financieras mundiales y finalmente se plasma en el documento la intención de crear un polo global de atracción que contrarreste la pretensión unilateral estadounidense. También se refleja en este documento la posición crítica bilateral hacia la expansión de la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte (OTAN) al oriente y a las denominadas “acciones humanitarias” aplicadas por Estados Unidos en los Balcanes y también con respecto a Chechenia, que amenazaba con afectar la integridad del territorio ruso y el de China con respecto al Tíbet y a Xinjiang.

Sin embargo, Estados Unidos es un referente muy importante para la relación sino-rusa, ya que, al mismo tiempo, en este periodo, en los círculos políticos de la Federación Rusa también había una fracción que deseaba profundizar la cooperación de Rusia con la OTAN. Se estudiaban incluso algunas variantes del ingreso de Rusia a la OTAN, pero un obstáculo relativo en el proceso de integración de Rusia fue este Gran Acuerdo con China de 2001, según el cual, ambos países se obligaron a no participar en ninguna alianza o bloque que pudiera perjudicar a la otra parte.

En ese momento, la preparación del acuerdo entre expertos y políticos rusos propició un debate, en el cual destacaron algunas posiciones y conceptos característicos para este periodo, que no fueron declarados oficialmente, ni entraron en el texto del documento. Ya que el acuerdo fue iniciativa de la parte china, surgió la interrogante: ¿con qué objetivo el liderazgo chino tomó esta posición? y las posibles respuestas en el gobierno ruso fueron:

- la intención de ampliar la maniobra de política exterior para aumentar el poder de China,
- o por medio de la cooperación internacional atenuar algunos problemas internos de China y solucionar la debilidad existente en la relación.

A estas interrogantes no hubo una respuesta única, pero lo qué si fue evidente, es que China se esforzó por fortalecer la asociación estratégica bilateral por medios jurídicos durante la administración de Yian Tsemin. Al finalizar ésta, el gobierno ruso tenía la incertidumbre sobre un posible cambio de curso de la política exterior china. Sin embargo, esta perspicacia no fue real, ya que el entonces Secretario General del Partido Comunista de la República Popular China, Hu Hintao ratificó plenamente este curso de política exterior de China hacia Rusia.

El nuevo liderazgo chino ha buscado en esta relación, reducir el número de sus contrincantes solamente a Estados Unidos en algunos aspectos y así también reducir el acercamiento de Rusia con la OTAN.

Por su parte, Rusia firmó este acuerdo partiendo no solamente del interés en desarrollar la cooperación bilateral, sino también de la idea de crear un sistema complejo de seguridad colectiva en Asia Oriental y también de la intención de formar un mercado común asiático-oriental en donde se incluyan Rusia, China, Japón, las dos Coreas y Mongolia.

Para China, Rusia constituye la principal y casi sin alternativa fuente de abastecimiento de armamentos modernos y tecnología bélica. En segundo lugar, la orientación china del gobierno ruso se vincula con el problema de la delimitación de la frontera y también con la cooperación fronteriza para frenar el contrabando.

### III. LA ESTRATEGIA CHINA EN ASIA CENTRAL

La desintegración de la Unión Soviética y la aparición de cinco nuevos países en Asia Central, llevaron a cambios fundamentales en el espacio geopolítico de Eurasia. China, Rusia, Irán y Afganistán, que tienen fronteras con estos países también se enfrentaron a una cambiante situación geopolítica. La región autónoma china de Xinjiang tiene frontera común con Kazajstán, Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán. En el periodo soviético, en las fronteras occidentales del norte de China había inestabilidad. En 1954 el gobierno chino publicó un mapa territorial con el señalamiento de que parte de las citadas repúblicas pertenecían al territorio chino y afirmaban que la Rusia zarista se anexó este territorio (Freeberne, 1968).

Aunque en 1987 Moscú y Pekín iniciaron un diálogo para saldar una disputa fronteriza, la desintegración de la Unión Soviética dejó esta cuestión sin resolver. Estas negociaciones se iniciaron después del discurso de Mijaíl Gorbachov, en las cuales propuso llevar a cabo pláticas con los líderes chinos por esta situación. Después de la desintegración de la Unión Soviética, el gobierno chino temía disturbios en su frontera occidental. En agosto de 1991, el vicepresidente chino Van Chen instruyó al ejército chino en Xinjiang a formar una pared de acero para la defensa del socialismo y la unión de la patria (Slobodan, 1998).

Por lo que a inicios de los años noventa, la cuestión clave en la agenda china era la estabilidad de Xinjiang y la regularización del conflicto con Rusia y las repúblicas de Asia Central. Como consecuencia, las cuestiones energéticas, el impulso al comercio a través del camino de la seda y la lucha contra el terrorismo, el extremismo religioso y el narcotráfico se convirtieron en factores muy importantes para China.

En los últimos 15 años China ha podido desarrollar lazos fuertes con las repúblicas de Asia Central y superar las anteriores definiciones sobre los conflictos fronterizos, la amenaza del terrorismo, el nacionalismo étnico y el extremismo religioso.

En el siglo XIX, Asia Central era la arena del Gran juego en el cual se confrontaban la Rusia Zarista y el Imperio Británico para tener la predominancia en la región. La participación de Estados Unidos en esta región después del 11 de septiembre de 2001 constituye un importante factor en la política de China en Asia Central.

#### INTERESES DE CHINA EN ASIA CENTRAL

Después de 22 sesiones de negociación, en 1996 fueron suscritos dos acuerdos sino-rusos para regularizar el conflicto fronterizo: la profundización de la confianza militar en las regiones fronterizas y la disminución de las fuerzas armadas en estas regiones fronterizas.

Estos acuerdos suponían que cada parte se abstendría de llevar a cabo ejercicios militares contra otra de las partes. En caso de llevarlos a cabo, era indispensable llamar a la otra parte a presenciarlos. Los acuerdos condujeron a la transición al diálogo entre Rusia y China y del conflicto a la cooperación.

China y las repúblicas ex soviéticas también firmaron acuerdos sobre las fronteras. En este aspecto, China y Kazajstán firmaron un protocolo sobre la demarcación de la línea fronteriza el 10 de mayo de 2002. Kirguistán y China firmaron dos protocolos en 1996 y en 1999 para la regularización de un conflicto territorial. Así, Kirguistán traspasó a China 30 000 hectáreas de territorio según el acuerdo de 1996, que fue ratificado por el Parlamento kirguizo en 1998.

Según el acuerdo de 1999, China recibió 95 000 hectáreas más, lo que normalizó las relaciones entre ambos países. Estos acuerdos fueron finalmente ratificados el 7 de mayo de 2002.

También Tadzhikistán y China firmaron un acuerdo en mayo de 2002, por este acuerdo, Tadzhikistán cedió 1 km<sup>2</sup> de territorio a China, a cambio de que ésta cancelara la pretensión sobre 28 000 km<sup>2</sup> de territorio de este país. China, que es el segundo consumidor de petróleo a nivel mundial después de Estados Unidos dedica una atención prioritaria al acceso de recursos de petróleo y gas de estas repúblicas. Por lo tanto, quiere diversificar su importación de energéticos y disminuir su dependencia de medio Oriente.

En el pensamiento estratégico chino se le da mucha importancia a la periferia del país y a la seguridad periférica y al bienestar económico de su población: la garantía de la paz y la integridad y estabilidad fronteriza a través del fortalecimiento de la buena vecindad y amistad (Dwidevi, 2005).

Por lo tanto, la estabilidad de la frontera de la provincia de Xinjiang es un factor importante, que define la política de China en Asia Central. En Xinjiang la etnia uigur por varios decenios ha luchado por su autonomía e independencia. Los uigures que viven en Kazajstán, Tadzhikistán y Kirguisztán tienen fuertes vínculos con sus contrapartes en Xinjiang.

Después del colapso de la Unión Soviética y el surgimiento de las repúblicas independientes en Asia Central, los uigures de Xinjiang y sus alrededores visualizaron la posibilidad de crear el Turkestán oriental independiente.

Esta pugna por la independencia se remonta a 1949, cuando el Estado musulmán del Turkestán Oriental entró a formar parte del territorio de China. Entonces en 1991, los uigures chinos se dirigían a las repúblicas de Asia Central para apoyo en su lucha separatista de China (Gladney, 2001).

Según la estadística oficial, en Asia Central viven más de 300 000 uigures, de los cuales 210 000 viven en Kazajstán, 46 000 en Kirguistán y cerca de 30 000 en Uzbekistán (Syroezhkin, 2003).

El gobierno de China teme el apoyo popular para la creación del Turkestán Oriental en el territorio de su provincia de Xinjiang, entre los uigures que viven en las repúblicas de Asia Central. Así China teme la unión de la etnia uigur más allá de las fronteras y los ánimos separatistas de los uigures que viven en Xinjiang. El objetivo de China es la neutralización de estos ánimos y su intento de apoyo por parte de las repúblicas de Asia Central a través de la Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái (OCSh).

Por lo que China considera los problemas en Asia Central, como el aumento del extremismo religioso, el terrorismo y las fuerzas de un agresivo nacionalismo y como subproducto, un levantamiento de los uigures en su territorio.

Sin embargo, no se trata sólo del separatismo uigur, sino que la caída en 1992 del régimen de Mohammed Nadschibullāh en Afganistán y la victoria de los extremistas religiosos, condujeron a que Afganistán se convirtiera en el centro del extremismo. La victoria de los talibanes en 1996 fue un estímulo complementario a las fuerzas extremistas y al terrorismo en Asia Central.

Además, la guerra civil en Tadzhikistán (1992-1997) y la aparición de grupos extremistas en Uzbekistán, como el Partido Islámico del Turkestán y el movimiento Jisbut-Tajir en el valle de Ferganá, un territorio muy pobre en el Asia central, dividido en tres repúblicas: Uzbekistán oriental, Tayikistán septentrional y Kirguistán meridional, el valle es étnicamente diverso y a principios del siglo XXI fue escenario de varios conflictos étnicos. Los problemas políticos, demográficos y étnicos derivados de esa división artificial en tres estados diferentes se evidenciaron con la caída de la Unión Soviética, convirtiendo el valle de Ferganá en la zona de mayor inestabilidad de Asia Central, y también en otras partes de Asia Central se crearon retos para la estabilidad y la seguridad en la región.

Una serie de acontecimientos graves como el estallido en Tashkent en julio de 2001 y los acontecimientos del 12 al 14 de mayo de 2005 en Andijan, parte del valle de Ferganá perteneciente a Uzbekistán, demostraron el creciente papel del extremismo religioso en Asia Central.

El movimiento islámico del Turkestán, también conocido como el Movimiento Islámico de Uzbekistán y el de Jizbut Tajir, declararon abiertamente su objetivo de eliminar las fronteras y las estructuras constitucionales en la zona y crear el Califato Islámico de Asia Central.

Además, el empeoramiento de las condiciones económicas, la corrupción, el sentido de la injusticia y la inestabilidad gubernamental les dieron a estos movimientos más posibilidades de acción y un matiz ideológico, apoyado por las fuerzas religiosas de Arabia Saudita fundamentalmente, que se ha caracterizado por enviar recursos económicos y propiciar el extremismo religioso en la zona y el conflicto en Afganistán fueron los factores del aumento del extremismo y la violencia en Asia Central.

En los planes de estos movimientos islámicos también entraba la región autónoma china de Xinjiang, como se anotó arriba. Así, en el discurso publicado el 21 de enero de 2002, el gobierno chino acusó a los extremistas religiosos y a los terroristas internacionales situados en Afganistán de apoyar a los separatistas uigures de Xinjiang. De ahí que en China y en las repúblicas de Asia Central se comparta el temor y el sentimiento de amenaza por parte de los separatistas extremistas.

Es por esto qué después del 11 de septiembre, Rusia y China apoyaron a Estados Unidos en el ataque a Afganistán, para que combatiera a los grupos terroristas que se refugiaban en este país. Pero a la vez, ambas naciones veían con suspicacia que Estados Unidos y otros países de Occidente poseían una agenda velada para el control de los recursos naturales de Asia Central y su objetivo real era tener presencia en la región e incluso, Estados Unidos estableció bases militares, como la base aérea de Manas contigua al aeropuerto internacional de Kirguistán, sólo a 200 kilómetros de la frontera china y muy cerca de una base militar rusa en este país. Esta situación aumentó la cautela de China.

Posteriormente, las operaciones militares de Estados Unidos en Irak en 2003 fueron interpretadas por el gobierno chino como la declaración estadounidense de unipolaridad del poder mundial.

La expansión hacia el este de la OTAN constituye un factor más de influencia sobre las iniciativas políticas de Pekín en Asia Central. Asimismo, los cambios de régimen auspiciados por Estados Unidos y países de Europa contra gobiernos que no tenían orientación pro occidental en el espacio ex-soviético, como la revolución rosa en Georgia en 2003, la naranja en Ucrania en 2004, la revolución de los tulipanes en Kirguistán en 2005, que resultó un intento fallido, y después la de Maidan en Ucrania en 2014, crearon gran preocupación en Pekín.

En los sucesos de Andijan, Uzbekistán en 2005, China y Rusia apoyaron al entonces presidente de ese país Islam Karimov y China fue el primer país que el presidente Karimov visitó después de Andijan. Este apoyo ayudó a Karimov a resistir la fuerte presión occidental para llevar a cabo una investigación internacional por la represión del gobierno al levantamiento en Andijan en donde los rebeldes se enfrentaron con las fuerzas militares uzbechas creándose grandes bajas de rebeldes y soldados uzbekos.

La participación de China fue mayor después de que los intelectuales uzbekos denominaran a los incidentes en Andijan una intervención directa de los Estados Unidos en los asuntos internos de Uzbekistán. Así, el gobierno chino puso en duda el papel de Estados Unidos en la cooperación para llevar a cabo cambios democráticos en la región y lo valoró como la intromisión en asuntos internos de estos países soberanos.

De ahí que China y Rusia tienen un interés común con respecto a confrontar los esfuerzos de Estados Unidos para llevar a cabo cambios de régimen en Asia Central. Ambos desean contener la influencia de Estados Unidos en la región y confrontar las amenazas no tradicionales a la seguridad y la estabilidad, ya que estos fenómenos tendrían amplias consecuencias para Rusia y China por la cercanía geográfica de la región.

Sobre esto hay una sección en el nuevo acuerdo sino-ruso sobre “Buena vecindad, Amistad y Cooperación” firmado por ambos países en 2001 ya anotado.

En relación al rubro de los energéticos, se pronosticaba que en 2020 la demanda de China de petróleo de importación sería de 250 a 300 millones de toneladas, en comparación de los 60 millones de toneladas en 2017, sin embargo, como se ha atestiguado, este cálculo se alteró totalmente debido a la crisis desatada por la pandemia del Covid SARS 2, que inició en China en diciembre de 2019.

Sin embargo, China tiene la intención de depender menos del petróleo del Medio Oriente y en este aspecto, la estrategia de desarrollo energético en Asia Central auspiciada por China constituye una parte importante de la estrategia energética de este país. Los países de Asia central también están interesados en el apoyo de China para desarrollar sus sectores energéticos y China ya ha realizado grandes inversiones en estos rubros como en PetroKazajstán, en Turkmenistán en la compañía Neftegaz y también en Neftagaz de Uzbekistán.

Además, China trabaja en nuevos ductos de gas y petróleo que unen a las repúblicas de Asia Central con la red de ductos de la provincia de Xinjiang. También se llevan a cabo proyectos para la creación de autopistas y vías férreas que unan el occidente de China con Rusia, Medio Oriente y Europa.

Esto significa que los intereses de China en lo que va del siglo XXI se han ampliado de cuidar la estabilidad y la paz en su región fronteriza a buscar la seguridad energética en una región mucho más cercana y pacífica que los países del Medio Oriente.

En efecto, la Doctrina de Seguridad de China ha tenido cambios. Según el especialista militar ruso Anatoli Klimenko: en condiciones de la globalización no es menos importante tener una zona determinada de influencia o en la terminología china, un espacio vital, que puede ser utilizado para el desarrollo económico, científico-tecnológico y también para garantizar de la seguridad del país (Klimenko, 2005).

“Los teóricos chinos consideran que las fronteras estratégicas del espacio vital de las grandes potencias van más allá del contexto de las fronteras gubernamentales, al mismo tiempo que el espacio vital de muchos países débiles, a veces tienen fronteras estratégicas que no coinciden con su poder, lo que puede llevar a pérdida de territorio” (Klimenko, 2005).

#### IV. LA COOPERACIÓN DE RUSIA Y CHINA EN ASIA CENTRAL

Rusia y los países de Asia Central están interesados en el desarrollo del transporte hacia Irán, el Medio Oriente y a mediano plazo a la India y también en desarrollar corredores hacia el sur.

El factor geopolítico juega aquí un papel clave, Rusia intenta regresar a la región en calidad de líder de procesos de integración. Rusia y China intentan también la minimización de la presencia económica, política y militar de la UE y de Estados Unidos.

Pekín también está preocupado por cuestiones de seguridad y desarrollo de su retaguardia, de sus provincias occidentales. La lucha contra el narcotráfico y el terrorismo en Asia Central constituyen un factor clave de cooperación de Rusia y China en la región.

Rusia, reconociendo la importancia de Asia Central para el fortalecimiento de sus posiciones internacionales, no puede hoy contar con las posiciones que tenía la Unión Soviética de vínculos intergubernamentales y culturales.

Pekín lleva a cabo una política de adaptación a la cambiante situación y por todos los medios se esfuerza en subrayar el hecho de que siempre toma en cuenta el interés de la parte rusa hacia los países de la región. La competencia suave de los socios estratégicos en Asia Central no es considerada como un factor de confrontación (Salitskii, 2019).

En este contexto, el actual enfoque pragmático de China le permite bastante efectivamente llenar el vacío en los aspectos económicos y culturales que dejó la Unión Soviética. La política de China consiste en un sistemático desarrollo de la cooperación en estos dos niveles con los países de Asia Central y apoyo a la estabilidad política en la región.

China tiene un fuerte interés en la estabilización de la región y en su exitoso desarrollo económico, porque la región se convirtió en un estratégico abastecedor de hidrocarburos para China. Los nexos sino-rusos hoy también alcanzan su mayor nivel en toda su historia y continúan desarrollándose.

#### V. EL PROYECTO BRI

El proyecto BRI representa uno de los más grandes proyectos de los últimos años y constituye la representación de las más recientes ambiciones de la política exterior de China. Fue presentado a los países de Eurasia con el objetivo de acercamiento y apertura del potencial económico de cada país miembro del proyecto y la búsqueda de relaciones mutuas de provecho en una perspectiva estratégica (Chumliakov, 2018).

La estrategia de China en relación con el BRI, declarada en la Universidad del presidente Nazarbáyev en Kazajstán en 2013, tenía 5 directivas de avance en la región:

Primero: Aumento de acuerdos políticos sobre estrategia y táctica de desarrollo económico, elaboración de un programa y medidas para el desarrollo de cooperación regional e integración económica regional en los planos legal y político.

Segundo: Aumento de la construcción de una red única de caminos y creación de condiciones favorables para transportación de cargas, mejoramiento de la infraestructura de transporte fronterizo a favor de la creación paulatina de una fuerte red de transporte.

Tercero: Aumento de nexos comerciales por medio de la cooperación en inversión comercial, simplificación del comercio e inversiones, liquidación de barreras comerciales, disminución de impuestos, aumento de la velocidad y calidad de las operaciones comerciales.

Cuarto: Aumento del flujo de divisas, introducción de cuentas en divisas nacionales, disminución significativa de los impuestos de las operaciones en dinero, fortalecimiento del blindaje ante los riesgos financieros y aumento de la competitividad internacional de la economía regional.

Quinto: Aumento de los vínculos intergubernamentales, fortalecimiento de la comprensión mutua y cooperación regional en la base social.

Posteriormente, en el Foro Internacional de la ciudad de Chongqing, el vice premier de China, Djan Gaoli declaró que China planeaba construir seis corredores económicos, entre los cuales se enumeran:

China- Mongolia-Rusia; el nuevo puente marino Eurasíático; China-Asia Central-Asia Occidental; China-Vietnam; China-Pakistán y China-Myanmar-Bangladesh-India.

Es evidente que la creación del corredor económico sino-mongol-ruso tiene un carácter estratégico, donde a Rusia en una visión geopolítica, se le da el papel de miembro clave en el proyecto. La cooperación de Rusia y China en el proyecto, sus perspectivas y directrices abren nuevas posibilidades de interacción entre los países.

Fuera de toda duda, una condición clave para el BRI es el desarrollo de la infraestructura de transporte y logística, ya que Eurasia posee posibilidades únicas de desarrollo de corredores internacionales de transporte y centros de almacenamiento. En perspectiva se prevé la creación de una red global de autopistas de alta velocidad.

Se espera la unión de la ruta transiberiana con las rutas de tránsito de este proyecto internacional. Considerando que el costo del transporte de carga marítima es menor al terrestre, se tiene una ruta en perspectiva, que une a Asia con Europa y la ruta ártica que también se encuentra en Rusia.

## VI. PROBLEMAS DE LA COOPERACIÓN SINO-RUSA EN ASIA CENTRAL EN EL MARCO DEL BRI

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Hoy los países de Asia Central no son capaces de proyectarse por sí mismos al exterior, sin embargo, están ávidos de integrarse a la economía mundial. Son miembros de la Organización Mundial del Comercio, pero son muy dependientes de Rusia.

Las relaciones sino-rusas se caracterizan por una fuerte dinámica de desarrollo, una sólida base legal y una extensa estructura organizacional y vínculos activos en todos los niveles. “Hoy las relaciones sino-rusas son oficialmente definidas por las partes como una amplia asociación de confianza mutua e interacción estratégica” (Martinенко, 2019).

Existe entre las partes un intensivo diálogo político. Pekín y Moscú buscan incrementar la estabilidad en la región de Asia Central y reducir la amenaza del separatismo, sobre todo de la provincia china de Xinjiang, como ya se anotó.

Ambas naciones buscan limitar la presencia estadounidense en la región. En la esfera económica, su objetivo es incrementar sus vínculos en la zona y asegurar mercados para sus exportaciones a las economías de Asia Central.

Sin embargo, también hay elementos de competencia, porque China está muy interesada en obtener acceso directo a los energéticos de Asia Central, mientras Moscú controla predominantemente los ductos de abastecimiento energético de la región.

Pero, a pesar de algunos intereses económicos rivales, estos no son una potencial fuente de conflicto en el futuro, porque existen muchos más acuerdos sobre la necesidad de cooperar para aumentar la estabilidad económica y política en la región (Martinenko, 2019).

Mientras tanto, “China confrontó una complejidad interna, ya que su inversión en sus instancias productivas representaba cerca de la mitad del PIB, al mismo tiempo representaba el doble del promedio mundial, según los datos de la OCDE y estaba acercándose a obtener una disminución drástica de ganancias” (Martinenko, 2019). Esto significaba que, en lugar de recibir las ganancias de su trabajo, iba más dinero a los nuevos proyectos estatales, negocios, maquinaria, pero no podían ser usados más productivamente. Al desplazarse China hacia afuera de sus fronteras, puede invertir su excedente de capital y lograr a través del comercio mayores retornos.

Con respecto a Asia Central, existe el proyecto que parte de China, vía Kirguistán, Tadjekistán, Uzbekistán, Turkmenistán hasta la orilla sur del Mar Caspio para llegar finalmente a Europa a través de Turquía.

Sin embargo, a pesar del colapso de la Unión Soviética y la creciente influencia económica de China en Asia Central, “Rusia sigue manteniendo un papel sustancial en la región, a través de una combinación de convenios energéticos, culturales y nexos militares que son muy profundos para que

China pueda cambiarlos en el corto y mediano plazo. China históricamente ha estado detrás de Rusia en el área de Asia Central" (Martinенко, 2019).

En la esfera económica, aunque China ha emergido en la región como el principal socio comercial e inversionista, Rusia permanece como una fuerza económica dominante en Asia Central y continúa jugando un papel mayor al de China en el mercado petrolero de Asia Central. Los dos mayores oleoductos con una capacidad de exportación de 1,42 millones de barriles diarios, llegan al territorio ruso a Novorossisk y a Samara (Serioeshkin, 2019).

Tadzhikistán importa el 90% de su consumo de petróleo de la Federación Rusa, Kirguistán importa el 92% también de Rusia, Uzbekistán el país mayor poblado de Asia Central, con 28 millones de habitantes, consume el gas que produce y el sobrante, más del 50% lo exporta a través de Rusia. Así la preponderancia económica de Rusia en la zona es mayor, dado que Rusia recibe mucha migración. Cerca de un millón de ciudadanos kirguizos y más de un millón de ciudadanos tadjikos (casi la mitad de la fuerza de trabajo de ambos países) trabajan en Rusia (Aristova, 2018).

Rusia y China son los principales actores exteriores en Asia Central. Juntos han desplazado el intento de Estados Unidos por tener influencia en la región. Rusia que conserva fuertes vínculos y posee un gran potencial militar en la zona, trata de ejercer mayor influencia política, después de haber logrado evitar la influencia occidental, mientras que China acentúa la interacción económica, cuyo objetivo principal es el desarrollo de Xinjiang.

Rusia no pudo llenar el vacío que la Unión Soviética dejó en la región, sin embargo, la política de China de presencia en la zona ha sido sistemática. Es claro que, para reducir los riesgos de aumento de amenazas y retos de seguridad en Asia central, es necesario impulsar la dinámica del desarrollo económico de las repúblicas.

Rusia se esfuerza en unir a las antiguas repúblicas exsoviéticas en una nueva base económica mediante el proyecto denominado la Unión Económica Eurasiática (UEEA), proyecto al que quiere atraer a los países del Asia Central. Sin embargo, llevar a cabo este objetivo cada vez es más complejo, debido a que las relaciones económicas de Rusia con estos países se perjudicaron mucho por la introducción de sanciones a Rusia por parte de Occidente ya que la devaluación del rublo obligó a los trabajadores migrantes a buscar nuevos puestos de trabajo o a regresar a su país después de las sanciones impuestas por la reabsorción de Crimea.

A su vez, China después de la desintegración de la Unión Soviética, empezó activamente a buscar la posibilidad de obtener acceso a los recursos de la región para lo cual era necesario construir infraestructura de ductos y de transporte, establecer la cooperación económico-comercial y proponer proyectos de inversión.

El resultado de esta nueva estrategia china en la región fue que este país se convirtió en el principal importador en Kirguistán, Tadzhikistán y Uzbekistán y en el mayor otorgador de créditos en la región.

Primero, Pekín intentó realizar sus objetivos en el marco de la Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái (OCSH) y para este fin fueron creados proyectos de zonas de libre comercio bajo el auspicio de esta organización. Pero estas iniciativas fueron declinadas y entonces China integró estos objetivos en el BRI. En la realización de este proyecto, Rusia no puede ejercer influencia significativa y fue invitada a unirse, para no quedarse sin nada.

Los proyectos de integración de Pekín son diferentes por su naturaleza, ya que el BRI se esfuerza en unir el territorio de sus provincias occidentales con la región de Asia Central y hacia el exterior con Europa, Medio Oriente, Asia del Sur. En cambio, la UEEA es un proyecto político, destinado a crear un bloque regional pro ruso para crear un régimen económico preferencial para un mercado interno.

Sin embargo, en 2015 fue firmado un documento de unificación del BRI y de la UEEA y China acordó tener una relación oficial con la organización de Rusia. China, como es sabido, tiene muchas más posibilidades financieras que Rusia para sus propios proyectos de integración.

El capital del Banco Asiático para Inversión en Infraestructura, según sus documentos es de 100 mil millones de dólares y el Banco de Desarrollo de Eurasia sólo tiene 7 mil millones de dólares. Por lo que, en un tiempo cercano, china será el líder de la cooperación económica en la región, pero en la esfera militar la Federación Rusa conserva sus posiciones (Dmitrieva, 2019).

Para China, Asia Central es un medio para su propio desarrollo y la vía para llegar a los mercados europeos, “el pragmatismo y el deseo de ganancias constituye el principal móvil de la sistemática política de Pekín en la región. Para Rusia, su influencia en Asia Central es un medio de posicionamiento exterior en calidad de gran potencia que propone otros valores de los de Occidente” (Dmitrieva, 2019).

Así, los países de Asia Central se encuentran en una situación en la que pueden hacer una selección: unirse a una organización internacional con una estructura firme, sus reglas y líneas de conducción como la UEEA o unirse a un proyecto económico como el BRI, que en una primera impresión da menos margen de maniobra.

Todos los países de la región apoyan cada vez más la iniciativa china, porque las repúblicas ex soviéticas no están dispuestas a seguir a Rusia y quedarse en el aislamiento en el cual está Rusia por las sanciones occidentales y que continúan profundizándose (Dmitrieva, 2019).

Así, en la visión de Elena Dmitrieva, el ingreso de Kazajstán y Kirguistán en la UEEA ocurrió en un marco de oposición interna y dudas. Sus temores

compartidos con otros países de Asia Central consisten en los riesgos potenciales de ingresar a esta organización y experimentar pérdidas de ganancias económicas en el comercio con países que no forman parte de la UEEA y pérdida de soberanía.

En la actualidad, Kirguistán es un país que reexporta mercancías chinas, ya que las importa de China según el esquema de bajos aranceles y recibe la plusvalía de la venta de estas mercancías en Kazajstán y Rusia, en donde los aranceles sobre la importación de China son mayores.

Sin embargo, las nuevas tarifas de importación de la UEEA sobre las mercancías que vienen del exterior son mayores que las de Kirguistán y pueden acarrearte pérdidas en el comercio que realiza.

Tadjikistán aunque también comparte estos temores, sin embargo, la mayoría de los tadjikos piden la unión con la UEEA con la esperanza de tener menos restricciones para trabajar en Rusia. Además, participar en el BRI también les preocupa por la posibilidad de no pagar los créditos a China, debido a la debilidad de su economía.

Sobre todo, Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán tienen reservas en endeudarse con China, ya que la isla de Shri Lanka tuvo que dar a ésta una concesión por 99 años del puerto Jamban Tota y un territorio aledaño con el objetivo de disminuir sus compromisos con China.

Pakistán que tenía la intención de pedir un crédito al Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI), para evitar una moratoria, demuestra en la práctica el no poder pagar un crédito. China también intercambia las obligaciones de deuda por activos no financieros o concesiones políticas y esto preocupa a las pequeñas repúblicas de Asia Central.

A su vez, los gobiernos de los países mayores de Asia Central como Kazajstán, Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán no pueden resistir la perspectiva de un gran inversionista que propone construir indispensables proyectos de infraestructura en sus países, pero también tienen reservas sobre el papel de China en su economía, política y su influencia en sus sociedades.

Otro problema para el desarrollo del BRI en Asia Central es la actitud negativa que tiene la población local hacia este proyecto. En Kazajstán las encuestas muestran el aumento del ánimo anti chino en el periodo de 2007 a 2012, casi en todas partes del país. En abril de 2016, protestas masivas fueron la respuesta a la decisión del gobierno de otorgar un arriendo de tierra a largo plazo a granjeros chinos.

En Kirguistán en 2016 también hubo protestas anti chinas. Entonces el primer ministro T. Sariev fue destituido, después de acusarlo de haber favorecido a una compañía china en una licitación para la construcción de un camino. También produce descontento la violación de derechos de kazajos y kirguizos étnicos en la provincia china de Xinjiang.

Por ahora el BRI no representa una gran amenaza a los intereses rusos en Asia Central, porque el proyecto mismo se encuentra en elaboración.

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Pero Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán tienen como única fuente de créditos a China, por lo que tendrán que actuar con gran cautela para no caer en una dependencia con respecto a este país.

A la vez, Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea han sido alejados de la zona y Rusia no tiene los medios suficientes para estos proyectos. Pero la esfera de seguridad todavía está bajo la supervisión de Rusia, ya que en estos Estados se encuentran bases militares rusas.

Kazajstán, que es el mayor socio de Rusia en Eurasia, coopera muy estrechamente con China y no dejará de hacerlo. Uzbekistán después de la muerte del líder Islam Karimov se ha vuelto muy activo en la región y para transformarse, también necesita recursos. Y tanto Kazajstán como Uzbekistán, son estados más fuertes que Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán., por lo tanto, no tienen el mismo riesgo de caer en una dependencia de China. Turkmenistán, el país más aislacionista de la ex Unión Soviética, también parece aceptar participar en el BRI.

## VII. UNIÓN DE LA UEEA Y DEL BRI: RIESGOS Y LOGROS

Las principales rutas del BRI pasarán de China a través de Asia Central y Rusia hacia Europa a través del Mar Báltico. Y de China a través de Asia Central y hacia Occidente, al Golfo Pérsico y al Mar Mediterráneo.

Según la académica Elena Garbuzarova, a fines de 2017, el intercambio comercial de la UEEA y China fue de 102.7 mil millones de dólares (incluida la exportación de bienes euroasiáticos a China por 57.4 mil millones de dólares, un aumento de 30.7%) En 2017, la participación de China en el comercio de la UEEA fue de 16.2%. (Garbuzorova, 2019).

De acuerdo con los especialistas chinos, el futuro desarrollo del comercio y de las relaciones económicas entre la UEEA y China, debería incluir las siguientes tareas básicas:

Primero. Estandarización e interacción entre los actores dentro de la estructura de la UEEA y del BRI que debería de tener lugar de acuerdo con las reglas de la OMC.

Segundo. La construcción de la Gran Eurasia por medio de la integración de todas las asociaciones económicas líderes del espacio eurasiático en un proyecto de largo plazo denominado la Gran Eurasia, que comprenda una amplia cooperación económica entre la UEEA, el BRI y los países de ASEAN y con la Unión Europea, proyecto que ya está dándose. Sin embargo, después de Crimea, con el deterioro de las relaciones entre Rusia y la UE este proyecto parece poco promisorio en el futuro.

Tercero. Cooperación en la esfera de alta tecnología.

La UEEA y China tienen un gran potencial para la cooperación para crear proyectos de innovación y tecnología. Para aumentar la competitividad de las tecnologías de la UEEA se necesitan cambios tecnológicos en el contexto de una profunda integración. La cooperación con China haría posible aumentar el potencial de innovación de los países participantes y abrir nuevas oportunidades en el desarrollo tecnológico.

El experto ruso Serguei Afontsev, cree que la cooperación en el sector de alta tecnología será “una real oportunidad para Rusia, para asegurar la solución de la tarea prioritaria de aumentar la participación de Rusia de productos que no sean materias primas. Para China será una oportunidad más de aumentar su potencial de exportación a través de la producción de nuevos productos fundamentales hechos para mercados específicos de la UEEA y para sus países socios (Afontsev, 2017).

Esta sugerencia se debe referir también a otros países miembros de la UEEA. Por ejemplo, el desarrollo de tecnologías de información es una prioridad para Bielorrusia, Kazajstán, Armenia y Kirguistán. A pesar del hecho de que el campo de las tecnologías de información en China aún es muy joven, sin embargo, en años recientes ha mostrado un impresionante éxito en esta área.

En 2013, China superó a Estados Unidos en términos de comercio en línea. Por lo que la cooperación en el establecimiento de proyectos conjuntos en el campo de la innovación permitirá a China y a los Estados miembros de la UEEA desarrollar proyectos de tecnología e innovación.

Cuarto. Infraestructura de transporte La cooperación de la UEEA y del BRI conectará a Occidente con el Este y creará una extensa red de vías férreas, ductos y puertos, así como infraestructura logística, China está interesada en el transporte ferroviario hacia Europa, que será una alternativa para disminuir el transporte aéreo y marítimo que son más costosos.

Los países que ingresen al BRI se beneficiarán no sólo por el tránsito sino por el intenso flujo comercial que será estimulado por el desarrollo de las vías férreas.

La cooperación entre ambas iniciativas transformará el espacio eurasiano en una sola zona económica que tendrá influencia no sólo en la formación de un nuevo sistema económico, sino también en las relaciones políticas, ya que la cooperación simplificará la interacción entre los países de Eurasia, creando condiciones para el movimiento de capital, mercancías y servicios y hará una importante contribución a la liberalización comercial.

## VIII. MULTIPOLARIDAD POLÍTICA

Rusia y China con su cooperación estratégica ofrecen al mundo un ejemplo de cooperación benéfica, equitativa y provechosa. Sin embargo, existen riesgos de la cooperación entre ambas iniciativas:

Primero. Probabilidad de una fiera competencia.

La cooperación entre ambas organizaciones puede contribuir al surgimiento de la competencia entre las compañías rusas y chinas que abastecen al mercado eurasiático.

Segundo. Problemas con la industrialización.

Algunos expertos creen que el comercio con China disminuirá la industrialización de los miembros de la UEEA y eliminará el apoyo a los productos locales.

Tercero. Competencia en el cambio de la ingeniería industrial.

Al otorgar créditos y realizar acuerdos de inversión en estos países, China busca usar el equipamiento para su propia producción. La cuestión es como los países miembros de la UEEA serán capaces de proteger su equipamiento.

Cuarto. Transición de un formato bilateral a uno multipolar de interacción.

En política exterior, China se inclina a construir acuerdos en una base bilateral, pero la cooperación entre la UEEA y el BRI prioriza el formato multilateral de interacción.

## **IX. POSIBLES CONTRADICCIONES ENTRE LOS PROYECTOS RUSOS Y CHINOS**

Se tiene la percepción de que, en años recientes, la influencia de Rusia en Asia Central está declinando y China está gradualmente fortaleciendo su posición económica gracias a su capacidad financiera.

Sin embargo, es muy temprano para hablar de reducir la influencia de Rusia en la región ya que Rusia y Asia Central continúan desarrollando interacciones económicas, militares y culturales.

La política de China es pacífica y no quiere agravar sus relaciones con los vecinos para así promover la estabilidad y la cooperación en Eurasia.

La probabilidad de una coalición entre los intereses de Rusia y China en Asia Central “es muy pequeña porque al asegurar la estabilidad de la región como una prioridad para China y otros Estados miembros, se trata de evitar las confrontaciones con Rusia” (Syroezhkin, 2003).

## **X. LOGROS DE LA COOPERACIÓN**

En marzo de 2017, la Comisión Económica Eurasática identificó 39 proyectos prioritarios que se implementaron por los miembros de la UEEA y la China. Entre estos, la modernización de los caminos ya existentes y la creación de nuevos:

- Construcción de nuevos caminos dentro de la ruta de transporte internacional “Europa Occidental- China Occidental”.
- Construcción de una vía férrea de alta velocidad Moscú-Kazán.

- Desarrollo de la vía férrea Armenia- Irán, con acceso de Armenia a Kazajstán y China, a través de Irán.
- Construcción de la vía férrea China- Kirguistán-Uzbekistán y más allá, a través de Afganistán, Irán y Turquía hasta alcanzar la red ferroviaria europea.

El Banco Asiático de Inversión en Infraestructura y el Fondo de la Ruta de la Seda proveen asistencia financiera a la cooperación de la UEEA y el BRI. Asimismo, la asociación interbancaria de la OCSH también les provee apoyo financiero (Dwidevi, 2005).

Existe también el proyecto de China y Uzbekistán firmado en 2015 para expandir el comercio y la cooperación económica. También con Kazajstán, China ha establecido 51 proyectos conjuntos en el plano industrial, de transporte y logística por 28 mil millones de dólares (Izimov, 2018).

Además, China ha creado proyectos de gas con Turkmenistán y Tadzhikistán y un contrato fue firmado entre China y Kirguistán para la construcción de un gasoducto para complementar el ducto de gas de Tadzhikistán que transportará gas de Turkmenistán a China (Izimov, 2018).

## XI. BRI FACTORES POSITIVOS Y NEGATIVOS

No obstante, hay opiniones de académicos rusos que no son tan optimistas como las anteriores, como la de Liudmila Aristova y Nelli Semeniova que consideran que la intención de Rusia de ampliar la cooperación en el plano de construcción de corredores de tránsito con China choca con los intereses que no concuerdan y el surgimiento de la competencia en Asia Central (Aristova, 2018).

Existe la opinión de que las consecuencias geopolíticas de la creación de nuevos corredores de tránsito que no son favorables para el gobierno ruso, van a expresarse en pérdida de comunicación con los países miembros de la OCSH, bloqueo de los intereses rusos en la región y la exclusión de Rusia de sus zonas tradicionales de influencia política. Para Rusia, las consecuencias del fortalecimiento del transporte de China van a ser muy negativas: las principales cargas irán por los corredores internacionales de transporte, construidos en su mayoría fuera del territorio ruso (Aristova, 2018).

La región de Asia Central tiene un significado geopolítico para Rusia en relación con el restablecimiento de su estatus como una gran fuerza política en la región. De aquí, la política de los países occidentales en la construcción conjunta en el territorio de la región de proyectos de transporte e infraestructura para no pasar por el territorio de Rusia.

El surgimiento de los cinco países independientes llevó a la necesidad de resolver de nueva forma las tareas políticas y económicas regionales y también la construcción de nuevas relaciones favorables con Rusia y entre sí.

El carácter de las relaciones entre Rusia y Asia Central siempre tuvo un significado importantísimo para la región, teniendo en cuenta el tránsito y los vínculos entre los países de occidente y de oriente. La destrucción de una red unificada de vías férreas después de la desintegración de la Unión Soviética, no sólo agudizó muchos problemas económicos de los países post soviéticos, sino que contribuyó al surgimiento de una serie de tendencias que influyen negativamente en la influencia regional de la actual Rusia.

Así, significativos cortes a la vía férrea denominada transiberiana quedaron bajo la jurisdicción de Kazajstán, en donde en el contexto de la cooperación con China se construyeron nuevas vías férreas que garantizan una comunicación directa con los países vecinos sin tocar el territorio ruso.

En este sentido, el BRI abre nuevas posibilidades para los países miembros y como representa a la parte china que propone darle una ganancia directa a estos países. En el marco del BRI se considera la creación de tres corredores en el norte de Eurasia: el del norte: China-Asia Central-Rusia-Europa, el del centro: China-Asia Central-Golfo Pérsico- Mar Mediterráneo y el del sur: China-Asia del sureste-Asia del sur-Océano Índico.

En el proceso de creación de autopistas se propone no sólo la creación de autopistas, vías férreas y puentes que funcionarían para los centros logísticos, colocación de líneas de producción a la par de autopistas. En relación con esto, las tareas de China representan inversiones para llevar a cabo los proyectos de transporte, que pasan por el territorio de Asia Central.

En el periodo del 13o quinquenio (2016-2021) de la economía china, ésta lleva a cabo el proyecto China-Mongolia-Rusia, China-Asia-Occidental, parte del corredor económico trans eurasíático “central”; China-Asia Central y Occidente- Golfo Pérsico y Mar mediterráneo, China-Pakistán.

Los sistemas de energía y de transportación unen a los países de la región para desarrollo de las vías comerciales.

En la parte positiva de estos desarrollos, es conocido que los servicios de transporte actualmente transcurren dos veces más rápido que el crecimiento de los servicios comerciales. Para Rusia que actualmente comercia con minerales, el recurso de transporte con respecto a Europa y Asia puede llegar a ser una parte importantísima de las entradas del presupuesto (Aristova, 2018).

La cooperación entre China y Rusia en la esfera del transporte, en el marco de la Ruta de la Seda puede llevarse a cabo en diferentes esferas de la infraestructura de transporte. Los puntos principales en los proyectos de transporte son:

- El corredor China-Mogolia-Rusia
- Construcción de autopistas y vías férreas de China y de Rusia en el Lejano Oriente Russo.

- Ampliación de la explotación Primorie I y Primorie II.
- Autopista Pekín-Moscú.

Este proyecto será favorable para ambos países, pero por ahora no se ha construido. Los proyectos Primorie I y II actualmente ya están en marcha, pero las posibilidades todavía no están totalmente exploradas. Según los especialistas chinos es indispensable invertir más en estos proyectos para el mejoramiento de los trabajos de los caminos, aumento de las cargas y la capacidad de tránsito.

Para China, ambos caminos tienen un significativo interés: pueden servir para llevar mercancías del noreste de China a través de la región rusa de Primorski a puertos del Océano Pacífico. Actualmente la posibilidad de tránsito de estos caminos es de 40 a 45 millones de toneladas al año, lo que no es suficiente.

En 2017 fue firmado el acuerdo entre Rusia, China y Mongolia sobre la interacción en la esfera del mejoramiento de la funcionalidad de estas vías férreas.

La modernización de los objetos del transporte en el contexto del BRI atrae a Rusia en la participación de la construcción del proyecto conjunto con China.

A inicios del siglo XXI, el volumen del intercambio comercial entre países de Europa y de Asia -Pacífico fue de cerca de 600 mil millones de dólares. Gran parte de este intercambio se lleva a cabo vía marítima por el Océano Índico que alarga el tiempo del viaje (más del 30% del comercio mundial). De seis millones de contenedores que se transportan anualmente desde los países de Asia Pacífico a Europa y de regreso, 99% van vía marítima y solo 1% por el territorio de Rusia y Kazajstán (por el Transiberiano) (Aristova, 2018).

El 95% de las cargas que van de China a Europa van por mar. El 90% de las cargas que van de China a Rusia se también se lleva por mar, pero el proyecto terrestre intenta disminuir a 11 días el comercio, mientras que por mar es de 45 días. El costo del proyecto es de cerca de 5.5 mil millones de dólares. China está interesada hace tiempo en la construcción de una autopista por el territorio de Kazajstán, Este camino puede tener no sólo un favorable significado económico, pero también puede representar un peligro para Kazajstán y Rusia desde el punto de vista estratégico-militar. El camino dividirá el territorio de Kazajstán y en caso de conflicto militar sería una vía rápida para llevar armamento y cargas de China a posibles lugares de acciones militares (Aristova, 2018).

## XII. AVANCES DE LOS PROYECTOS DE INFRAESTRUCTURA EN LA REGIÓN

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La construcción de los proyectos económicos de los países de Asia Central en los próximos años influirá en sus economías y también la introducción de proyectos energéticos y de transporte con el apoyo de China. Hoy estos proyectos están vinculados directamente con la realización del BRI y China planea la construcción de una parte sustancial en Kazajstán.

La realización de proyectos de infraestructura conjuntos en la vía férrea Rusia-Asia Central-China puede influir favorablemente en la economía de la región en total y en las economías nacionales de los países participantes, como creación de fábricas, empleo de la población, ingresos por tránsito de los cargamentos, modernización de los caminos, puentes, estaciones, y construcción de nuevos objetivos de energía. Además, la introducción de centros logísticos permitirá aumentar el volumen de los cargamentos y de pasajeros y disminuir el tiempo de transporte.

Todo esto puede contribuir a la consolidación de las regiones de Rusia, China, Kazajstán y otros países de Asia Central. La zona que puede llegar a ser más favorecida es la del lejano oriente ruso, la región más oriental de Siberia y también las del occidente de China debido a la construcción de nuevas vías férreas y autopistas.

Pero, hay que considerar que al realizar el proyecto del BRI, China persigue más que nada sus intereses nacionales consistentes en el desarrollo de sus regiones centrales y occidentales que representan el 86% de todo el territorio de China, el 58% de la población y sólo el 15% de su Producto Interno Bruto (PIB) (Aristova, 2018).

Según el proyecto estratégico chino, estos desarrollos deben contribuir a la apertura e interacción entre las regiones orientales, centrales y occidentales del país, lo que presupone una apertura de las regiones internas de China hacia las provincias marítimas y también de las regiones en el valle del Yantse hacia las regiones internas. Es decir, que este es un momento muy importante en la consideración del programa de homogenización del nivel de vida en China. En suma, la iniciativa china está dirigida no tanto al exterior, sino al interior de la misma economía china y de la sociedad.

Partiendo de lo anterior, es evidente que China se apega puntualmente a su objetivo y actúa en concordancia con la “Concepción y plan de acciones para coadyuvar a la construcción del BRI terrestre y marítimo del siglo XXI”, pero está ausente la descripción de proyectos concretos, con excepción del Banco Asiático en Inversión de Infraestructura, el Fondo de la Ruta de la Seda y algunas actividades en la esfera de la cooperación humanitaria.

Pero hasta ahora, no hay una elaboración concluida del plan para construir el BRI, no hay datos del número de países unidos al proyecto, ni un

plan preciso del mapa de ruta de los participantes, ni están establecidos los términos de la realización del proyecto, aunque se planea para 2030, aunque tampoco hay claridad en el financiamiento.

Aún no están concluidos los datos sobre la longitud de las vías férreas en cada país y el volumen de los contenedores, ya que los grandes gastos previstos no incluyen su desglose en cada país.

Además, sólo 20% de los vagones que regresan desde Europa vienen cargados. Las inversiones de China crean significativas deudas que en el futuro serán difíciles de pagar. En total, China disminuyó sus inversiones en otros países en 2017-2018, previendo esta situación. En estos años, hasta el 90% de los cargamentos venían por mar.

En la apertura de un oleoducto en Atasu Alasharkou de Kazajstán al occidente de China, Pekín logró grandes éxitos en la asimilación de los recursos de Asia Central. La construcción del gasoducto de longitud de 988 km inició en septiembre de 2004 y fue concluida en diez meses. China financió todo el proyecto con inversiones que sobrepasan los 800 millones de dólares.

Con Uzbekistán, China firmó un acuerdo de inversión por 210 millones de dólares para la exploración de petróleo y gas por un periodo de 5 años desde 2017. Asimismo, Con Turkmenistán firmó un acuerdo para la construcción de un gasoducto de este país a China, a través del territorio de Uzbekistán. También está en construcción una línea férrea que une Uzbekistán con Xinjiang, a través de Kirguistán.

China también participa en objetivos de infraestructura en la región. Así, Pekín firmó el 14 de julio de 2006 un acuerdo sobre la construcción de una autopista en Tadzhikistán. También Kazajstán acordó con China la construcción de una hidroeléctrica.

En 2006, China invirtió 50 millones de dólares para mejorar el sistema de irrigación de Uzbekistán. También China prometió a los países del Asia Central invertir en la red óptica para mejorar el internet.

Kazajstán y Turkmenistán son países clave para la consecución de energéticos por parte de China, por lo que las inversiones chinas en el sistema energético de Kazajstán son significativas en exploración y construcción de ductos.

También en la esfera del transporte, China participa en la construcción y reparación de caminos. Actualmente está en marcha la reconstrucción de la autopista magistral China-Kirguistán-Uzbekistán.

También fue construido un camino que une a China con Tadzhikistán y éste puede ser un corredor de transporte que le brinde acceso a estos dos países al Océano Índico, a través de Afganistán y Pakistán. Así, la ampliación de nexos entre China y Asia Central ha aumentado las perspectivas del comercio fronterizo de China con Kazajstán y Kirguistán.

En el plano de la seguridad, China tiene ya un acuerdo de seguridad estratégica con Kazajstán y con Kirguistán ha llevado a cabo ejercicios militares en la frontera bilateral.

En el marco de la OCSH Rusia y China trabajan con los países de Asia Central, excepto con Turkmenistán, para lograr una integración regional. Se espera que el Banco Eurasíatico, creado por Kazajstán y Rusia financiará los proyectos de la Sociedad Asiática de Cooperación con un capital de 1.5 mil millones de dólares (Salitskii, 2019).

### XIII. LAS CONTRADICCIONES DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN PARA LA COOPERACIÓN DE SHANGÁI

La primera contradicción es la competencia de China y Rusia en el Asia Central. La primera visita de Xi Jin Pin fue a Moscú no a Washington. En ese momento, la visión estratégica estadounidense de Zigniew Brzezinski consideraba que este hecho era una extrema confusión por parte del presidente Xi, ya que no fue a visitar a un socio importantísimo y a la potencia económica líder, sino a Rusia.

Según el experto en Asia Central Adil Kaukenov: “Es evidente que uno de los motivos del ingreso de Rusia a la OCSH ha sido la intención de prevenir una expansión sin control de China en Asia Central, ya que a inicios del año 2000 era ya claro que la entrada de China en la región era inminente y por eso Moscú accedió a esta presencia, pero con su participación. La creación de la OCSH también favoreció a Pekín porque le dio legitimidad a la presencia China en la región (Kaukenov, 2013).

La estrategia de Rusia ha sido la de extender la membresía a otros países como a la India y a Pakistán, y darle a la organización una proyección internacional, sin embargo, esta estrategia no concuerda con la visión de China, que ve en la organización un instrumento para su expansión y no quiere que ésta se diluya con la presencia de otros actores, que además están involucrados en conflictos con Washington como Irán.

Para su influencia en Asia Central, Moscú tiene otras organizaciones con las mismas funciones que la OCSH, pero sin la participación de China. En estas organizaciones alternativas como la Organización del Tratado de Seguridad Colectiva, Moscú se esfuerza en crear Fuerzas Militares de Reacción Rápida y una economía regional con los mismos aranceles.

Por eso, la visita de Xi tenía la intención de cambiar esta dinámica e involucrar a Moscú en proyectos conjuntos como la construcción de ductos de transporte de energéticos y autopistas internacionales.

El segundo nivel de contradicciones en la OCSH es la competencia de los países de Asia Central, los procesos de desintegración en la región y la vacilación de las élites de Asia Central para inclinarse hacia alguno de los centros de poder mundial.

La OCSH tiene una orientación anti-OTAN. La declaración de la Cumbre de 2005 en Astana, donde se cuestionó la necesidad de que las bases militares estadounidenses se retiraran de Asia Central dio inicio al uso político de la organización, ya que Rusia demostró su fuerza en la región y China inició un proceso de alejar a Estados Unidos de sus fronteras occidentales. Asimismo, Uzbekistán pidió la retirada de la base militar estadounidense por los sucesos de Andijan y se incorporó a la OCSH. Por su parte, Kirguistán vio la posibilidad de negociar un mayor pago por la base estadounidense que alberga en Manas, junto al aeropuerto internacional y en general la OCSH fue una garantía para evitar las maniobras de cambio de régimen de Estados Unidos en la región.

#### XIV. CONCLUSIÓN

No se puede obviar el hecho del grado de complementación de la economía de los dos países y su fuerte influencia en las economías de Asia Central. Incluso considerando el poder de la economía china y su evidente tendencia a convertirse en una gran potencia comercial mundial, sin la ayuda de Rusia y de los países de Asia Central no le sería fácil conservar su fuerte y sistemático desarrollo (Serioeshkin, 2019).

Sin embargo, hay una creciente tendencia a la competitividad entre China y Rusia. China no sólo es el principal creador de los proyectos de gran volumen de transporte y de infraestructura que se realizan en la región, sino que es el principal otorgante de crédito a las economías de Asia Central.

En segundo lugar, China sustituye esforzadamente a Rusia en su posición de principal socio comercial en la región, ya que actualmente las mercancías chinas dominan en Kirguistán y Tadzhikistán y Kazajstán sigue también esta tendencia.

En tercer lugar, ha habido un cambio de actitud de las élites y la población de estos países con respecto a China, ya que a pesar de la cautela que hay en estos países ante la expansión china, este país se contempla como una alternativa a Rusia.

En esta región China siempre ha actuado según dos principios:

- Valoración de los problemas de Asia Central, las amenazas que surgen ahí y los retos a la seguridad nacional de China.
- Las posibilidades que surgen para resolver tareas estratégicas para China.

“Todo lo que China ha hecho en sus relaciones con la región, primordialmente ha sido para sus intereses nacionales, el principal de los cuales ha sido buscar condiciones favorables para el desarrollo de las regiones noroccidentales de China, la realización de la estrategia de conversión de China en una gran potencia comercial y también la garantía de la seguridad del país y

también en el contexto de minimizar la influencia y consecuencias de los procesos negativos en el Asia Central post soviética (Serioeshkin, 2019).

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Después del 11 de septiembre de 2001, Asia central adquirió gran relevancia para China por el factor geopolítico de tener a Estados Unidos en esta región.

Por esto, una de las orientaciones fundamentales de la política regional de Pekín en este periodo, es minimizar las consecuencias negativas de la presencia militar estadounidense en la zona, lo que la conduce a ampliar los volúmenes de su presencia económica en la región y resolver tareas geoestratégicas:

No entrar en un conflicto directo con Estados Unidos y en lo posible cooperar con este país y tratar de crear condiciones para disminuir su presencia y su influencia en la región. A la vez, apoya a Moscú para hacerle creer que es la primera fuerza en la región y fortalecer sus contactos económicos, políticos y militares sobre todo con Kazajstán y Kirguistán y utiliza el sistema de la OCSH para paulatinamente garantizarse un lugar importante en el sistema regional de seguridad.

Al otorgar créditos comerciales y ofrecer inversiones en proyectos futuros, fortalece sus posiciones económicas y forma una imagen positiva en la opinión pública de los países de Asia Central.

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# La importancia de los países de la Unión Económica Euroasiática (UEE) en el marco de la relación Rusia-China

**SUMARIO:** I.Introducción II. Geoeconomía y el “país-puente” III. La integración de los “países-puente” a los proyectos euroasiáticos IV. La función geoeconómica del “país-puente” en los proyectos euroasiáticos V.Consideraciones finales VI.Referencias

## I. INTRODUCCIÓN

A inicios del siglo XXI el mundo se configuró en un sistema de múltiples polos de poder con el fortalecimiento internacional y desarrollo económico de numerosos Estados, como los BRICS, situación que se alejó de la política unipolar que caracterizó la década de 1990 (Añorve, Cid y Gutiérrez del Cid, 2012; Pérez, Pérez y Pérez-Gavilán, 2019). Parte de la evidencia teórica y empírica que permite observar la formación de un sistema mundial multipolar es la conformación y formalización de “bloques regionales de poder” en forma de organizaciones de integración regional que ofrecen alternativas eminentemente económicas a las instituciones internacionales occidentales (Merino, 2016). En Eurasia, la consolidación de dichos bloques de poder se han manifestado en la proliferación de organizaciones<sup>4</sup> conglomeradas en torno a dos actores: China y Rusia.

<sup>1</sup> Profesor-investigador de tiempo completo en el Departamento de Política y Cultura de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. Contacto: [etzili@correo.xoc.uam.mx](mailto:etzili@correo.xoc.uam.mx).

<sup>2</sup> Especialista en temas de Rusia y el espacio exsoviético. Investigador asociado del Centro de Estudios Postsoviéticos, con sede en Moscú. Contacto: [epalacioscabrera@gmail.com](mailto:epalacioscabrera@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Miembros del Grupo de Estudios Sobre Eurasia (GESE).

<sup>4</sup> Banco Asiático de Inversión en Infraestructura de 2014, Comunidad Económica Euroasiática de 2012, Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái de 2001, por mencionar los más importantes.

Es conocido que a partir de la década de 1980 la República Popular de China (en adelante también “China”) ha adquirido tales capacidades económicas, militares, políticas y tecnológicas que, sin duda, es considerado actualmente como un polo de poder (Oropeza, 2019). En este sentido, la Iniciativa Franja y Ruta (IFR)<sup>5</sup> es el proyecto de política exterior china para consolidar un bloque de poder por excelencia. Hasta finales del 2019 China había firmado 197 documentos de cooperación con 137 países y con 30 organizaciones internacionales (Xinhua, 2019).

Por su parte, la Federación Rusa lleva dos décadas consolidando su reposicionamiento como potencia regional, de la mano de Vladimir Putin. Desde que tomó el poder en 2000, el presidente ruso ha pugnado por retomar el estatus de gran potencia que Rusia ostentó durante la Guerra Fría. Ayudado por el alza en los precios del petróleo, esta nación euroasiática aumentó considerablemente su proyección internacional<sup>6</sup> hasta el revés que le significó la Crisis de Ucrania de 2014. A raíz de este suceso, Rusia ha entrado en un conflicto estancado pero latente con Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea, por lo que ha tenido que buscar en sus extensiones asiáticas a nuevos socios económicos y aliados estratégicos, siendo China el principal prospecto.

Debido a la convergencia de dos polos y dos bloques de poder en la misma región, Eurasia, ha surgido todo un debate en torno a si dicha convergencia podría representar un punto de cooperación o de conflicto. Sangar (2017) afirma que la asociación entre la Iniciativa Franja y Ruta –particularmente su dimensión terrestre– y la Unión Económica Euroasiática está en el interés de China y Rusia, pues funciona como un elemento cohesionador y dirime cualquier probabilidad de conflicto. En la misma línea de pensamiento, Zigu (2019) afirma que, a juzgar por su naturaleza distinta –siendo la UEEA una unión económica institucionalizada y la FERS una iniciativa de cooperación económica–, no existe en esencia ninguna contradicción entre ambos proyectos ni existe un conflicto fundamental entre ellos, lo que sienta las bases para su conexión.

Por su parte, Wilson (2016) y Kaczmarski (2017a), argumentan que la coincidencia espaciotemporal de ambos proyectos se ha minado cada vez más debido a las disparidades económicas y asimetrías de poder entre sus países líderes, y aunque hasta el momento se han mantenido relaciones cordiales, no es seguro firmar que esto sea una constante en el futuro. En esta línea, Kaczmarski (2017b) también plantea que, si bien ambos proyectos pueden tener objetivos distintos, el alejamiento de las formas occidentales de proceder en la arena internacional les permite converger. Ostrovskii

**5** Cabe recordar que la “Iniciativa Franja y Ruta” es el nombre contraído de “Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda” (proyectos por tierra) y “Ruta de la Seda Económica Siglo XXI” (proyectos por mar).

**6** En su punto más álgido, Rusia se insertó en el conflicto de la Guerra de Siria en 2014, siendo ésta su primera intervención en un conflicto armado fuera del espacio exsoviético desde la caída de la URSS.

(2017, p. 488) menciona que la conjunción de ambos proyectos permitirá que los países miembros puedan disfrutar de una “zona colosal de tránsito” entre Asia y Europa, aunado a que se reforzaría la complementariedad entre los países de la UEEA y China, pues le permitiría al país asiático acceder al mercado de vastos recursos naturales y *commodities*. En contraste con esto, Czerewacz-Filipowicz (2019) argumenta que si bien en teoría la unión aduanera en el marco de la UEEA facilitaría el tránsito de bienes en el “Corredor Trans-siberiano” –la parte sino-rusa de la Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda (FERS)–, en la práctica, debido a factores estructurales y políticos, se limitan mucho las posibilidades de tránsito, lo que afecta la convergencia entre ambos mega-proyectos. A esto se relaciona lo dicho por Glinkina y Yakovlev (2018, p. 416) y Gabuev (2016), en cuanto a las percepciones divergentes de la coincidencia entre la FERS y la UEEA, pues mientras Rusia espera que China coopere con el mecanismo de la unión económica, multilateralmente, Beijing apuesta por la cooperación bilateral con cada uno de los miembros de unión, a lo cual se suma un poco involucramiento de la comunidad empresarial de ambos países en los proyectos del otro y la diferencia en los procesos de toma de decisiones.

En ese capítulo no nos interesa tanto analizar los papeles internacionales de China y Rusia, o las dinámicas de la IFR y la UEE, pues ya han sido temas ampliamente analizados y debatidos.<sup>7</sup> Más bien, este trabajo parte del entendimiento de la relación bilateral Rusia-China como una relación estratégica y complementaria, en la que ambos países reconocen mutuamente su peso histórico, político, económico y estratégico en la arena internacional, respetando en todo momento los intereses que ambos tienen en sus respectivas esferas de influencia. Por ello, nos interesa reflexionar sobre el papel de los Estados miembros –Armenia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán y Kirguistán–, que coinciden en ambos proyectos de integración regional, ya que asumimos que su papel es crucial en determinar si ambas iniciativas pueden converger exitosamente o no. En esta línea, la principal pregunta de investigación que guía al capítulo es ¿qué papel desempeñan los Estados miembros –no China ni Rusia– de la Unión Económica Euroasiática y la Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda en materia de convergencia o divergencia entre ambos proyectos? A manera de respuesta e hipótesis, argumentamos que los Estados miembros de ambos proyectos desempeñan un papel estratégico y, sobre todo, geoeconómico, en calidad de “país-puente”, en el que su participación es decisiva para el éxito de la convergencia de los proyectos de China y Rusia y, por ende, para el reforzamiento de una relación bilateral armoniosa y pacífica entre ambas potencias en Eurasia.

<sup>7</sup> Para estos temas véase: Gutiérrez del Cid (2016), Oropeza (2018), Rocha (2013), Rocha Pino (2017), Tzili (2018) y el presente libro.

Para elaborar el argumento, el presente capítulo se divide en cuatro apartados. En el primero, proponemos una definición de “país-puente” en el marco de la geoconomía. En el segundo apartado ofrecemos una revisión histórica de la integración a los proyectos de los Estados miembros de ambas iniciativas. En el tercer apartado analizamos si, en efecto, los Estados miembros cumplen la función de país-puente, o en caso de no, interpretamos el porqué. En el cuarto y último apartado ofrecemos algunas consideraciones finales y proponemos líneas de investigación pendientes.

## II. GEOECONOMÍA Y EL “PAÍS-PUENTE”

Si el siglo XX y la Guerra Fría se caracterizaron por el ejercicio del pensamiento geopolítico por medio del realismo político, el siglo XXI se caracterizará por el ejercicio del pensamiento geoeconómico a partir de la interdependencia compleja (Vihma, 2017). Para este punto adoptamos la definición de “geoconomía” de Blackwill y Harris (2016, p. 20), quienes establecen que:

[La geoconomía] es el uso de instrumentos económicos para la promoción y defensa de intereses nacionales, para la producción de resultados geopolíticos beneficiosos, además de que caracteriza los efectos de las acciones económicas de una nación en los objetivos políticos de otra.

El uso de instrumentos económicos por encima de los instrumentos militares, precisamente, ha caracterizado a las relaciones internacionales de la posguerra fría, ya que ha existido un constante aumento de la interdependencia compleja global. En este sentido, cabe recordar que la “interdependencia”, en política mundial, se refiere a “situaciones caracterizadas por efectos recíprocos entre Estados”, ello debido a un alto grado de sensibilidad –el grado de reacción en el marco de políticas– y vulnerabilidad –riesgo de asumir costos por una acción externa– en la relación entre dos o más actores (Keohane y Nye, 2012, pp. 7-11).

En otras palabras, el ascenso de la geoconomía ha sido posible gracias al incremento y profundización de los canales de comunicación –económicos, en este caso– e interacción, que a su vez caracterizan a la interdependencia compleja mundial. De igual modo, la geoconomía implica que el Estado ha aprovechado estos múltiples canales de interacción económica para cumplir sus intereses nacionales y alcanzar beneficios geopolíticos. Para lo anterior, una estrategia geoeconómica a la que los Estados han recurrido es el impulso de acciones con base en una identidad de “país-puente”. Un “país-puente” es un “código geopolítico” debido a que es “la manera en que un Estado se orienta hacia el mundo”, acción realizada a partir de saber quiénes son los aliados de dicho Estado, quiénes son los adversarios, cómo se pueden mantener a los aliados, cómo se pueden contrarrestar a los adversarios y poten-

ciales amenazas, y cómo se pueden justificar estos cálculos de manera pública (Flint, 2006, pp. 55-56). En este sentido, un “país-puente”, como acción geoeconómica, apuesta por influir en los “imperativos de gobernanza” de procesos fundamentalmente económicos (Sparke, 1998), pero a partir de una condición identitaria y particular: la de un país que une, pero no solo por su importancia geopolítica, sino también por sus capacidades económicas.

Turquía ha sido conceptualizada como el clásico ejemplo de un “país-puente”, aunque también otros Estados han sido identificados así, como Chile y México. En estos casos, las definiciones de “país-puente” se han limitado a enfatizar la importancia eminentemente geográfica de los actores en cuestión. Turquía, por ejemplo, se ha identificado a sí misma como un “puente” entre Europa y Asia dada su posición territorial ventajosa (Bagci y Anlar, 2009; Yeşiltaş, 2013). De igual modo, México ha sido definido como un “puente” en el que convergen y se encuentran numerosos actores dada su posición geográfica entre América del Norte y América Latina, aunado a que representa una “importante ventana” hacia el Caribe (Saltalamacchia, 2018). Por su parte, Chile ha sido oficialmente asumido como “país-puente” entre América Latina y Asia-Pacífico debido a su posición geográfica, aunque en este caso, debido al interés de promover su identidad de país-puente para una “diplomacia comercial”, Chile ha sido académicamente conceptualizado más como un “agente comercial” (*broker*) (Schulz y Rojas-De-Galarreta, 2020).

Para nuestro caso de estudio, parece seguro afirmar que la promoción china de la IFR y la rusa de la UEEA tienen objetivos eminentemente geo-económicos –cuestión que el presente libro aborda–. Por el lado de la República Popular de China, la materialización de la Iniciativa Franja y Ruta parece apostar por colocar al país asiático en el centro de las redes que implican los procesos productivos regionales, situación que a su vez incrementaría la importancia económica y geopolítica de China (Beeson, 2018). Para el caso de la Federación Rusa, la consolidación de la Unión Económica Euroasiática parece ir de la mano con la intencionalidad económica rusa de a) no quedarse fuera de los macro-procesos de integración económica entre China y Europa, b) afianzar la importancia económica de Rusia para Armenia, Bielorrusia y Kirguistán, y c) mejorar la relación kazajo-rusa y reducir la dependencia de Kazajstán con China (Czerewacz-Filipowicz, 2017).

Para nuestro capítulo, consideramos que Armenia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán y Kirguistán son “países-puente” entre la Unión Económica Euroasiática y la Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda no solo por su importancia logística, ubicación territorial y cercanía con los Estados promotores de proyectos de integración regional, sino también porque se asumen geográficamente importantes como parte de una estrategia geoeconómica que busca aprovechar los canales de interacción económica abiertos gracias a ambas iniciativas multilaterales.

### III. LA INTEGRACIÓN DE LOS “PAÍSES-PUENTE” A LOS PROYECTOS EUROASIÁTICOS

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La Iniciativa Franja y Ruta (IFR) se estableció formalmente a partir del discurso del presidente Xi Jinping en la Universidad de Nazarbayev, Kazajstán, en septiembre de 2013. Esta fecha también es el punto de inicio de la Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda (FERS), la dimensión terrestre del proyecto. En el marco de esta propuesta, además de Kazajstán el presidente chino visitó también Kirguistán, Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán, lo cual es puede ser significativo dado que hasta ese momento ningún presidente estadounidense había visitado Asia Central, mucho menos en la coyuntura en que el gobierno en Washington había impulsado su *pivot to Asia* (Nolan, 2019).

Cabe destacar que la IFR es un proyecto chino que apuesta por defender el sistema económico mundial y el libre comercio, el desarrollo económico diversificado, aunado a la profundización de la cooperación regional (Gobierno de China, 2017). En esta línea, desde un inicio se planteó el código geopolítico de la IFR como “puente” entre China y Europa al subrayar la importancia del desarrollo de infraestructura, particularmente aeropuertos, caminos, telecomunicaciones y vías de ferrocarril, entre otras cosas (Nolan, 2019).

**TABLA 1. CORREDORES ECONÓMICOS DE LA FERS**

PROYECTO	AÑO DE INICIO
Corredor Económico China-Mongolia-Rusia	2014
Corredor Económico Nuevo Puente Continental Euroasiático	2015
Corredor Económico China-Asia central-Asia oriental	2014
Corredor Económico China-Península de Indochina	2015
Corredor Económico China-Pakistán	2013
Corredor Económico Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar	2013

**FUENTE:** Fang y Nolan (2019).

La Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda se compone, principalmente, de seis “corredores económicos” mismos que aprovechan infraestructura ya existente para ampliar y mejorar la red de conexiones física entre China y Europa. Como se puede observar en la Tabla 1, estos corredores conectan a China con Rusia, Europa, Turquía, Sureste Asiático, Pakistán e India –aunque cabe destacar que este último corredor es el menos desarrollado dada la reticencia india a unirse a la IFR–.

Para el caso de nuestro objeto de investigación, es importante recordar que China ha propuesto el marco de cooperación “5+1” para fomentar los vínculos con la Unión Económica Euroasiática (Hu, Liu y Yan, 2017). De manera particular, los “países-puente” entre la UEA y la FERS forman parte

del Corredor Económico Nuevo Puente Continental Euroasiático y del Corredor Económico China-Asia central-Asia oriental. El primer corredor conecta a China con Europa vía Kazajstán, Rusia y Bielorrusia; se apoya en el marco “Cooperación 16+1”<sup>8</sup> y en la Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái (OCS), y sus objetivos principales son a) la infraestructura para la conectividad, b) la cooperación industrial y para la inversión, c) la cooperación económica y de comercio (OBOREurope, 2020; Wang, 2019a). El segundo corredor conecta a China con el Mediterráneo vía Kazajstán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán, Uzbekistán, Irán y Turquía; se apoya en la Red Sino-Árabe de Cooperación “1+2+3”,<sup>9</sup> y sus objetivos principales son a) la infraestructura para la conectividad, b) la cooperación en materia de energéticos, c) la cooperación industrial y para la inversión, d) la cooperación económica y de comercio (OBOREurope, 2020; Wang, 2019b).

Los países-puente en consideración tienen tanto a China cuanto a Rusia entre sus principales socios comerciales. Para 2018, el primer socio comercial de Armenia fue Rusia, mientras que China fue el tercero; en el mismo año el primer socio comercial de Bielorrusia fue Rusia; para Kazajstán China representó el segundo socio comercial más importante y Rusia el cuarto; para Kirguistán Rusia fue el tercer socio comercial más importante. Cabe destacar que, para Rusia, China fue el principal socio comercial en el año 2018 y Bielorrusia el cuarto, mientras que en cuanto China ninguno de los países-puente –o Rusia, para el caso– formó parte de los principales socios comerciales.

**TABLA 2. PRINCIPALES SOCIOS COMERCIALES DE CHINA, RUSIA Y LOS “PAÍSES-PUENTE” DE LA IFR Y LA UEEA, 2018**

LUGAR ENTRE LOS PRINCIPALES SOCIOS COMERCIALES	ARMENIA	CHINA	BIELORRUSIA	KAZAJSTÁN	KIRGUISTÁN	RUSIA
1°	Rusia, 622		Rusia, 12879			China, 56020
2°				China, 6307		
3°	China, 211				Rusia, 266	
4°				Rusia, 5280		Bielorrusia, 22780

**FUENTE:** UNCTAD (2019). Los números representan el valor de las exportaciones en millones de dólares estadounidenses.

**8** El marco “Cooperación 16+1” es un formato de cooperación establecido desde 2012 entre China y Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croacia, Eslovaquia, Eslovenia, Estonia, Hungría, Letonia, Lituania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Polonia, República Checa, Rumanía y Serbia.

**9** La Red Sino-Árabe de Cooperación “1+2+3” es un formato de cooperación establecido en 2014 entre China y los países miembros de la Liga Árabe en el marco del Foro Sino-Árabe de Cooperación. El “1” se refiere a la energía como base, el “2” a la infraestructura e inversiones como pilares de apoyo, y el “3” a los campos específico de cooperación: energía nuclear, satélites espaciales y nuevas energías.

La Unión Económica Euroasiática, como idea, fue propuesta inicialmente por el entonces presidente de Kazajistán, Nursultán Nazarvayev en 1994. Algunos expertos consideran que el impulso para consolidar la UEEA fue precisamente la creciente influencia económica de China en Eurasia (Sokoláyi, 2015). El acuerdo sobre la creación de la UEEA fue firmado el 29 de mayo de 2014 por los Estados miembros de la Unión Aduanera y del Espacio Económico único. La alianza incluye Rusia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán y Armenia (Unión Económica Euroasiática, 2020). Kirguistán se adhirió a la Unión en mayo de 2015.

En palabras de Verónica Nikishina, Ministra de Comercio de la Comisión Económica Euroasiática (CEE, su principal órgano ejecutivo), la UEEA “es una unión de integración clásica basada en el principio de libertad de circulación de bienes, servicios, finanzas y mano de obra. (Comisión Económica Euroasiática, 2017). El objetivo principal de la Unión es proporcionar condiciones para el desarrollo estable de las economías de los Estados miembros con el fin de mejorar el nivel de vida de su población, la modernización integral, la cooperación y el aumento de la competitividad de las economías nacionales en la economía mundial (Unión Económica Euroasiática, 2020).

En su estado actual, y después de cinco años desde su fundación, la UEEA avanza a un ritmo más lento de lo esperado en la consecución de proyectos concretos. Un resumen analítico publicado por Moscow World Trade Center (2016) con base en un trabajo multidisciplinario titulado «Cinturón Económico de Integración Euroasiática»<sup>10</sup> subraya que si bien la Unión Aduanera de la UEEA prevé el establecimiento de aranceles nulos entre los Estados miembros de la Unión, la supresión de las fronteras aduaneras y un arancel externo único para terceros países, todavía existen algunos sectores de la economía en los que no existen mercados únicos con normas armonizadas, a saber: los mercados de petróleo y sus derivados, alcohol, automóviles y gas. En cuanto a la creación de mercados únicos para el resto de la economía, según los planes de la CEE, el mercado único de la electricidad debería comenzar a funcionar en 2019 y el de petróleo y gas, a más tardar en 2025 (Moscow WTC, 2016). En cuanto a su apertura a la economía mundial, cabe destacar el tratado de libre comercio que la UEEA firmó con Vietnam en 2015.

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**10** Este trabajo fue presentado en el Foro Económico Internacional de San Petersburgo de 2016, elaborado en conjunto por la Fundación Roscongress, la Academia Rusa de Comercio Exterior y el Centro de Investigación ITI (International Trade and Integration) editado por B.C. Pavel Kadochnikov (WAWT), Ad. Vladimir Salamatov (ITI), Ad. Andrei Spartak (WAWT, WNIKI).

#### IV. LA FUNCIÓN GEOECONÓMICA DEL “PAÍS-PUENTE” EN LOS PROYECTOS EUROASIÁTICOS

Armenia en la FERS: Armenia, junto a Bielorrusia y Kirguistán, es una de las tres economías pequeñas de la UEEA. A pesar de ser uno de los países que no figura como un socio comercial mayoritario para China –debido a las limitaciones que le imponen su economía y su lejanía geográfica–, esta sí lo es para Armenia. No obstante, dentro de la región del Cáucaso, Armenia parece pasar desapercibida para la FERS china; en 2019, ningún representante de ese país fue invitado al foro “*Cooperation One Belt, One Road: Building a Common Bright Future*”, que tuvo lugar en Beijing y donde participaron 37 líderes mundiales, 360 ministros del exterior y representantes de más de 90 organizaciones internacionales (Kerimkhanov, 2019).

La falta de interés de China por integrar a Armenia en su macro proyecto puede explicarse por diversas razones. La primera obedece al pobre desarrollo de la infraestructura de transporte armenia, como lo menciona atinadamente Sahakyan (2019), primer ministro asistente de Armenia: para convertirse en un país de tránsito en los corredores de transporte que unen diferentes regiones del continente euroasiático, Armenia debe desarrollar y modernizar primero su infraestructura de transporte, que se encuentra pobremente desarrollada. Por esta razón, Armenia está construyendo el Corredor de 556 kilómetros por la carretera Norte-Sur, que comenzará en la frontera entre Armenia e Irán y se extenderá hasta la frontera entre Armenia y Georgia (Sahakyan, 2019).

En concordancia con lo anterior, el ex primer ministro y economista Hrant Bagratyan cree que las autoridades armenias cometieron un gran error cuando el país no se unió al club de cofundadores del Banco Asiático de Inversión en Infraestructura, que financia proyectos de la Ruta de la Seda (Kerimkhanov, 2019).

Finalmente, más allá de las razones económicas, el rechazo chino a incluir a Armenia en sus proyectos de integración económica sin duda se relaciona también con el conflicto no resuelto que este país mantiene con su vecino Azerbaiyán en la región de Nagorno-Karabaj. Este conjunto de factores debilita la capacidad de la nación armenia de fungir como “país puente” entre Rusia y China.

Bielorrusia en la FERS: Bielorrusia es un aliado clave para el proyecto chino en Europa del Este. Con Ucrania fuera del juego –tras el conflicto con Rusia de 2014, mismo que continúa sin resolverse hasta la fecha– Bielorrusia alza la mano como el sustituto perfecto para ocupar su lugar en la FERS: “Después del inicio del conflicto ruso-ucraniano, China sin duda se convirtió no sólo en un socio económico importante para Bielorrusia, sino también en uno militar y político”, dijo Arseny Sivitski, Director del Centro

de Estudios Estratégicos y de Política Exterior en Minsk (Belt and Road News, 2019).

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El gobierno bielorruso, encabezado por Alexander Lukashenko, está dispuesto a convertir a su país en un eslabón indispensable del proyecto chino. Tras su visita a Beijing en abril de 2019, Lukashenko aseguró para su país dos importantes acuerdos de préstamo: el Banco Chino de Desarrollo proporcionó 100 millones de euros (110,9 millones de dólares) a Belarusbank, mientras que el Banco de Exportación e Importación de China acordó suministrar 65,7 millones de euros a Ferrocarriles Bielorrusos (Belt and Road News, 2019).

El principal proyecto-puente que une a Bielorrusia con la FERS es sin duda el *Great Stone Industrial Park*. El presidente chino Xi Jinping una vez lo llamó la “Perla” del Belt & Road: un complejo de 112 kilómetros cuadrados en las afueras de Minsk con capacidad para 200.000 trabajadores. No sólo es Great Stone el mayor proyecto de inversión extranjera en Bielorrusia, es el proyecto económico extranjero más grande de China. Este proyecto es, sin duda, una puerta de entrada a la UEEA a través de Bielorrusia para bienes y servicios chinos.

**Kazajstán en la FERS:** Esta nación centroasiática es un actor de primer orden en la estrategia china de integración regional. Kazajstán se distingue por su vasto territorio, su potencial económico y sus grandes reservas de recursos naturales. Aunado a ello, es la nación más desarrollada económica y la más estable en términos políticos en Asia Central. Estos factores convergen para crear un clima que atrae la inversión y promueve a la nación kazaja en el ámbito internacional como un socio estratégico. Además, su posición geográfica la sitúa en el corazón de la FERS: fue precisamente en Astaná donde Xi Jinping hizo público al resto del mundo su proyecto de integración regional en un discurso en la Universidad Nazarvayev en 2013 (Jiao, 2013).

Al más alto nivel, China y Kazajstán identifican las principales direcciones de trabajo conjunto sobre la integración del programa “*Nurly Zhol*<sup>11</sup>” de Kazajstán con la *Belt and Road Initiative*. La armonía de *Nurly Zhol* y BRI está determinada por el hecho de que ambos megaproyectos priorizan el transporte, la logística, la industria, la energía, las exportaciones agrícolas, la vivienda, la infraestructura comunitaria, la educación, el desarrollo del capital humano y el apoyo a las pequeñas y medianas empresas (Nurgaliyev, 2020). En palabras de Bolat Nurgaliyev (2020), Vicepresidente de la Junta del Instituto de Investigación de Política Exterior dependiente del Ministerio de

<sup>11</sup> El *Nury Zhol* o “Camino Brillante” es un programa gubernamental enfocado a canalizar inversión extranjera directa y estatal para desarrollar la infraestructura de Kazajstán. Fue anunciado en 2014 por el entonces presidente en funciones Nursultán Nazarvayev con un monto inicial de \$9 billones de dólares. (Embajada de la República de Kazajstán en Estados Unidos, S/F).

Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Kazajstán: “De particular importancia para nuestro país es la creación de corredores de transporte “China-Kazajstán-Rusia-Europa Occidental”, “China-Kazajstán-Asia Occidental”, “China-Kazajstán-Cáucaso Meridional/Turquía-Europa” dentro de la IFR.

Empero, lograr la armonización de los proyectos arriba mencionados también acarrea ciertas dificultades. Existe evidencia de que algunos proyectos a gran escala en Kazajstán han implicado mala praxis debido a la falta de Estado de Derecho y de rendición de cuentas (Zogg, 2019). En esta línea, podría suponerse que los proyectos BRI no son una excepción; un proyecto de infraestructura en la capital de Kazajstán es el recordatorio diario de los viajeros de tal mala praxis: pilares para un ferrocarril ligero, para el que Kazajstán pidió prestados 1.500 millones de dólares del Banco Chino de Desarrollo Internacional, actualmente se encuentran a través de la capital como el esqueleto de una obra inconclusa (Zogg, 2019).

No obstante lo anterior, el potencial de Kazajstán como país-puente sigue siendo innegable. Es una nación que mantiene buenas relaciones tanto con China como con Rusia y es la segunda economía más pujante de la UEEA, por lo que podría fungir como mediador para dirimir disputas que puedan surgir en la relación bilateral sino-rusa en cuanto a los proyectos de integración económica en Asia Central se refiere.

Kirguistán en la FERS: Kirguistán es una nación sin salida al mar que presenta características contradictorias. Si bien mantiene una relación directa con China ya que comparten frontera, lo que podría significar una relación comercial floreciente, Kirguistán es una de las economías más pobres de Asia Central y los proyectos recientes que se han intentado en conjunto con China se han visto truncados por la corrupción y la ineficiencia del gobierno kirguizo. Tanto la UEEA como la FERS representan para la nación kirguiza oportunidades indispensables para mantener a flote su endeudada economía<sup>12</sup>, modernizar su infraestructura nacional e insertarse en la economía mundial.

Similar al caso armenio, Kirguistán resulta poco atractiva para el proyecto chino, por su devaluada economía y su inestabilidad general. Prueba de ello es la cancelación en febrero de 2020, tras protestas de los pobladores locales, de un proyecto sino-kirguizo para establecer una zona de libre comercio en la frontera compartida, que incluía la construcción de un centro logístico por \$275 millones de dólares (Putz, 2020). El acuerdo, establecido en 2019 cuando el presidente chino Xi Jinping estuvo en Bishkek para la cumbre anual de la Organización de Cooperación de Shanghái, implicó el arrendamiento de 200 hectáreas de tierra en el distrito de At-Bashi por la Zona

**12** Deuda que asciende a los 3, 382,318.97 millones de dólares para el año 2018 según datos del Banco Mundial (2018).

Económica Libre de Naryn durante 49 años a una empresa conjunta entre Kirguistán y China, que planeaba construir un centro logístico en el sitio (Putz, 2020). Esto fue interpretado por los pobladores locales como una apropiación china de tierras kirguizas.

El bajo potencial económico de esta nación resta mucho su capacidad de funcionar como un país-puente para mejorar la relación sino-rusa. Empero, en el ámbito estratégico, Kirguistán podría verse beneficiado si continúa aceptando a Rusia como su proveedor de servicios de seguridad, lo que sin duda tranquiliza a China al garantizarle un vecino seguro, sin problemas de extremismo o terrorismo.

## V. CONSIDERACIONES FINALES

A lo largo de este capítulo pudimos constatar la importancia de los países de la UEEA para el devenir de la relación bilateral entre Rusia y China, así como para el nexo entre la Unión Económica Euroasiática y la Franja Económica Ruta de la Seda. Armenia, Bielorrusia, Kazajstán y Kirguistán no sólo fungen como un puente geográfico *de facto* entre Rusia y China, sino que presentan una serie de características que los convierten en verdaderos países-puente para la relación bilateral sino-rusa.

No obstante, la afirmación anterior merece acotarse, pues no todos los países mencionados cumplen con el mismo grado de efectividad la función de país-puente, ni todos tienen el mismo potencial de desarrollo para convertirse en un verdadero nexo sólido y estable entre la UEEA y la FERS. Esto obedece a las características económicas, políticas y sociales intrínsecas de cada país, a la manera en que conducen su política exterior y a su importancia geoeconómica relativa en Eurasia.

Así pues, se observa que si bien todos los Estados-miembro de la UEEA –sin contar a Rusia– tienen la intención y podrían ser considerados para formar parte del proyecto chino, no todos despiertan el mismo interés para el país asiático. En ese sentido, como parte del análisis que presentamos, es menester jerarquizar el grado de efectividad con la que estos Estados desempeñan su papel de país-puente para definir su importancia en la relación bilateral sino-rusa, así como su capacidad para consagrarse como verdaderos vínculos entre ambos proyectos de integración regional.

En este orden de ideas, Kazajstán sería el país-puente de mayor relevancia. Lo anterior, debido a que es la economía más importante de la UEEA –después de Rusia–, comparte una amplia frontera con ambos países y, además, Rusia y China son socios comerciales de primer orden para la nación kazaja, lo que reafirma su relevancia para ambos. Finalmente, de los cuatro países analizados, es el actor que más importancia tiene para FERS debido a

la cantidad de proyectos —y a los montos económicos que estos representan— que ya tiene en marcha dentro de la iniciativa china.

En este punto, cabe resaltar el segundo lugar, que es el caso de Bielorrusia. A primera instancia, esto puede parecer contradictorio, debido a su lejanía geográfica y cultural con China. Además, este es un país que se ha caracterizado por su cercana coexistencia con Rusia, representada por los fuertes lazos económicos, políticos y culturales que mantiene con ese país. No obstante, a raíz del conflicto ucraniano de 2014, Bielorrusia se ha convertido en la opción más viable para fungir como puerta de entrada a Europa para la FERS. Esto se hace patente con proyectos económicos como el *Great Stone Industrial Park*, lo que convierte a Bielorrusia en el epítome de lo que significa ser un país-puente entre la UEEA y la FERS.

El tercer lugar en jerarquía de importancia y efectividad como país-puente lo ocupa Kirguistán. A pesar de ser un país económicamente débil, y con marcados conflictos políticos y sociales, un punto que refuerza su relevancia geopolítica sería su membresía en la Organización para la Cooperación de Shanghái, y geoeconómicamente está contemplado por China dentro de la FERS. Además, es un aliado importante de Rusia en Asia Central y miembro pleno de la UEEA.

Finalmente, el cuarto lugar lo ocupa Armenia. Esta nación del Cáucaso acarrea diversos problemas económicos y políticos, lo que ha llevado a su aislamiento de los principales procesos geoeconómicos a los que nos referimos. Sus debilidades intrínsecas le han impedido acoplarse adecuadamente a los proyectos de integración regional más allá del espacio exsoviético. Además, China no ha dado señales de buscar integrar a Armenia a su proyecto FERS, más allá de una poco desarrollada iniciativa de construir una vía férrea que conecte Armenia con Irán.

El futuro desarrollo de la capacidad de fungir como país-puente de los cuatro actores analizados en este capítulo dependerá de una serie de factores. El principal está representado por la voluntad y facultad de China y Rusia en continuar aceptando mutuamente el peso estratégico que ambos países tienen en Eurasia. Desde la década de 1990 ambas naciones aceptaron que la lógica de suma cero no puede aplicarse a esta región —lo que ha quedado asentado desde la creación de la OCS— dado que la influencia de ambos actores es innegable desde cualquier perspectiva. Esto implica un reconocimiento mutuo de los intereses nacionales que ambos países tienen para el desarrollo regional euroasiático y refuerza la intencionalidad de evitar un conflicto entre ambos. El siguiente factor implica la continuidad que tanto Rusia como China impriman en sus proyectos; ninguna nación aquí analizada puede funcionar como país-puente si no existen iniciativas de cooperación que vincular. En este sentido, es fundamental que la UEEA se

apoye en la propia FERS para detonar su potencial y afianzar su viabilidad como proyecto de integración económica. Finalmente, el tercer factor dependerá de la voluntad política que cada una de las cuatro naciones estudiadas mantenga en su afán por fungir como país-puente y volverse un actor importante tanto para la FERS como para la UEEA. La corrupción, los malos manejos gubernamentales, los conflictos internacionales, la inestabilidad social, entre otros, son elementos que afectan de manera directa la capacidad de estos países para acoplarse a cualquier iniciativa de cooperación internacional en materia económica y, contrariamente, aumentan la posibilidad de caer en un aislacionismo geoconómico.

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Marco jurídico  
de la Unión Económica  
Euroasiática



# Legal study of the EAEU. Fundamental legal documents

## LEGAL NATURE AND PROGRESSIVE PROVISIONS OF THE EAEU ACTS MEDIATING. COMMERCIAL TURNOVER WITHIN THE UNION

The foundation of any regional organization and the development of any kind of integration processes has at its core the economic, geographical and political foundation. The development of Eurasian integration processes is no exception. When the USSR collapsed in 1991, the need for regional integration became evident due to the close cultural, economic, geographical interconnections between the former USSR republics, the established division of labor, and certain political objectives. At the same time, political independence, sovereignty of the former Soviet Union republics, which were transitioning to a market economy, complicated, to some extent, the process of negotiations on the foundation of a regional organization, development of regional integration processes involving negotiations on the free movement of citizens, goods and services. But the world market conditions, the development of regional, primarily economic, processes demanded from the former Union republics determination, fraternity and coherence in economic, customs and political policies, which seemed almost impossible without the appropriate organizational basis.

Thus, along with the processes of development of sovereignty and political independence of States in the Eurasian region, the trajectories of economic integration were discussed also in the context of the USSR dissolution.

At the same time, it should be noted that the process of the USSR dissolution was accompanied with the Commonwealth of Independent States (hereinafter CIS) foundation in 1991. The Commonwealth of Independent States (the CIS) was founded by the heads of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine by signing "The Agreement Establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States" at Viskuli (Bialovezhskaya Push-

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Private International Law, Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), PhD in Law. bashahnazarov@msal.ru

cha) on 8 December 1991.<sup>2</sup> According to the Declaration adopted in Almaty on 21 December 1991,<sup>3</sup> the CIS was formed by the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, being the former republics of the USSR, did not join the CIS. In addition, during the years of existence of the CIS, Georgia ceased to be a member of the CIS (in 2008). Turkmenia is an associate member, having not signed the Charter of the CIS. Ukraine has effectively ended its membership in the CIS since 2014, while not formally securing its withdrawal from the Commonwealth, remaining its member. The main problem of the CIS was that most of the decisions taken within the CIS were not implemented in practice, and there were political and economic contradictions.

As long as 1994, the CIS member states formulated a new vector for the regional economic integration at an essentially different level and principles different from the foundations and ideas of the formation of the CIS. First, we are talking about the implementation of the concept of closer and more effective trade and economic cooperation, which was not possible within the framework of the CIS through the creation of the Customs Union and the Common Free Market Zone. As long as on 6 January 1995<sup>4</sup>, Russia and the Republic of Belarus concluded the Agreement on the Customs Union and the Common Free Market Zone. On January 20 1995, Kazakhstan joined the Agreement. The Agreement under consideration is considered to be a starting point in the creation of the contemporary Eurasian Economic Union (hereinafter the EAEU).

On 29 March 1996, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed the Treaty on Deepening Economic and Humanitarian Integration. On February 26, 1999, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed the Treaty on the Customs Union that established the Customs Union consisting of different members, and the organization in that status had existed only for 18 months due to the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (hereinafter the EurAsEC).

Indeed, customs integration was an important achievement, but the

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**2** The Agreement Establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States (8 December 1991). CIS Official Internet Portal: <https://e-cis.info/page/3373/79405/> (cited 16 March 2020) (In Russian).

**3** Almaty Declaration of December 21, 1991. Available from: CIS Official Internet Portal: URL: <https://e-cis.info/page/3373/79405/> (cited 16.03.2020) (In Russ.)

**4** Agreement on the Customs Union between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus of 6 January 1995. URL: [http://www.tsouz.ru/Docs/IntAgrmnts/Pages/Dogovor\\_06011995.aspx](http://www.tsouz.ru/Docs/IntAgrmnts/Pages/Dogovor_06011995.aspx) (cited: 16.03.2020).

States parties to the relevant processes were focused on deeper economic and political integration, rather than on just developing common customs rules and borders. On October 10, 2000, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed in Astana (Kazakhstan) the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community that formed the basis of a supranational format of a more comprehensive economic integration, which is confirmed by the creation of the first supranational body, namely: the Court of the Eurasian Economic Community. Another important document on the way to the formation of the contemporary Eurasian Economic Union was adopted on 19 September 2003. The Agreement on the Common Free Market Zone, to which Russia, the Republic of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan became parties, predetermined the legal foundation of the processes of creation of the common free market zone and secured free movement of goods, services, labor and capital (the so-called "four freedoms" of the modern Eurasian Economic Union).

The contemporary integration processes taking place on the territory of the Eurasian region take their origins from the activities of the Eurasian Economic Community (hereinafter - EurAsEC). The Eurasian Economic Community is an international economic organization created for effective promotion by the Member States of the formation of the Customs Union and the Common Free Market Zone, as well as other goals and objectives associated with the process of deeper integration in the economic and humanitarian field's.<sup>5</sup> The organization is established in full compliance with the principles of the United Nations and international law rules and possesses international legal capacity. It is a clearly structured system with a rigid decision making and implementation mechanisms. The Community and its officials enjoy the privileges and immunities necessary to perform the functions and achieve the objectives of the EurAsEC Treaty and the treaties in force in the Community. In 2003, the EurAsEC received observer status in the United Nations General Assembly. It is worth noting the real prospects of EurAsEC expansion appearing in those years. Since May 2002, Ukraine and Moldova have acquired the EurAsEC observer status, since January 2003 the same status was assigned to Armenia and some international organizations, namely, the Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC), the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB).

The next important stage of Eurasian integration is marked by the Agreement on the Common Customs Zone and the Customs Union based on the EurAsEC signed on October 6, 2007. Russia, the Republic of Belarus and Kazakhstan became parties to the Agreement and by signing the Agreement

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<sup>5</sup> History of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). Official website of the EurAsEC: <http://www.evrazes.com/about/history> (date of access: 16 March 2020).

mentioned above, they undertook, from the time of creation of the common customs zone, not to apply customs duties in mutual trade relations, quantitative restrictions and similar measures. A supranational body of the EurAsEC – the Commission of the Customs Union – and the Supreme Economic Council were established. In 2010, the Customs Union began its work, introduced a uniform Customs Code for the Member States of the Customs Union, the Common Customs Tariff of the three countries, and since July 2011 the whole customs control has been implemented on the outer circuit of the Union with the preservation of border and migration control at the internal borders.

Along with the processes mentioned above on 27 November 2009, the Presidents of Russia, the Republic of Belarus and Kazakhstan decided to move to a deeper form of economic integration – the Common Free Market Zone (hereinafter the CFMZ), based on the principles and provisions of the World Trade Organization regulations. On December 9, 2010, the Declaration on the Formation of the CFMZ in the Customs Union of the three countries was signed. The CFMZ provides for the removal of barriers to mutual trade, the creation of a common market for goods, services, capital and labor, and the implementation of a harmonized currency policy. At the same time, it is extremely important that the Declaration for the first time enshrined that, by developing the Customs Union and the CFMZ, the EurAsEC is moving towards a new form of integration, namely: the Eurasian Economic Union. In addition, the need for a unified system of technical regulation and the introduction of fundamentally new supranational standards (technical regulations) was identified.

The FCMZ began operating in January 2012 when framework and underlying agreements came into force.

Active interstate activity of the Member States of the Free Common Market Zone led to the adoption of a large number of technical regulations (24 technical regulations entered into force during 2012-2015). The entry into force of the technical regulations for the production of a particular product implied the abolition of the national standard for the production of the relevant products.

On the way to the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted the Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration in 2011.<sup>6</sup> In the initial provisions of the Declaration the States, noting the

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<sup>6</sup> The Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration dated 18 November, 2011. The official website of the Eurasian Economic Commission — the permanent regulatory body of the Eurasian Economic Union: [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr\\_i\\_makroec/dep\\_razv\\_integr/Documents/%d0%94%d0%b5%d0%ba%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%8f%202011.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr_i_makroec/dep_razv_integr/Documents/%d0%94%d0%b5%d0%ba%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%8f%202011.pdf) (date of access: 16 March 2020)

successful functioning of the Customs Union of the three states within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and the entry into force of international treaties forming the legal framework of the Common Free Market Zone that came into force on 1 January 2012 and ensured freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, announced the transition to the next phase of integration, namely: the Common Free Market Zone (hereinafter CFMZ). Under the Declaration, the CFMZ is based on the principles of observance of universally recognized norms of international law, including respect for the sovereignty and equality of States, the affirmation of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the rule of law state and the market economy. Signatories of the Declaration paid particular attention to the need to comply with the norms and rules of the World Trade Organization, noting the importance of the accession of all three States to the international organization<sup>7</sup> Indeed, modern regional economic integration can be successfully implemented only by being built on a universal international legal framework with due regard to the necessary compliance with universally recognized principles and norms of international law, the provisions of universal treaties having a wide range of participants. Treaties (international agreements) adopted within the framework of the WTO are presented in this context as the very universal international legal framework for economic international and integration processes.

In addition, the Declaration highlights that the main scope of further integration of the States parties to the Declaration will be: 1. the comprehensive implementation of the potential capacity of the Customs Union and the Common Free Market Zone; 2. improvement and further development of the legal framework, institutions and practical interaction in a number of determined areas, including ensuring effective functioning of the common market of goods, services, capital and labor; 3. further convergence, harmonization of national legislations and their harmonization in the areas defined by the treaties and agreements that constitute the legal framework of the Common Free Market Zone; 4. improvement and development of supranational institutions, *etc.* It is the Declaration that can be considered as the initial legal framework elaborated for the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Commission (hereinafter the EEC) – the permanent regulatory body of the modern Eurasian Economic Union since the Member States declared in its text the fact that EEC was established and its activities were carried out for the benefit of the entire integration community with due regard to its implementation on a highly professional basis.

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<sup>7</sup> As of 16 March 2020, all states of the Eurasian Economic Union, except the Republic of Belarus, which is in the process of negotiating accession to the WTO, are members of the WTO.

It is important to emphasize that the period of active formation of the existing uniform economic integration association, namely, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), takes its origins since 2012, i.e. since the beginning of the operation of the CFMZ. These processes are accompanied by the abandonment of the temporary (transitional) forms of cooperation discussed above in favour of the development of institutional supranational institutions.

Integration processes taking place within the Eurasian region are becoming deeper, interaction between States becomes closer. At the same time, Eurasian cooperation during the specified period tends to be focuses on the expansion of the territorial element of economic cooperation, taking a trajectory on integration processes between the boundaries of the continent.

The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union is the fundamental document that establishes and defines the foundations of the activities of the Eurasian Economic Union. The treaty was signed in Astana (currently Nur-Sultan, capital of Kazakhstan) on 29 May 2014<sup>8</sup> and it came into force on 1 January 2015. The Presidents of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation signed the Treaty. Currently, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Armenia are also the members of the EAEU.

The doctrine highlights that the important activity of the EAEU in the modern format of its existence, the expansion of “cooperation with other projects in the region” forms the basis for the achievement of its goals and objectives.<sup>9</sup> It is noted that the most promising option of such cooperation involves close cooperation with the People’s Republic of China within the framework of the project “One Belt - One Road” and with the land part of this Silk Road Economic Belt project. Indeed, Eurasian integration development within the framework of cooperation between the EAEU and the People’s Republic of China appears to be the most important direction of development of the region’s economy due to geographical, political and economic commonality, the relationships between the EAEU member states and the PRC, the existing legal framework of relevant cooperation, in particular the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of 2001 (hereinafter the SCO), and the instruments adopted within the framework of the SCO; the Agreement on the Exchange of Information on Goods and Vehicles of International Transport Moving Through Customs Borders of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the People’s Republic

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<sup>8</sup> Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of 29 May 2019. Official website of the EAEU: URL: <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#info> (cited 16.03.2020)

<sup>9</sup> Яковлев, А. А. (2018). Евразийский экономический союз и китайская инициатива Один пояс – один путь: возможности для сотрудничества [Eurasian Economic Union and Chinese Initiative One Belt - One Way: Opportunities for Cooperation] (Russian). Bulletin of the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1, 202—211.

of China (PRC) signed on 6 June 2019 during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

As early as in 2016, in the context of the development of Eurasian integration they began to speak about the so-called "Greater Eurasia," which led to the proposal of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin to found the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP) on the basis of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese "One Belt, One Road" project.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, on 2 May 2016 the EAEU expanded the borders of cooperation by concluding the Free Trade Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Vietnam. Similar agreements have been concluded between the EAEU and Iran, China, Cuba.

On 14 April 2017, the Republic of Moldova joined the cooperation with the EAEU, having received a special status of the observer-state, demonstrating its intentions for Eurasian integration.

The adoption of the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union that came into force on 1 January 2018 became the next important stage of the evolution of the legal regulation of integration processes within the framework of activities of the Eurasian Economic Union, the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union being adopted on 11 April 2017.<sup>11</sup> The Customs Code of the EAEU replaced the Customs Code of the Customs Union that was previously in force. The Customs Code is the most important document of the EAEU, accession of new states to the EAEU means automatic accession to the Customs Code, which demonstrates the vector for systematization of the legal regulation of trade relations within the EAEU.

Such systematization assumed organizational and infrastructural foundations for the EAEU functioning. Thus, the EAEU has the following supranational regulatory bodies: the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (the supreme body which meets annually and consists of the heads of the EAEU member states); the Eurasian Intergovernmental Economic Council (a EAEU body sitting annually that consists of the heads of governments (prime ministers) of the EAEU member states); the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) (a permanent regulatory body responsible for providing direct functioning of the EAEU, the development of integration and supranational institutions and instruments, including the Council and the Board of the Commission); the Court of the Eurasian Economic Union (a judicial body implementing law enforcement on the basis of the EAEU legislation).

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**10** Магвеев, В.А.. (2018) Новейшие тенденции развития российско-китайского экономического сотрудничества в большой Евразии [New trends in the development of Russian-Chinese economic cooperation in Greater Eurasia]. (Russian). China in world and regional politics. History and modernity.

**11** Treaty on the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union dated 11 April 2017. The official website of the Eurasian Economic Commission — the permanent regulatory body of the Eurasian Economic Union: [https://docs.eaeunion.org/docs/ru-ru/01413569/itia\\_12042017](https://docs.eaeunion.org/docs/ru-ru/01413569/itia_12042017) (date of access: 16 March 2020).

The Preamble of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of 2014 declares that the Treaty is adopted for the purpose of developing the economies of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union and ensuring their harmonious development and convergence, as well as guarantees of sustainable growth in business activity, balanced trade and fair competition, which predetermines the private law vector of the normative legal regulation carried out within the framework of the EAEU. In addition, the Preamble to the Treaty indicates that the Member States, in fact, take into account, for the purpose of establishing and further functioning of the EAEU, the norms, rules and principles of the World Trade Organization. It also highlights the need to unify the regulation of relations under private law in the context of the regulation of trade relations, services and protection in the field of intellectual property established, *inter alia*, by the GATT, GATS, and TRIPS Agreements.

Taking into account the fact that the EAEU as an international regional economic integration organization has international legal personality (Art. 1 of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union) based on the principles of respect for the political structure of Member States, mutually beneficial cooperation and equality of the parties, observance of the principles of the market economy and fair competition, as well as on the principles of the UN Charter and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law, and bearing in mind that the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union regulates relations in the field of customs, financial markets, foreign trade, taxation, energy development, transport, industry, intellectual property, as well as labor migration issues,<sup>12</sup> it can be concluded that the regulation within the EAEU and relations between the entities of the EAEU member states can be implemented uniformly. At the same time, Article 6 of the Treaty enshrines the scope of the concept "Law of the Union" that includes the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union itself; treaties and international agreements concluded within the framework of the Union; international treaties of the Union with third parties; decisions and orders of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council and the Eurasian Economic Commission adopted within the framework of their powers and jurisdiction under the Treaty and international agreements within the framework of the Union. Thus, EAEU Law as a system of international law rules is focused not only on the member states of the EAEU, but also on participants (subjects) of relations regulated under private law of the respective States in the context of domestic rules, according to which international rules constitute a part of the national legal system and take precedence over the rules of national laws (in particular, Part 4 of

<sup>12</sup> Стародубцев, Г.С. (2016). Международная правосубъектность ЕАЭС (Russian). ADVANCES IN LAW STUDIES, 1(4). <https://riorpublisher.com/ru/nauka/article/10845/view>

Article 15 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Part 3 of Article 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Part 3 of Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, Article 6 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic).

Unifying foundations of economic relations within the framework of the EAEU emerged, as follows from the above-mentioned acts, even before the establishment of the EAEU. Many regulations and regulatory acts have been codified in the context of the elaboration of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. The most important normative provisions were included into the text of the Treaty, being adapted to take into account the goals and objectives of the EAEU. Many normative legal acts adopted within the framework of the Customs Union have been included in the annexes to the Treaty, which implies their application unless they contravene the provisions of the Treaty, and, in addition to the latter, they also form EAEU Law. In addition, the regulation of relations within the Union can be carried out by the national legislation of the EAEU Member States, which is not prohibited by the Treaty. At the same time, it is substantiated that it is necessary to harmonize and unify legislation, i.e. to converge legislation of Member States in order to: 1) establish similar (comparable) normative regulation; and 2) to establish uniform legal regulation mechanisms in certain areas defined by the Treaty.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, mechanisms for the harmonization and unification of national legislation represent a tool primarily inherent to the international private law (conflict of laws) of States and seem to be an important focus of EAEU activities. Being binding for the Member States, a number of the documents adopted within the framework of the EAEU as an international organization of regional economic integration can and should be aimed at the convergence of the legal regulation of relations regulated under private law, which will correspond to one of the goals of the organization's activities: the pursuit for the formation of a common market of goods, services, capital and labor within the framework of the Union (Article 4 of the Treaty). This is confirmed in the initial provisions of the Treaty, in particular by the definition of the process of harmonization of legislation in Article 2 of the Treaty as a convergence of the legislation of Member States aimed at establishing identical legal regulatory mechanisms in certain areas defined by the Treaty. Such individual private law areas may include the issues of trade relations between private law entities within the framework of the EAEU. Thus, the following areas can be named: Section

<sup>13</sup> Шестакова, М.П. (2016). О правовом регулировании внешнеторговых отношений в рамках Евразийского экономического союза [On Legal Regulation of Foreign Trade Relations in the Framework of the Eurasian Economic Union] (In Russian). Journal of Foreign Legislation and Comparative Law. 6, 82.

VII. Regulation of the circulation of pharmaceuticals and medical products; Section XV. Trade in Services, Incorporation, Activities and Investments, which enshrines the principle of freedom of trade in services, institution, activity and investment in within the Union (Annex 16 to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union - Protocol on Trade in Services, Incorporation, Activities and Investments), Section XVIII. General Principles and Rules of Competition (Annex 19 - Protocol on General Principles and Rules of Competition); Section XIX. Natural Monopolies (Annex 20 - Protocol on Common Regulation Principles and Rules for Activities of Natural Monopoly Entities); Section XXVI. Labour Migration, Section XXIII. Intellectual Property (Protocol on the Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights - Annex 26 to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union), Annex 23 Protocol on Organization, Management, Functioning and Development of the Common Markets of Oil and Petroleum Products, Annex 24 Protocol on Coordinated (Agreed) Transport Policy. It should be noted that in the territory of the EAEU (i.e. in the customs zone of the Union) the uniform Commodity Nomenclature for foreign economic activity of Eurasian Economic Union and the Common Customs Tariff for the Eurasian Economic Union approved by the Commission and used as means of trade policy of the Union (Art. 42 of the Treaty) are applied. In addition, the Treaty establishes the foundations of a single currency, industrial, transport policies, and the direction of cooperation in energy.

The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union along with other treaties and agreements adopted pursuant to the TEEU separate provisions, forms a polysystem complex of the EAEU law regulating various administrative and private relations within the framework of the Union, demonstrating the in-depth cooperation of the Member States of the EAEU in a large number of legal relations. The TEEU sets forth the foundations and vectors of regulation and private relations arising in the field of business activities, which, in turn, demonstrates particular importance and influence of supranational regulation on business activity within the EAEU.

The doctrine highlights that the development of integration processes within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union provides us with prerequisites for the unification of private legal contractual relations between economic entities located on the territory of the EAEU Member States with due regard to the existing international legal framework of such regional unification that has developed under the auspices of international organizations, intergovernmental associations (WTO, the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the International Institute for the Unification of

Private Law (UNIDROIT), *etc*<sup>14</sup>.) It is also noted that there is such a possible vector of regulation of such private legal aspects of integration processes within these interstate associations as unification of conflicts of law rules providing the most reasonable and predictable choice of foreign law to be applied to specific relations, as well as the creation of uniform substantive regulation of foreign economic relationships, which represents important areas of activity of organizations under consideration.<sup>15</sup>

As it is seen, regulation of conflict-of-law and substantive issues (not only in relations in the field of foreign economy, but also in various areas regulated under private law within the EAEU, i.e. labor relations, obligations arising from causing harm, and, possibly in the future, inheritance and family relations, *etc.*) amounts to an important trajectory for the EAEU in view of special importance of such a normative framework of Eurasian integration with due regard to the statements enshrined in the Preamble to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, according to which Member States tend to strengthen solidarity and deepen cooperation among their peoples while respecting their history, culture and traditions. This is possible in the context of the activities of other integration associations (in particular, the European Union that adopts not only uniform substantive law rules, but also conflict-of-law rules, namely: Rules Rome I, Rome II, Rome III, Rome IV). In addition, the Eurasian Region has already experienced convergence of approaches to civil law legislation and regulation of a wide range of private relations by harmonizing national laws of the Eurasian States. Thus, in 1994 within the CIS at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States (IPA CIS) a model recommendatory legislative act of the Commonwealth of Independent States — the CIS Model Civil Code 16 — was adopted. The provisions of the CIS Model Civil Code formed the basis of national civil codes of CIS Member States.

At the same time, independent political development, different ways of economic development and trajectories of international cooperation predetermined multi-vector development of civil laws of the CIS member states.

At the same time, during the period of the EurAsEC existance, only the following concepts of legislative frameworks aimed at simplifying the movement of goods, services, persons and capital among Member States have

**14** Shestakova M.P. O pravovom regulirovaniy vneshtorgovykh otnoshenii v ramkakh Evraziiskogo ekonomicheskogo soiuza [On Legal Regulation of Foreign Trade Relations in the Framework of the Eurasian Economic Union]. Zhurnal zarubezhnogo zakonodatelstva i srovnitel'nogo pravovedeniia [Journal of Foreign Legislation and Comparative Law], 2016, No. 6, P. 82.

**15** See: *Ibid.*

**16** *The Model Civil Code of the CIS Countries: A Recommendatory Legislative Act of the Commonwealth of Independent States of October 29, 1994.* Inform. Bulletin of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS). 1994. No. 6. P. 3—192.

been developed: the Concept of the Legal Framework for the EurAsEC Investment Legislation (approved by IPA CIS Bureau Resolution No. 9 dated 6 April 2010), the Concept of Foundations of the EurAsEC Transport Legislation (approved by IPA CIS Bureau Resolution No. 4-11 dated 16 June 2003), the Concept of the Framework for the EurAsEC Customs Legislation (approved by IPA CIS Bureau Resolution No. 5 dated 16 June 2003 ), etc<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time, the EAEU in the modern format of existence has all necessary opportunities and grounds for the formation of a harmonized civil legislation of the Union Member States.

Thus, on 01 February 2019 within the framework of the EAEU the Agreement on Navigation was adopted. The Agreement on Navigation established the procedure for sailing vessels under flags of the EAEU Member States on inland waterways in their territories open for navigation on the basis of an application submitted by the ship-owner or his representative to the authorized body of the Member State on the territory of which waterways are located not later than 10 calendar days before the vessel enters the waterways (Article 3). At the same time, under Paragraph 1 Article 7 of the Agreement, the parties shall mutually recognize the vessel's documents on board the vessel issued in accordance with the law of the Member State under the flag of which the vessel floats. The Navigation Agreement Member States have undertaken to recognize the identification documents of crew members issued in accordance with the laws of Member States. All the Member States have agreed on precise and exhaustive list of such documents for each EAEU Member State (Para 2, Article 7).

In addition, Article 8 of the Navigation Agreement establishes some more rules aimed at regulating private legal relations. Thus, crew members of a vessel flying the flag of one Member State, while on inland waterways and on the territory of another Member State, are responsible for failure to comply with the law of that Member State. In the presence of crew members of a vessel flying the flag of one Member State on inland waterways and on the territory of another Member State, the civil jurisdiction of that other Member State shall not apply when the dispute concerns the internal order and labor relations onboard the vessel. Article 10 contains provisions aimed at maintaining and developing business relations and cooperation not only between competent authorities, but also between the economic entities in the field of water transportation.

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<sup>17</sup> See: Муратова, О.В. (2015). Направления и пределы гармонизации частного права в условиях региональной экономической интеграции [Directions and Limits of Harmonization of Private Law in the Conditions of Regional Economic Integration] (Russian). Journal of Russian Law, 12, 144-145.

Thus, the Agreement under consideration contains the mechanisms inherent in private international law for regulating cross-border private law relations, which demonstrates its civil law character.

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Another noteworthy international treaty concluded within the framework of the EAEU and focused on the regulation of private legal relations was adopted on 3 February 2020 was the Agreement on the Procedure of Circulation within the Eurasian Economic Union of Products the Requirements for which are not Established by the Technical Regulations of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Rules of Ensuring Safety of Such Products. The Agreement affects such trade relations as circulation of products not included in the uniform list of products in respect of which the mandatory requirements are imposed within the Union, as well as products included in a uniform list, but for which the technical regulations of the Union have not been adopted or have not entered into force and, thus, they cannot be applied to establish an order of circulation and safety regulations for such products. The agreement does not apply to defense products (works, services) used to enforce defense and security interests, products that have been used previously, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices. The Agreement defines the key concept of 'a safe product' as a product that, when meeting the conditions of operation (of the use or application), with due regard to the fact that the product's characteristics and consumer properties (including composition, useful time), as well as conditions for installation, adjustment, operation, storage, transportation, sale and disposal, including maintenance requirements), does not pose any risk. Permitting the circulation of safe products in the territory of the EAEU Member States, the Agreement in Article 3 establishes the obligation for legal or natural entities, registered as individual entrepreneurs, their authorized representatives, including manufacturers, persons authorized by the manufacturer, importers and sellers engaged in the production and/or sale of products, to ensure the safety of products at all stages of the life cycle of the products in accordance with the legislation of Member States and with due regard to the Agreement. Thus, the international treaty adopted within the framework of the EAEU creates obligations for private legal entities, i.e. requirements to ensure the safety of products are imposed on legal entities and individuals from the EAEU member states in order to unify the basis of cross-border trade activities within the framework of EAEU, which appears to be the most important direction of integration processes to ensure uniform regulation of business activity and facilitation of cross-border trade in the EAEU.

At the same time, under the Agreement, the responsibility for launching into circulation and circulation of dangerous products is established in

accordance with the legislation of the Member States, which demonstrates the vector aimed at securing sufficient autonomy of States in determining legal consequences of violation of the provisions of the Agreements, as well as circulation and trafficking of dangerous products not regulated under the Agreement.

The EAEU work aimed at the harmonization of common approaches to the legal protection of intellectual property is of particular interest. This work resulted in the adoption of a whole block of international treaties, which highlights the special importance of intellectual property in the development of the economy of the EAEU Member States, the innovative and technological vector of development of Eurasian integration.

One of the first agreements adopted in this context was the Agreement on the Coordination of Activities on the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights\_dated 8 September 2015. The Agreement is progressive in the view that, in order to protect intellectual property rights and to ensure effective suppression of IP rights infringements in the customs territory of the EAEU the following measures shall to be carried out: coordination of actions on prevention, detection, suppression and investigation of IP rights infringements, as well as on improvement of the work of authorized bodies in this field; harmonization and improvement of the legislation of EAEU Member States in the field of protection of the IP rights in the customs territory of the Union;other actions (if needed). At the same time, the Agreement defines an IP rights violation as the use of intellectual property objects, including their use in the information and telecommunication network 'Internet,' manufacture, distribution or other use, as well as import, transportation or storage of goods for purposes that entail infringement of the rights to the objects of intellectual property protected under the laws of Member States. Regulation of interstate cooperation within the EAEU in the field of IP rights protection, including unification and harmonization of the intellectual property laws, is the most important direction of development of integration processes and the basis for innovative development of the region.

The EAEU Member States have undertaken some steps to regulate certain objects and aspects of intellectual property. The Agreement on the Procedure for the Management of Copyright and Related Rights on a Collective Basis of 11 December 2017 can be used as an example. The Agreement focuses on common approaches to the regulation of activities concerning collective administration of copyright and related rights within the EAEU and creation of a uniform legal framework for collective management of rights and, consequently, development and spread of creativity within the Union. As rightly noted in the doctrine, the copyright holders will have acquired more opportunities to effectively control the distribution of remuneration due to im-

creased transparency in the activities of organizations exercising collective management of rights and effective monitoring of their<sup>18</sup> activities.

The most important document that mediates unification and simplification of legal protection of intellectual property in the EAEU is the Agreement On Trademarks, Service Marks and Appellations of Origin of Goods of the Eurasian Economic Union that was adopted on 3 February 2020 in order to implement paragraph 4 part 2 of Article 89 of the Treaty on the EAEU regarding the introduction of the EAEU trademark registration system and appellations of origin of EAEU goods in the territory of Member States. The Treaty regulates relations arising in connection with the registration, legal protection and use of trademarks, service marks and appellations of origin of Eurasian Economic Union goods and introduces the Uniform Registers of respective designations, and states that registration of the trade mark, service mark and appellation of origin of the goods of the Union has in each Member State the force of national registration of the trademark, service mark and appellation of origin of the product.

Regulation of the uniform system of protection of means of individualization under a separate agreement is primarily aimed at simplifying legal protection of designations of applicants from the EAEU member states and promoting cross-border business activities of such actors. Such regulation, which has an administrative character, is focused on the implementation of private-legal relations with regard to the use and protection of rights to uniform means of individualization in the EAEU and stimulates the conduct of cross-border business activities within the Union.

In addition, some basic provisions of the EAEU Treaty are particularly relevant in this context. Thus, the regional Principle of Exhaustion of the Exclusive Right for a Trademark and the Trademark of the Union was introduced under Article 16 of the Protocol on the Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (Annex 26 to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union). At the same time, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council has the right to establish exceptions to the application of the regional principle of exhaustion of the exclusive right for a trademark and the trademark of the Union in respect to certain types of products. Relevant domestic procedures were carried out in all EAEU member states.<sup>19</sup>

The EAEU also adopted international agreements associated with trademark protection, in particular: the Agreement on Marking Goods by Means of Identification in the Eurasian Economic Union dated 2 February 2018

**18** See: Шугуров, М.В. (2019). ЕАЭС: динамика интеграции в сфере интеллектуальной собственности в контексте цифровых трансформаций [The EAEU: Dynamics of Integration in the Field of Intellectual Property in the Context of Digital Transformations] (In Russian). International Law and International Organizations, 3, 1-23.

**19** See: Ibid.

and the Agreement on the Implementation of a Pilot Project to Place Control (Identification) Tags on Goods Classified as “Item of Clothing, Clothing Accessories and other Items Made of Natural Fur” in 2015-2016 dated 8 September 2015.

Another area related to intellectual property, an area of economy that is regulated in the EAEU, is represented by the circulation of medical products and medical devices. Thus, within the EAEU, the Agreement on Common Principles and Rules of Circulation of Medical Products within the Eurasian Economic Union was adopted on 23 December 2014. The Agreement on Common Principles and Principles and Rules of Circulation of Medical Devices (Medical Products and Medical Equipment) within the Eurasian Economic Union was adopted on 23 December 2014. Both Agreements have established single markets and rules of circulation for related products. In addition, the EAEU Unified Register of Registered Medical Products and the EAEU Unified Register of Medical Devices have been introduced, which systematizes the necessary consideration of such special products of social use, allows to harmonize and adhere to uniform requirements for the production and registration of medical products and provides us with a progressive mechanism of interaction between the EAEU member states strengthening the social security of the EAEU Member States.

In the context of the intellectual property protection within the EAEU, it is worth noting its anticipating character aimed, *inter alia*, at the development of the digital economy. Thus, the doctrine highlights that the solution of the issues included in this direction of integration (protection, enforcement, management, commercialization of intellectual property rights), suggests currently expansion of the use of digital technologies, and digitalization of the economy requires the development of the model of EAEU intellectual property law in the context of strengthening the importance of the supranational element.<sup>20</sup> In this context, it should be noted that Article 23 of the Treaty on the EAEU established that when using software and technical means and information technologies, Member States shall ensure the protection of intellectual property used or obtained in the process of interaction. Indeed, the processes of digitalization of national economies pose challenges to States both of informational and intellectual character and overcoming of such challenges is seen as the most effective at the supranational and, primarily, regional level. Uniform aspects of intellectual property law that are unified within the framework of Eurasian integration can serve as the foundation and motivation for the economy of the EAEU Member States, as well as digital economy of the region.

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**20** See: Ibid.

The Agreement on Harmonization of Legislation of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union in the Field of Financial Market adopted on 6 November 2018 is an example of another international agreement concluded within the EAEU, which demonstrates the trajectory of Eurasian integration and related regulation concerning convergence of legislation in banking, insurance and services sector of the stock market. The measures stated in the Agreement are enshrined in Article 1 and include: 1. adoption of agreed requirements to the participants of financial markets with regard to their foundation, establishment and functioning in the banking sector, insurance sector, stock market services sector; 2. harmonization of approaches to risk management on the financial market in accordance with international standards; 3. harmonization of supervisory requirements and procedures for supervision of participants of the financial market; 4. provision of conditions for mutual recognition of licenses; 5. harmonization of requirements for disclosure of information in the field of the financial market; 6. resolution of the issue of acquisition of stocks (shares) in the authorized capital of participants of the financial market by investors of Member States; 7 harmonization of criteria for protection of rights and interests of financial services consumers.

In addition, on 23 December 2014, the Agreement on Exchange of Information, Including Confidential one, in the Financial Sector in Order to Create Conditions in the Financial Markets to Ensure Free Movement of Capital was adopted in order to create conditions for financial markets to ensure the free movement of capital that provides for the exchange of financial information between the authorized bodies of the EAEU Member States, *e.g.* information necessary for making a decision on opening of a cross-border organization, including information about the financial status of the parent (mother) organization, which demonstrates the Eurasian trajectory of the regulation of financial relations, in particular in the context of transboundary (within the EAEU) business activities.

Thus, in the EAEU, the regulation of the large and most important sector of the economy — the financial services sector – is being harmonized. Most of the issues that constitute the scope of the Agreement concern business law and regulation, *inter alia*, of private legal relations arising on financial markets, which appears to be a progressive and necessary step in the development of regional integration processes.

In addition, international agreements have been concluded to facilitate the turnover of certain products in the EAEU. Such agreements include: the Agreement on the Circulation of Seeds of Agricultural Plants within the Eurasian Economic Union dated 7 November 2017, Agreement on Movement of Ozone-Depleting Substances and Products Containing Them and

Accounting of Ozone-Depleting Substances when Implementing Mutual Trade of the EAEU Member States dated 29 May 2015. The latter Agreement in its initial provisions states that, in the context of promoting trade linkages, the movement of ozone-depleting substances and products containing them is based on a permissive document – an expert finding. At the same time, the agreement applies to legal entities and individuals registered as individual entrepreneurs.

The study of the EAEU normative legal acts shows the synthesis of administrative and civil legal mechanisms of regulation of completely different economic and related relations within the EAEU. Detailed regulation of private legal relations, unified and harmonized provisions of civil legislation are considered as a priority direction of Eurasian integration, which will simplify the implementation of legal relations between private and legal entities, accelerate and strengthen commercial and trade relations within the EAEU and, as a result, strengthen the economy of the Region.

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# General legal framework of the Eurasian Economic Union

## CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION AND “BELT AND ROAD” INITIATIVE VS. OTHER COMPETING POLITICAL AND LEGAL GEOPOLITICAL ORDERS FOR GREATER EURASIA

**SUMMARY:** I. Introduction II. Basic concepts and perceptions III. The multiplicity of projects of intraregional cooperation in Greater Eurasia IV. Multiplicity of institutions of intraregional organization in Greater Eurasia V. Competition between five geopolitical projects of arrangement of Greater Eurasia VI. Instead of a conclusion: the prospects for matching geopolitical projects of ASEAN, China, Russia, Japan and the EU VII. Bibliography

### I. INTRODUCTION

A few years ago globalization was the main trend of world development. Now the situation has changed. And the point is not at all that the negative effects of globalization are felt in much more painful way.

There are other things making the case obvious (Afontsev 2016; Dergachev 2016). Strengthening intraregional ties has gone ahead. The European Union used to be a pioneer in this regard. After several decades countries from all over the world followed its example.

In addition, almost all major powers are convinced now that regionalization meets their interests. It gives additional economic incentives. Allows to increase competitive advantages they posses. Strengthens their authority and influence on international arena. Transposes them into the category of authentic poles of a multipolar world (Koldunova; Kuznetsov 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> Professor of MGIMO-University, research-Professor of the Baltic Federal University

<sup>2</sup> Professor of National Research University Higher School of Economics, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Europe, RAS

Transformation of regionalization into one of the most important determinants of the internal and external development of states sharply raised the question of the organization of interregional cooperation and competition (Analytics 2017). Finding suitable algorithms and their formalization became the imperative of time. It happened regardless of whether major world players decided to contribute to this or resist, because "even players like the United States or China cannot be such completely individual poles" (Portyakova 2019).

For the space of Greater Eurasia, the correct answer will have a special meaning. Let us analyze why, in order to justify the preferred solution – the choice in favor of the formation of a cooperative interregional order.

## **II. BASIC CONCEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS**

The spatial outlines of Greater Eurasia are blurred. One of the possible approaches is to focus on a purely geographical criterion. It was the Asia-Europe Forum (ASEM) that followed such a path. ASEM purpose is to serve the dialogue between these two groups of countries. Only Europe means for it the European Union and Asia means, first of all, states of East Asia, which over the years have been joined by almost all the key countries of the surrounding sub-regions. Since the 2000s, Russia has been participating in its work (Koldunova 2010).

It is preferable, however, rather an inclusive approach, implying that all countries belonging politically, economically and existentially to this endless super-region are invited to cooperate in the framework of Greater Eurasia. The empire of the great Emir Timur (Tamerlane), which left an imprint on all the subsequent developments of mankind, can serve as a historical connotation in this regard. At its peak, it included three continents. From this point of view, Greater Eurasia is a space that connects the following regions: Northeast and Southeast Asia, Greater Central Asia, Greater Middle East, the whole of Europe, North Africa and maybe even Oceania.

Such an understanding of Greater Eurasia is proper to Moscow and Beijing, the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, and numerous research centers created by them for its advancement (Greater 2019). Then, if you follow the UN classification, 48 countries of Europe, 50 – of Asia and 7 – from North Africa go to it: these are 8 of 12 local civilizations and civilization associations, 80% of the world's population, 75% of world GDP (World 2015).

For the designation of Greater Eurasia in Western international documents and political science literature, the term Wider Eurasia is most often used. This term is a Western-style political construct that is dedicated to cancel, replace and to marginalize the concept of Greater Eurasia.

Wider Eurasia suggests the expansion of political and normative cultures and traditions of the EU towards third countries. Greater Eurasia, on the

contrary, insists on such an organization of political, economic, legal, humanitarian and cultural space, which is based on equal cooperation and the contribution of each participant to the common project.

Accordingly, Wider Eurasia turns out to be a projection of the political and normative traditions of only one region to the entire boundless super-region, which the other participants in the Greater Eurasia project would never agree with. They have no reason to agree. Russia and China have made their choice long ago. They will build Greater Eurasia. This is the essence of their approach to the organization of a multi-regional order.

This approach has another advantage. It provides an opportunity for each state to integrate into Greater Eurasia simultaneously both individually and through regional instruments, which gives the whole structure much greater flexibility and democracy, while the concept of Wider Europe comes from the fact that there is only one grouping of states that acts as a single unit, and all the rest must agree with its rules of the game.

But after all, the idea that the EU is a bastion of postmodernism, that only the EU is moving along the path of integration, and only its institutions are legitimate and are engaged in business – all this stuff is a tribute to the past, more and more distant. In this respect, everything is no longer so. Yes, the EU has advanced further than others in reducing barriers between states and uniting them, using supranational tools. But in recent years other regional projects have received rapid development. They are carried out using various management decisions. Their driving force is Russia, China, other world and regional players (Greater 2018).

### **III. THE MULTIPLICITY OF PROJECTS OF INTRAREGIONAL COOPERATION IN GREATER EURASIA**

The Eurasian Economic Union firmly moves forward with its integration project. It has already built Customs Union and outgrown it. Now it is striving to achieve the goals of ensuring four common market freedoms – freedom of movement of goods, labor, services and capital, relying, among other things, on the activities of such a supranational regulatory and legislative body, as the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), and the expanding practice of the EAEU Court. Recently, in the first half of the summer of 2019, the EAEU took another significant step in this direction: a draft document defining the strategic directions of economic integration until 2025 was sent to Member States for consideration.

It basically proposes to remove step by step, within a specified time frame and on the basis of road maps updated every two years 71 major obstacles hindering the proper functioning of the internal market – they were identified by the Eurasian Economic Commission in cooperation with business.

Among them there are 17 barriers (i.e. direct violations of the Treaty on the EAEU), 16 exemptions (statutory derogations from general rules) and 38 restrictions (resulting from the lack of a common regulatory framework). True, several more ambitious plans were set forth in it. However, Member States were not ready for them. Thus, they rejected the transfer to the Commission of additional supranational powers to mediate disputes between them and to monitor the implementation of projects. They did not go neither to the establishment of a single body for technical regulation and standardization (Edovina 2019).

The rest of the document deals mainly with the implementation of a principled course towards deeper harmonization of law enforcement and legislation of Member States. Harmonization should cover technical regulation and standardization; the turnover of goods and services for which general standards have not yet been established; powers of national supervisory authorities (with the help of a unified database of measurement results that will be created); liability for violation of product quality requirements; transition to electronic forms of permits, etc. It is assumed that by 2022 a unified system for ensuring product quality and service delivery will be created, subject to continuous modernization and improvement (Edovina 2019).

Road maps are being prepared in other areas of the EAEU activities as well. Among them there are such important ones as covering the implementation of the digital agenda (EAEU 2019). Institutional construction continues too – in July 2019 the Eurasian Economic Commission Board approved the draft Agreement on the Advisory Council on the exchange rate policy of the EAEU states (EAEU 2019).

In addition, the EAEU confidently equips the space around it. In 2015 the EAEU signed the first external agreement on free trade with Vietnam. Later it signed an agreement with China, this time mostly about the elimination of administrative and other barriers and harmonization of custom procedures. In 2018 a little bit more specific agreement was concluded with Iran. The EAEU continues negotiations and consultations on free trade with India, Egypt, Serbia and a number of other countries. It has memorandums of understanding with associations of countries that are somewhat slower moving along the path of integration, including such as ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the Andean Community, the Latin American Economic System, and the Community of Independent States. It benefits as well from memorandums of understanding with key organizations of the UN system: the UN regional commissions, UNCTAD, UNIDO, and others. Such developments makes the EAEU, as Tatyana Valovaya, former Minister for Integration and Macroeconomics of the EEC, puts it, a “full participant in the global geo-economic architecture” (Portyakova 2019).

In practice, the EAEU does much more than is known. Its misfortune is that it lacks necessary media support. The EAEU is poorly represented in the information field. Therefore, it enjoys insufficient social support. There are a lot of speculations about it. In 2017-2018 the EAEU experienced a mini-crisis. The Russian currency has weakened, and Russian-made goods and services poured into the market of other Members of the Union, which caused their discontent. However, as the Russian economy and currency strengthened, despite the restrictions imposed by the EU and the USA, the interest of other Members of the EAEU towards the continuation and improvement of the effectiveness of the Eurasian integration process has again increased.

In contrast to the EU and the EAEU, China, Japan, India, Uzbekistan, Australia, ASEAN countries carry out their integration projects by other methods, which received the generic name "new regionalism". The essence of these methods consists in solving the problems of reducing and eliminating barriers in trade and other areas, bringing countries together and creating compatible legal regimes and economic spaces without assigning national sovereignty and establishing cumbersome, costly and self-sufficient supranational bodies, (Afontsev, 2016; Dergachev, 2019).

China forms with any countries willing to go along with it free trade zones, attractive for them. The attractiveness for the partners of China of the relevant agreements is due to several factors. The main thing is that these countries get preferential legal treatment and access to loans issued by Beijing on favorable terms and without political demands; large-scale industrial and infrastructure facilities appear in their territory, erected by China in exchange for opening up the market for Chinese goods and services that are more competitive.

In turn, the rapprochement between the ASEAN countries in no way resembles classical integration. Nevertheless, the effect is to some extent comparable. Intraregional trade and exchanges are growing at a faster pace. The economy of the region easily attracts much-needed investments for all. It develops steadily, dynamically. Economic growth is healthy.

It is quite natural in this situation that Russia raised the level of its relations with ASEAN "to a strategic partnership." This was done at the 2018 Singapore Summit. As the head of Russian diplomacy S.V. Lavrov emphasized at a ministerial meeting in Bangkok on the last day of July 2019, "the parties promptly, without wasting time, began to implement" understandings reached by the leaders and tasks they agreed upon. "As a result," commentators say, "the trade turnover between the Russian Federation and ASEAN countries increased by 6.8% in 2018 and reached \$19.6 billion." There are good opportunities to bring it to \$100 billion by 2025 (Tarasenko ASEAN 2019).

Japan, India and Australia are promoting their projects in order to keep up, to have their counterplay and not lose perspective. Uzbekistan is actively rebuilding subregional and regional ties in order to adapt them to its needs, skillfully using the Chinese experience.

#### **IV. MULTIPLICITY OF INSTITUTIONS OF INTRAREGIONAL ORGANIZATION IN GREATER EURASIA**

The mosaic and multi-vector development of Greater Eurasia is enhanced by the abundance of separate regional and trans-regional structures and organizations arising in the super-region. So far the EU is out of competition in this respect. It has long equipped itself with the most powerful system of central organs of supranational and intergovernmental multi-level governance. In a number of cases, they are empowered to make decisions and monitor their implementation even in the absence of the general agreement of the Member States. Therefore, for the EU and the Member States, the next personnel rotation in the highest echelons of power of the integration community, the decisions on which were taken in May-July 2019, was so important.

In addition to them, the EU has created a large group of diversified structures (services, agencies, etc.) of a specialized nature with significant powers in almost all areas of human activity (EU 2019). The Union formalized strategies and policies it implements towards nearly all regions of the planet and established both internal and external bodies for the management of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and interaction. How effective they are is another matter.

However, as far as global governance systems are concerned, the EU and its Member States have until recently relied entirely on the United States and international structures they created, comprising WTO and universal financial organizations of the Bretton-Woods system, which they believed also serve their interests. Together with the USA, they prevented their timely reform and democratization in favor of the developing world. Therefore, China, Russia and the leading regional powers of the planet had to look for palliatives.

China, relying on its rapidly growing economic and financial strength, has established several world banks, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. In terms of the quality of the procedures adopted in them, they are in no way inferior to their pro-American counterparts or the European Investment Bank. In terms of resources and loan portfolio, they steadily increase their capabilities.

Russia and China, together with the countries of Central Asia, created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Step by step, it becomes more and more influential, turning into an inclusive trans-regional and multi-regional

organization. Under an agreement between Moscow and Beijing, the SCO included India and Pakistan. Afghanistan, Iran and others take part in its work as observers.

Together with India and Brazil, joined later by South Africa, Russia and China created BRICS – an exceptionally representative international structure capable of speaking on behalf of all continents. In fact, it is able to represent simultaneously Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Depending on where its summits are held, BRICS invites to them the heads of state and government of all the countries concerned. Already, specialists, for example the head of the Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia at MGIMO-University Boris Martynov, call BRICS the prototype of the future organization of the world order – an international structure that serves the dialogue not only between countries and regions, but also “between cultures and civilizations” (Tarasenko 2019).

On the eve of G20 meetings, it holds its regular meetings, since all the BRICS members are members of the G20. The EU is represented in it by Britain (so far), Germany, France and the Netherlands, since the requirements of the developing world to calculate the rating of states in terms of purchasing power have not yet been agreed upon. But the BRICS meetings in all respects are much more representative, including on such parameters as multi-regionality, the size of the total territory, population, military potential, and the ability to serve as a motor for global development.

Institutional construction in the space of the former USSR has become widespread. All international organizations created here have a mutually supportive nature and are to some extent similar to the Russian nesting doll. The EAEU is only their core. The Commonwealth of Independent States is the most numerous, though a framework organization. The free trade zone created by it is open for third countries accession. The military-political and anti-terrorism continuation of the CIS and the EAEU is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

This is not all, of course. There are also the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the military-political undertakings of France, India and Australia, as well as the USA, Japan and India, an agreement as it was called previously on a Trans-Pacific partnership, etc. However, the painted picture is enough to conclude that Greater Eurasia has a huge potential for growth and cooperation, which is still poorly used. The super-region remains fragmented, torn between different players and centers of influence, mastering at the same time different, poorly compatible models of integration and intra-regional cooperation.

Previously, such a state of Greater Eurasia was easily explained. In the context of the processes of growing regionalization and the strengthening of

interregional ties which have entered into competition with the stalled globalization, it becomes an anachronism. It does not correspond to the needs of further development of interregional trade. It infringes large interregional projects. It conflicts with the interests of the largest players in the super-region. Naturally, the answer to these challenges was to follow.

## **V. COMPETITION BETWEEN FIVE GEOPOLITICAL PROJECTS OF ARRANGEMENT OF GREATER EURASIA**

The first of these was the appearance of the Asia-Europe Forum in 1996 at the initiative of France and Singapore. Initially, it was conceived as a link between the EU and East Asia. Now it has outgrown this framework. It includes the EU member states, the European Commission, Norway and Switzerland, on the one hand, the ASEAN countries, the ASEAN secretariat, Japan, India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Kazakhstan and Mongolia on the other (The Asia 2019). None of them wanted to be turned off from inter-regional dialogue.

Since its inception, the credo of the Forum has become the concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence. Gradually, the idea of connected development (connectivity) became the core of all its activities. However, ASEM could not offer something more specific than a dialogue about all imaginable issues. And this is despite the fact that a large number of working meetings, events, consultations are held within the framework of the Forum, and it has many areas of activity (Asia 2019). Nowadays as before, the main results of its work are the final documents of the summits, the preparation of which takes enormous diplomatic efforts. Alas, they include only the most common agreed positions on everything in the world (from supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to climate and ecology) and the reaction to current events. The real mate in them is difficult to find.

The situation is completely different with the Chinese project of the Silk Road (Belt and Road initiative). During the phase of implementation it conceptually strongly evolved. At the beginning, it was about purely infrastructural plans for the construction of trans-regional highways and railways and the improvement of sea routes for the transport of Chinese goods to Central and Western Europe. Now it is presented as a financially viable instrumental opportunity for the spread of the Chinese economic miracle to transit and receiving countries.

In this context, the formation of a new trans-regional infrastructure is seen as generating the emergence of new industrial centers, new growth points and a new economy, investment objects, in which transit countries are really interested. In this case, infrastructure projects in the Chinese version turn into a much more important and advantageous thing – connecting the

lagging regions and everyone who wants to the Chinese locomotive of economic modernization. In fact, as it tries to present BRI, Beijing seeks to engage them in economic co-development.

At the same time, as far as practical politics and economics are concerned, the Silk Road remains, first of all, what it always was – “an initiative pushed by internal factors” and “a project to spread Chinese influence” (Mitter 2019). Its goal is to load China’s surplus production and construction capacities with the orders they need, invest excessive capitals and substantially expand the labor market for China’s skilled and unskilled labor. It is an important means by which Beijing is trying to open up new sales markets for a much more powerful and competitive Chinese economy and to bind to itself the political and business elites of transit countries and countries of destination of Chinese goods and credit, and financial assistance. From this angle, the Silk Road is more political than a commercial project, which explains its generous funding and the fact that its implementation is based on large-scale subsidies.

Authorship of another, this time fully geopolitical project, which can also be attributed to the number of projects linking together the separate parts of a huge super-region, belongs to Russia [Karaganov 2017]. Its distinguishing feature is that it is an order of magnitude more comprehensive than all others (Karaganov, Bordachev 2016; Karaganov, Bordachev 2017; Karaganov, Bordachev 2018). To emphasize this, Russia called it the project of forming the Comprehensive Greater Eurasia Partnership (spaces, community – CGEP).

The CGEP project was put forward by the leadership of Russia after an agreement was reached with China on the conjunction of the Economic Belt of Silk Road and the activities of the EAEU, which was later repeatedly confirmed [Joint 2015]. The Joint Statement on the Development of Comprehensive Partnership Relations and Strategic Interaction, for example, stated: “the parties believe that the One Belt - One Road Initiative and the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership can develop in parallel and in coordination, will contribute to the development of regional associations, bilateral and multilateral integration processes for the benefit of the peoples of the Eurasian continent”. Therefore, at some point, Chinese experts even suggested that “in geo-economic terms, Russian Greater Eurasia and Chinese One Belt and One Road are one and the same” (Li Xin 2018), which, of course, is not so (Li Zigu 2017).

The agreement received the support of the supreme body of the EAEU, which promptly gave the Eurasian Economic Commission a mandate to negotiate with China on behalf of the “five”. The concluded agreement, in essence, on reducing administrative and other barriers is the first in a series of

planned treaties. In addition, during the state visit to Beijing in 2018 of the President of the Russian Federation, the economic ministries of Russia and China approved the terms of reference for concluding a comprehensive treaty of a new generation.

The project of the formation of the CGEP has several dimensions (Analytics 2017; Entin, Entina 2017, 2019; Entin, Entina 2016a, 2016b). In economic terms, it involves the creation of North-South and South-North transport corridors in addition to the Silk Road corridors, the creation of growth centers and centers of new economies along their path and at intersections, the implementation of large-scale energy and other projects, the formation of trans-regional production value chains, the joint commercial development of new breakthrough technologies and products (including wide-body aircrafts of new generation, mobile nuclear power plants and much more).

In the military-political – insists on the erection of obstacles to external interference in the affairs of the countries of the super-region. This is necessary in order to prevent external players from turning the constantly emerging internal turmoil into a pretext for political destabilization. There are already precedents for solving such problems. As an example, we can refer to the relatively recently concluded treaty on the Caspian Sea. In accordance with it, the Caspian countries have committed themselves to protect their joint military-political space from such interference, and also to exclude the use of their territory by third powers for illegal purposes.

Other components of the military-political dimension are the creation of a collective security system that would be able to prevent the escalation of conflicts between its participants, as the leader of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev always dreamed of, and finding approaches to de-escalating international conflicts and crises and prospects for their subsequent settlement.

In a politico-normative dimension, it proposes to abandon the policy of sanctions and any other unilateral measures of a similar nature and prohibit them. Moreover, it requires a return to unconditional observance of the UN Charter in its classical interpretation and all existing principles of international law in their interconnection, and first of all the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*.

It would be a big mistake to forget, as is now often done, that the application of each particular principle of international law in its relationship with all others is insisted on by the relevant resolution of the UN General Assembly and the Helsinki Final Act. In this regard, the CGEP is positioned as stopping ongoing attempts to discredit the UN Security Council, undermine the role of the United Nations as the only universal and authoritative security organization in the modern world, monopolize the right to decide issues of war and peace and internal development for others (Derkul 2019).

Every year, a detailed description of this dimension of the CGEP occupies an increasingly prominent place in the joint Russian-Chinese documents. According to one of the latest formulations, Moscow and Beijing are in favor of "further uniting efforts with like-minded countries in order to protect the world order and the international system, which are based on the goals and principles of the UN Charter; promoting a new type of international relations based on the principles of mutual respect, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation, and building a community of a common destiny of humanity based on the equal participation of all countries in global governance, respect for international law, ensuring equal and indivisible security, mutual respect and consideration for each other's interests, rejection of confrontation and conflict; collectively resolving global and regional issues; upholding justice in international affairs; promoting a more fair and rational polycentric world order; implementation of mutually beneficial cooperation for the benefit of the peoples of the world "(Joint 2019).

In the regulatory framework, it proceeds from the assumption that supranational, unified, uniform integration in the super-region is impossible. In addition, it is absolutely not needed, and even contraindicated. Countries of the super-region can win only as a result of the mutual removal of barriers, a feasible combination of efforts to solve common problems, and the compatibility of the conditions for the activities of individuals and companies throughout its space. Accordingly, the project for the formation of CGEP proposes a model of the most gentle, flexible, different-speed integration, which aims to protect the identity and independence of each participant, ensure political stability and accelerate economic development and modernization.

In connection to institutional build-up, it calls for relying on all international structures existing in the super-region without any discrimination and on the establishment of cooperative relations between them. There are a lot of problems and challenges faced by the countries of the super-region. These problems are extremely complex. In their regard, decisions imposed from outside will not work. In the future, unhealthy competition between institutions will only impede their solution. There is no alternative to cooperation between them, be it the establishment of direct relations between the EU and the EAEU, or NATO and the CSTO. The possibility of holding a BRICS-EU summit in Russia was thought back in the second half of the 2000s. The earlier individual regions and their countries realize this, the more they will be able to profit of.

In the socio-cultural sense, it puts into practical terms the basic tenets of the Millennium Resolution, in which the UN General Assembly convincingly showed the value of all civilizations on Earth, the inadmissibility of dividing them into higher and lower ones and urged to treat them with due attention.

tion and respect. Genuine Eurasians have always insisted on this. In contrast to the geopolitical constructions of Halford Mackinder, they were not talking about the world domination by the Heartland, as Western political scientists continue to say [Spanger 2019], not about the permanent war of maritime and continental civilizations, but about historical closeness and common fate. The main elements of this doctrine concerning the equality of cultures and the objective need to unite the efforts of the peoples of the super-region are being developed by Russian philosophers, historians, writers, ethnographers, and public figures from the second half of the 19th century. The death of the Russian Empire gives impetus to its design in an independent course of political thought.

Its revival begins after the collapse of the USSR. The Eurasian ideas of Nursultan Nazarbayev form the basis for the creation of the Eurasian Economic Community, then the Customs Union and, finally, the EAEU. The 4th wave Eurasians become forerunners of CGEP. They substantiate the objective necessity and the logic of its formation; creatively comprehend the ideological legacy of Eurasianism in relation to the modern era (Karaganov, Bordachev 2016; Karaganov, Bordachev 2017; Karaganov, Bordachev 2018).

The latest project concerning Greater Eurasia, understood as Wider Eurasia, is the policy of connectivity between Europe and Asia of the European Union. It was made public quite recently – in mid-September 2018 (Joint 2018). Its appearance was a kind of response to the Chinese Belt and Road initiative. The economic activities of Beijing in the context of the Silk Road began to reformat the space of Asia and Europe so noticeably that the EU was frightened for its domination and leading role. The Russian project of the formation of CGEP is not even mentioned in it. Brussels says about Russia frankly little and only in passing. True, about China it says nearly nothing too.

In fact, this policy consists of two parts: negative and positive. The negative can be judged by the policy of containing China in the political, economic and media sphere, which Brussels has recently been trying to pursue, following Washington. It seeks to prove both to itself and to all transit countries – civil society, expert circles and the political establishment that the Silk Road is beneficial only to Beijing. Chinese companies are implementing the “Belt and Road” in opaque manner, using gray, black and other corruption schemes.

Its implementation, insists Brussels and NGOs and research centers close to it, does nothing to combat unemployment, since jobs are created only for the Chinese themselves. Moreover, it enslaves transit countries. Their sovereign debt to China is growing rapidly, making them pliable to its influence to the detriment of their own national interests. On the one hand, write researchers of the Royal Institute of International affairs, “China pursues protectionist policies while engaging actively in intellectual property

theft”; on the other – “China lends unconditionally to countries that abuse human rights and are corrupt, undermining efforts by Western governments to promote good governance and human rights” (Lind 2019). In this vein, public opinion is processed in the most active way. More realistic and constructive assessments (Clini 2019) are drowning in a common choir. The main theses of Brussels about Beijing’s double-dealing are easily taken on faith. Here with the logic of evidence, everything is in order. It works. Large-ly because the Western political establishment starts to being really afraid of Chinese expansion, as well as Western business. They fear that Europe will repeat if not the African, then at least the Latin American scenario. As Russian researchers write, they behave as if “invasion” of China into Latin America is frankly annoying ... but there are few mechanisms to contain it” (Razumovsky and others 2019).

From 2% in the early 2000s, China’s share in Latin American foreign trade increased to 11% in 2018. Without counting offshore flow, direct investment in the region reached \$17.5 billion in record time. High technologies went from the East, and not from the West. And all that without political demands and interference in internal affairs. “For many countries, China has become a major trading partner”. This made it easier for them to survive the first global financial and economic crisis, to keep national economies afloat without relying on IMF loans, provided under tough conditions. One more important detail - “PRC promised to connect partners to its megaproject “New Silk Road” (Razumovsky and others 2019).

The positive component is expressed not so clearly. From the published document, Chinese experts are surprised, it is completely incomprehensible how “the EU is going to create an interface with Asia” [Devonshire-Ellis 2018]. The main components of this EU policy are the same infrastructure, but, in addition, investments in human capital, energy security, digitalization, technical standards convergence. However, the core and the most im- portant task of the policy are completely different. Brussels insists that ev- erything is done according to the rules (and not like China, Russia, etc.).

This is the main message that was followed by a cold reaction from poten- tial EU partners. If rules mean international law and jointly developed norms of behavior, if Brussels proposes normative co-creation, nobody would mind. But nowhere in the EU texts this possibility is mentioned. If we are talking about the next reissue of the EU’s claims to the projection of its legal order on all others and normative domination, Brussels was late for the era.

Now are not the 90s of the last century, and not even the beginning of the new millennium. After the global crisis, the sovereign debt crisis and the migration crisis, the EU has fundamentally lost in soft power and attractive- ness. The internal weaknesses of the EU are obvious to everyone. Everyone

knows the terrible costs of borrowing the EU regulatory framework. It is clear that the regulatory expansion of the EU serves only its own interests and nothing more. That Brussels uses it without a twinge of conscience to interfere in the internal affairs of third countries and adjust their policies.

None of the independent players would agree with such type of approach to building cooperation in Greater Eurasia, and not Wider, as Brussels insists. The same is true for the region of Central Asia (Council 2019). Even research centers operating in Brussels (Sahajpal, Blockmans 2019) warn of this. Moreover, the EU is ready to spend not hundreds of billions of dollars, but a modest or even several orders of magnitude more modest amount on investments in Wider Eurasia. Take Central Asia: the formally accumulated investments of the EU reached 62 billion euro, but, after all, their lion's share (at 75%) was invested exclusively in the oil and gas industry of Kazakhstan (The EU 2019).

Another good reason why the new EU policy, like the one adopted for its development (in fact, not such a new (Putz 2019) strategy for Central Asia was, let's say diplomatically, met with coolness in Moscow, is because it have a "second bottom." In any case, this policy is so perceived by politicians, business and the expert community. How exactly is well illustrated by the following characteristic: "The EU is interested in solving the problems of security and energy in cooperation with these states, and at the same time it automatically opposes the deepening of integration processes in the post-Soviet space"; still insists on unrealizable Europeanization of these states and their transit towards European standards; "does not take into account the positions of China and Russia, and does not suggest joint approaches" (Ermina 2019).

It does not add optimism that approximately six months after the publication of its connectivity policy, Brussels, following in the wake of the warlike rhetoric of Donald Trump, whom it seems to be trying to disown, sharply tightened the declared line with regard to Beijing. In March 2019, the European Commission and the European External Action Service submitted to the EU political institutions a Communication with its outline, in which China was called an "economic competitor" and a "systemic rival" (Document 2019).

In this document, and at a meeting of the European Council that supported it, held on March 21-22, 2019, Beijing was accused of imposing an alternative illiberal development model. It was presented with a standard set of claims that it puts Western companies in unequal conditions, in illegitimate ways supports the national producers, and violates intellectual property rights. It was sharply criticized for absolutely everything: the Silk Road, investment in strategic objects of the European economy, and the damage that Chinese

state-owned companies, according to EU institutions, cause to European business and the region's international competitiveness (Casarini 2019).

Like Moscow, Beijing was blamed for violating the rules on which the world order is based. And this time it was mainly about violations of the rules of international trade, reciprocity, openness, intellectual property. With this, according to a part of the European expert community, the EU began to exaggerate in a biased manner – it needs to be very careful in blocking with the United States, because the methods used by the USA not less and maybe even more undermine the rule-based order (Casarini 2019).

Somewhat earlier than the EU, Japan thought about the need to come up with a competing project that could balance the Chinese "Belt and Road" initiative. Its concerns had and have an economic and military-strategic background. On the one hand, Tokyo felt that Beijing was reorienting almost all the countries of the "common neighborhood" to itself and was beginning to force Japanese capital out of the region – Japanese firms find it harder and harder to break through and win contracts that are interesting for them. On the other hand, Tokyo was afraid that as a result of the accelerated military construction, Beijing would be able to take control of the sea lanes on which the entire Japanese economy depends (Brown 2019).

Japan's alternative project is called the Free and Open Vision of the Indo-Pacific Region. Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe first outlined its main provisions in Nairobi in August 2016. Speaking in the capital of Kenya, he said that Japan should promote the rapprochement of the Pacific and Indian oceans, Asia and Africa, should help turn them into a common space of market economy and rule of law, free from the power of force or coercion. Later his speech formed the basis of the initiative announced by the Japanese Foreign Ministry. It proclaimed as the main objectives of its implementation: maintaining the rule of law, including freedom of navigation; promoting economic growth in the region through investments in "high-quality infrastructure", including ports, railways, highways, as well as in energy and information technology projects; supporting peace and stability through building the capacity of the States of the region in the field of maritime security, the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance in dealing with natural disasters (Brown 2019).

According to some of its parameters, "Vision" is very similar to the EU Europe-Asia connectivity policy, while on others, it differs significantly from it. In terms of content, they are similar. "Vision" also offers partner countries the implementation of infrastructure, energy and high-tech projects, investment in human capital, etc. But Tokyo, hoping to beat Beijing in this regard, is focusing on the quality of the facilities being built. Japan even managed to include a passage concerning "investments in high-quality infrastructure" in

the final declaration of the G20 summit in Osaka (G20 2019). In addition, it has not so little done in practical terms, although its capital investments are several orders of magnitude smaller than those of Beijing. It moves production in the countries of vast region, builds most modern nuclear power plants and other facilities, etc.

Vision has a strong ideological component. Tokyo also advocates order based on rules, primarily on “freedom and openness.” But, taking into account the specifics of the party-political systems of countries invited to cooperate, it carefully disassociates itself from interfering in their internal affairs and Western-style messianism, not insisting on the conditionality of its assistance by the commitment of these states to the ideals of democracy and human rights. It focuses its attention on external, international aspects of the order: openness and transparency of launching and implementing projects and their financing, multilateralism versus one-sidedness, truly free trade, mixing imbalances, etc.

With its spearhead “Vision” and the policy of connectivity is directed against China. Russia’s capabilities in both cases are not taken into account. Also in both cases a similar focus is camouflaged by advertising claims about how much the countries of the region could get from orientation to Tokyo and Brussels, how much Japan and the EU can give them. (However, not in terms of capital investments – so, with regard to Central Asia, even taking into account the new EU strategy for the region, “for the period from 2014 to 2020, funding from Brussels will not exceed €1 billion for all areas of cooperation with all five countries included in the EU strategy – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan” (Eremina 2019).

But EU policy has a purely civilian dimension. It is about economics, law, education, the progress of society, etc. Moreover, it is precisely the policy of the regional bloc projected on the neighboring and more remote regions. “Vision” is positioned as a project with the participation of such important world players as the USA, India and Australia. In this regard, it is not a unilateral, but as well a common and joint activity.

However, the main thing is that it has a military-strategic dimension. Japan strongly pushes it into the background. Tokyo explains that “Vision” is not directed against anyone. It is not at all about creating a military-political bloc and opposing the countries of the region on the principle of “for” or “against” China. However, it attracted the US precisely as another element of China’s containment. That is why Moscow and Beijing perceived it mostly negatively. They were repelled by the fact that it turns out to be a conductor of US influence in the region and translates some issues into a confrontational plane. This is not the case, according to some orientalists, “Vision” is neutral, and it can be very useful for Moscow and provide it with additional

room for maneuver (Brown 2019). However, neither official instances nor the Russian expert community seem to share this opinion. Maybe they act like that it in vain.

Moreover, on the approach is another bewitching project, positioned as a purely economic, the scale of which, however, turns it into a geostrategic one that overshadows many others. Intentions were announced to sign by the end of 2019 an agreement on the creation of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). If this happens, the foundations for building the world's largest free trade zone will be laid.

The ASEAN countries, Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, and South Korea are planning to enter it. The 27<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations took place on July 22-31, 2019 [27<sup>th</sup> 2019]. According to official estimates, the volume of GDP of potential participants in the RCEP is about \$49.5 trillion. This is approximately 39% of global GDP.

In June 2019, on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit, according to the "Kommersant" newspaper, the deputy press secretary of the Thai government, General Virachong Sukhonthapatipak talked a lot about the advantages of the RCEP. Particular emphasis was placed in his comments on the fact that the agreement "will become one of the most important mechanisms for maintaining and strengthening the economies of the block countries." RCEP "will help to further connect ASEAN economic development with other countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the world, whether it be cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the United States and other countries of America or the European Union" (Tarasenko ASEAN 2019).

## **VI. INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: THE PROSPECTS FOR MATCHING GEOPOLITICAL PROJECTS OF ASEAN, CHINA, RUSSIA, JAPAN AND THE EU**

Now they are not visible. It would be strange if it were otherwise in the context of confrontation between the EU and Russia, when Brussels and member states pursue a policy of containing Russia and China, rely on restrictive and other unilateral measures and promote their approach to cooperation in the super-region as an alternative.

However, in the case of the normalization of relations between Russia and the EU and the refusal of Brussels from claims of exclusivity and normative messianism, an interface between all the geopolitical projects that have been analyzed above will become quite possible. The countries of the super-region are interested in peaceful creative development, not confrontation. Creative cooperation is beneficial to all. It can give a lot. This is or should be the essence of cooperative multiregional order, in which there will be a place for everyone.

For its part, Russia will be ready to support it. When creating the EAEU, Moscow proceeded from the fact that integration in the former Soviet Union would become a brick into a common building with the EU, serve to form a common economic, legal and humanitarian space, will lead to the establishment of a union of unions. And now Russia, together with the other members of the “five”, continues to build up the internal law of the EAEU in such a way that it does not contradict the EU law to the maximum possible extent.

The Russian initiative to form the CGEP suggests equal participation of all countries, all regions, including the EU. Its anti-Western sound, which permitted the rejection of the EU and the formation of a common space from St. Petersburg to Shanghai, has long been eradicated. It is important that Brussels follows this recipe in understanding and implementing its course of external action; that it does not hinder integration processes in the post-Soviet space; ceases to assume that the EAEU will collapse in the near future, and that the Silk Road and the activities of the EAEU are extremely difficult to integrate, at least “it’s not clear how”, which runs through the official documents of the EU (EU 2019). So that Brussels will finally think about a positive agenda without preliminary conditions and the linking of Europe with Asia not abstractly, not in general, but taking into account other geopolitical projects, institutional structures and development trends existing here. What Beijing also insists on [Devonshire-Ellis 2018].

If and when this happens, the following concrete proposals could be translated into practical terms:

#### 1. IN INSTITUTIONAL TERMS:

- To establish a multi-level dialogue between the EU and the EAEU, between NATO and the CSTO, then or in parallel – between the SCO and the EU, BRICS and the EU.

#### 2. IN LEGAL TERMS:

- Take steps aimed at achieving compatibility between external free trade agreements and negative integration agreements, concluded by the EAEU and the EU with third countries and associations;
- Launch, at an expert level, the elaboration of various aspects of the future basic agreement between Russia and the EU or the basic agreement between the EAEU and the EU replacing it, taking into account the newest international practices – innovations included in the EU agreements with Canada, Japan, as well as with Ukraine, Armenia and Kazakhstan and promising rules included in the agreements of the EAEU with Vietnam, China, Serbia, etc., without prejudging the decision on the date of official negotiations;
- Test tripartite negotiations with the participation of Russia, the EU and third countries (going beyond the negotiations on the transit of energy supply) to

check how much this format is needed, how it works, what results can be achieved with it, to expand the palette of means of cooperation and interaction across the Greater Eurasia;

- Agree on how Serbia could remain in the free trade zone of the EAEU and the CIS, first at the time of accession negotiations and then on an ongoing basis (regardless of when and under what conditions Belgrade may be accepted in the EU) to get the invaluable experience of pairing the two integrations, which could be further extended to other countries.

### 3. IN TERMS OF RESTORING NON-ALTERNATIVE LAW-ABIDING BEHAVIOR OF STATES:

- Create a permanent open platform for dialogue on international law issues;
- Arrange regular bilateral meetings of national associations of international law, then add a multilateral dimension to them, leading to the creation of the Greater Eurasian Society of International Law;
- Clarify the meaningful content of the notion of “order based on rules”, recently promoted by Brussels and Tokyo, and its relationship with classical ideas about the international law and world legal system order in order to remove misunderstanding between Brussels, Moscow and Beijing and between Tokyo, Beijing and Moscow;
- Concentrate the efforts of all countries of the super-region on the harmonization of that part of the national legal regulation that serves implementation of large infrastructure interregional projects and interregional production chains and value chains creation;
- To raise the status of the ongoing work of various international research teams and public structures over the content of the projects for building common spaces and, in particular, the common economic space from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean;
- To carry out the changeover of the activities of the Council of Europe as the bearer of the invaluable experience of international rulemaking and after that give it an opportunity to work on the development of international agreements of a new generation that would form the basis for the formation of the CGEP;
- When renewing cooperation between the Federal Assembly and the European Parliament, focus it on solving problems of harmonization of legislation and law enforcement.

### 4. IN TERMS OF NORMALIZATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE INFORMATION SPACE:

- Reduce the degree of misinformation that has swept over the media sphere;

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- Return to the practice of respectful attitude to each other and an objective presentation of the facts, events, positions, initiatives;
- To focus on points of common interests, and not on what divides, contrasts and spurs confrontation.

## 5. REVISION OF PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED FOREIGN POLICY AND GEOPOLITICAL CONCEPTS:

- Remove the inherent plaque of one-sidedness in the course of their processing and renewal;
- Focus on harmonization;
- See how to achieve synergy.

## 6. STREAMLINE DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES:

- Try to reach an agreement on reducing step by step the level of politicization of problems in the preparation and implementation of important economic decisions in the international environment;
- Be guided not so much by foreign policy considerations but by commercial interests when working on preparation and implementation of economic decisions;
- To return to market laws a priority in the regulation of free trade and international interaction and to interfere in their operation only in a coordinated manner or taking into account a preliminary exchange of views.

## 7. RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MULTILATERALISM:

- To reach a political agreement, which will then receive a regulatory expression, on a phased rejection of the policy of resorting to unilateral measures;
- Similarly, on inadmissibility of the use of sanctions mechanisms in circumvention of the powers of the UN Security Council;
- Likewise on the unlawfulness of the extraterritorial effect of the norms of national law.

## 8. JOINT IMPLEMENTATION OF LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND OTHER PROJECTS:

- To pave the way towards their internationalization (so that the spirit of deterrence, which representatives of the Western establishment and expert circles [Spanger 2019] can feel and reproduce in everything now, is replaced by a spirit of cooperation and interaction in solving common problems).

It seems that the implementation of the above proposals would have avoided fierce competition between various projects of the organization of Great

ter Eurasia and lead to the establishment of cooperative order in the super-region.

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# Common approaches to the legal systems of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union

**SUMMARY:** I. Legal systems of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and supranational economic Law II. General provisions on regulation of economic activity in the Eurasian Economic Union member states III. International norms on economic activity IV. The EAEU member states constitutions and regulation of economic activity V. References

## I. LEGAL SYSTEMS OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION AND SUPRANATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW

Starting with the characterization of the legal systems of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, we underline that their current state is greatly influenced by the membership of the states in this international organization. It is known that the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (Astana, 29 May 2014) was concluded by the Republic of Belarus (Belarus), the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan) and the Russian Federation (Russia) as the result of many years of cooperation under the conditions of economic integration in the post-Soviet area.

In 2015, the Republic of Armenia and the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) joined the Treaty. The Treaty established the Eurasian Economic Union (hereinafter EAEU, the Union). The Union ensures freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, implementation of coordinated, agreed, common or uniform policies in the sectors of the economy defined under the Treaty and international treaties and agreements within the Union. The EAEU is an international regional economic integration organization possessing international legal personality.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Business and Corporate Law, Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), Head of the Department of Business and Corporate Law, Doctor of Law, inna.ershova@mail.ru

The consensual (conventional) and legal framework of the economic activity within the EAEU is made up by the provisions of the EAEU Treaty and the Annexes hereto. Annexes to the Treaty define:

- General conditions for the economic activity of the EAEU Member States — Annex 13 Protocol on Agreed Policy in the Sphere of Consumer Protection; Annex 14 Protocol on Implementation of Agreed Macroeconomic Policy; Annex 9 Protocol on Technical Regulation within the Eurasian Economic Union, Annex 19 Protocol on General Principles and Rules of Competition, *etc.*;

- *Rules for conducting foreign economic activity of the EAEU Member States* — Annex 6 Protocol on Common Customs Tariff Regulation; Annex 7 Protocol on Non-Tariff Regulatory Measures in Relation to Third Countries; Annex 8 Protocol on the Application of Safeguard, Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Measures to Third Countries; Annex 18 on the Procedure for Collection of Indirect Taxes and the Mechanism for controlling their Payments on Export and Import of Goods, Performance of Works and Provision of Services, *etc.*;

- *Rules for the implementation of certain economic activities or economic activities in certain spheres* — Annex 16 Protocol on Trade in Services, Incorporation, Activities and Investments; Annex 17 Protocol on Financial Services; Annex 21 Protocol on Ensuring Access to Services of Natural Monopoly Entities in the Electric Power Sphere, including Fundamental Pricing and Tariff Policy; Annex 22 Protocol on the Rules of Access to Services of Natural Monopoly Entities in the Sphere of Gas Transportations Using Gas Transportation Systems, including Fundamental Pricing and Tariff Policy; Annex 24 Protocol on Coordinated (Agreed) Transport Policy; Annex 25 Protocol on the Procedure for Regulating Procurement; Annex 27 Protocol on Industrial Cooperation; Annex 29 Protocol on State Support Measures for Agriculture; Annex 30 on Provision of Medical Treatment of Workers of the Member States and their Family Members, *etc.*

We believe that these instruments form the most important direction of supranational economic law — the law of the Eurasian Economic Union (Кашкин, Монсеев).

International treaties within the framework of the EAEU, international treaties with a third party and decisions of the EAEU bodies are subject to official publication on the official website of the EAEU on the Internet (<http://www.eaeunion.org>).

The EAEU Treaty defines the concept of *a common economic space* consisting of the territories of the Member States where similar (comparable) and same-type economic regulation mechanisms based on market principles

and application of harmonized or uniform laws are functioning and where a uniform infrastructure exists.

In the fields specified by the EAEU Treaty and defined by Member States, a *uniform (common) policy* is implemented, assuming the application by Member States of uniform legal regulation, including regulation based on decisions of the organs of the Union within the framework of their jurisdiction.

The analysis of the rules of the EAEU functioning allows us to say that they provide:

**Harmonization of legislation** — convergence of legislation of Member States aimed at establishing similar (comparable) normative regulation in individual areas;

**Unification of legislation** — approximation of legislation of Member States aimed at establishing identical legal regulatory mechanisms in separate areas as specified in the EAEU Treaty.

As noted by Prof. Galina K. Dmitrieva, "the basis of unification is an international agreement containing clearly formulated rules that the States acceding to the international agreement are obliged to apply in the domestic legal system without any changes" (Дмитриева, 36).

Within the EAEU, the following measures are undertaken to facilitate economic activity:

**Coordinated policy** involving cooperation of Member States based on common approaches approved by the organs of the Union necessary to achieve the objectives of the Union stipulated by the Treaty;

**Harmonized policy** implemented by Member States in various areas involving harmonization of legal regulation also by means of the decisions of the organs of the Union to the extent necessary to achieve the objectives of the Union stipulated by the Treaty;

**Uniform policy** implemented by Member States in the areas specified by the Treaty, involving the application by Member States of a uniform legal regulation also based on the decisions of the organs of the Union within the framework of their powers and jurisdiction.

## II. GENERAL PROVISIONS ON REGULATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION MEMBER STATES

The legal doctrine has historically formed different types of legal understanding: positivistic, natural legal, historical, realistic, psychological, socio-logical, Marxist and other types of understanding of the essence of law.

Traditionally, for the EAEU countries belonging to the Romano-German legal family, the legal understanding was based on "normativist-positivist" approaches. However, lawyers now come to the conclusion that an "integral"

legal understanding is more appropriate, as it combines elements of different types which results in a more objective and detailed study of the nature of law and various legal phenomena (Матузов, 115-116). It should be noted that this approach also affects the system of legal regulation of economic activity.

The sources of legal regulation of the economy in the EAEU countries can be classified on various grounds.

According to *the way of expression (formation) of the rules of law*, the rules of law are classified as: universally recognized principles and norms of international law, normative legal act (laws and by-laws (regulations)), normative legal agreement, legal custom, and local (corporate) acts.

Depending on their *legal force*, one can construct the following hierarchy of legal acts:

- International (e.g. international agreements and treaties);
- Internal: federal (for example, federal laws, regulations of the Government of the Russian Federation, etc.), regional (constitutions, statutes and charters of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, acts of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, etc.), municipal (municipal regulations); local (statutes and other local legal acts, regulatory agreements (law-making agreements), including corporate contracts, etc.); legal customs and judicial practice (jurisprudence, case law).

Be it noted that the system of internal acts of each member of the EAEU is predetermined by the structure of bodies of the state power. At the same time, each of the member states of the Union is a republic headed by the President. Legislative bodies are represented by parliaments (Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Parliament — National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Zhogorku Kenesh - Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

The bodies of executive power are headed by the governments of the States (in the Republic of Belarus it is the Government-Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus).

Each member of the EAEU has a Constitutional Court. The judicial system is headed by the Supreme Courts (in Armenia, by the Court of Cassation).

Taking into account the *interim period of validity*, it is possible to divide acts into permanent (accepted without reference to the period of validity) and temporary/term (e.g. Temporary Regulation on Holding Companies Established during the Transformation of State-Owned Enterprises into Joint-Stock Companies).

According to *the territory (dislocation) of application*, the rules governing economic activity can be divided into the rules acting: in the territory of the State concerned (e.g. Russian Federation) and on the territory of foreign countries. For example, under Article 2, paragraph 5, of the Federal Law No. 57-FZ dated 29 April 2008 “On the procedure for foreign investments in economic societies of strategic importance for the provision of defense of the country and security of the State” provisions of this law apply to transactions made outside the territory of Russia (for example, in the case of circulation of securities and shares of authorized capitals of strategic corporations).

The system of legal regulation of federal states, to which the Russian Federation is referred, has its own particularities. Sources of the legal regulation in this case can be classified according to *the territory of their action and the subject matter of law-making*. Thus, in the Russian Federation, these are acts of the federal level and of the level of constituent entities of the Russian Federation adopted, respectively, by federal and regional bodies of state power. The other EAEU Member States are unitary in nature and they do not have such a division.

It should be noted that information concerning existing legal acts as well as draft new laws at the stage of discussion or adoption could be found on the official websites of the authorized bodies and organizations. Here are some official portals containing current legal information.

**Russian Federation:** Legal Portal of the Russian Federation (<https://pravo.gov.ru>), Government Portal of the Russian Federation (<https://government.ru>), the portal of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation (<https://www.economy.gov.ru>).

**Republic of Belarus:** Portal of the Government of the Republic of Belarus (<https://www.government.by>), Legal Portal of the Republic of Belarus (<https://www.pravo.by>), Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus (<https://economy.gov.by>).

**Republic of Kazakhstan:** Information and legal system of regulatory acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan (<https://adilet.zan.kz>), Portal of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (<https://primeminister.kz>).

**Kyrgyz Republic:** Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic (<https://mineconom.gov.kg>).

**Republic of Armenia:** Government Portal of the Republic of Armenia (<https://www.gov.am>), Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia (<https://www.mineconomy.am>).

On some sites, users can choose the language in which information should be provided. Generally, it is the state language, as well as Russian and English languages. For example, in the Information and Legal System of Regulatory Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan information is presented in

Kazakh, Russian and English languages. The portal of the Government of the Republic of Belarus provides access to materials in Belarusian, Russian and English languages. The languages of the portal of the Government of the Republic of Armenia are Armenian, Russian and English. The Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic provides information in Kyrgyz, Russian and English.

Further we examine some sources of legal regulation of economic activity of the EAEU members in more detail.

### **III. INTERNATIONAL NORMS ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

When studying the norms of international law, researchers (Лаптев, 76-80) draw attention to the existence of monistic and dualistic approaches to the issue of interrelatedness of international and national systems of law. Representatives of monistic views believe that the legal system of the State is uniform and includes the rules of national and international law. The dualistic approach implies the existence of interrelated systems of law: international and national.

The Russian legal system, for example, is monistic in view of the explicit provision enshrined in Paragraph 4 Article 15 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation on recognition of international norms "as an integral part of its legal system." However, a number of laws refer to generally recognized principles and norms of international law as a source of law. Thus, by virtue of Article 7 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation constitute under the Constitution of the Russian Federation an integral part of the legal system of the Russian Federation. Federal Law No. 101-FZ dated 15 July 1995 "On International Treaties of the Russian Federation" stipulates that international treaties of the Russian Federation have priority over domestic legislation. A similar rule is enshrined in Article 7 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation: "If an international treaty of the Russian Federation establishes rules other than those provided for by civil legislation, the rules of an international treaty apply."

Under Article 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan "The existing law in the Republic of Kazakhstan consists of the norms of the Constitution, laws corresponding to it, other normative legal acts, international contractual and other obligations of the Republic, as well as normative decisions of the Constitutional Council and the Supreme Court of the Republic. International treaties ratified by the Republic take precedence over its laws. The procedure and conditions of operation in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan of international treaties to which Kazakhstan is a party shall be determined by the legislation of the Republic."

Under Article 6 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic “International treaties entered into force in accordance with the procedure established by law, to which the Kyrgyz Republic is a party, as well as generally recognized principles and norms of international law constitute an integral part of the legal system of the Kyrgyz Republic. The procedure and conditions for the application of international treaties and universally recognized principles and norms of international law shall be determined by laws.”

International rules of law include: universally recognized principles, universally recognized norms, international treaties, international customs. It should be noted that this approach has been reflected in Russian jurisprudence. Under Paragraph 1 of the Resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation No. 5 dated 10 October 2003 “On the application by courts of general jurisdiction of universally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation” universally recognized principles of international law should be understood as fundamental peremptory norms of international law adopted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole, deviation from which and violation of which is unacceptable (the principle of universal respect for human rights and the principle of good-faith fulfillment of international obligations). A generally recognized rule of international law refers to a rule of conduct accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as legally binding.

The rules of international law have more specific legal certainty than principles. The system of regulation of the EAEU Member States economic activity highlights such universally recognized principles as prohibition of abuse of rights, protection of property right, principle of good faith. Generally, recognized norms of international law include freedom of movement of goods and freedom of competition or recognition of a liquidated branch (subsidiary) of a corporation in the country in the event of termination of the corporation’s activities in the country of its place of registration (incorporation).

We should note two types of *international treaties*: (1) officially published and not requiring adoption by means of domestic acts for their application, (2) adopted through the relevant legal acts (treaties and international agreements to be ratified).

According to another classification (depending on in whose name international treaties with foreign States are concluded), the treaties and international agreements can be classified into the following: interstate treaties, intergovernmental treaties and interdepartmental treaties.

Interstate economic treaties include the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (Geneva, 19 May 1956), the

United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (Vienna, 11 April 1980). An example of an intergovernmental agreement is the Agreement on Support and Development of Small Business in the CIS Member States (Moscow, 17 January 1997). The interdepartmental agreements include the Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic on cooperation in the field of health and medicine (Moscow, 27 July 2000).

*International customs in the field of entrepreneurship* are the oldest in time for the emergence of law, the rules of which have been developed by the historically established rule of conduct of market participants. Under Article 5 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, international *custom is defined as* “the rule of behavior that has taken shape and is widely applied in a certain sphere of business activities, and which has not been stipulated by legislation, regardless of whether it has or has not been fixed in any one document.”

Originally having an unwritten form of expression, customs fixed in legal instruments later became widespread. As explained by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation in Paragraph 2 of the Resolution of the Plenum dated 23 June 2015 No. 25 “On the application by courts of certain provisions of section I of part one of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation,” “the custom shall be applied as recorded in a document (published in the press, set out in a court decision in a particular case containing similar circumstances, verified by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation) and existing independently of such fixation. The party that refers to it must prove the existence of the custom she refers to.”

As an example of the custom we can refer to the Official Rules for Interpretation of Trade Terms “Incoterms 2010” (International Commercial Terms) published by the International Chamber of Commerce. *Incoterms* are applied in business turnover when concluding foreign economic transactions and in court practice. Thus, reversing earlier decisions in the case, the Presidium of the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation in its Decision No. 14914/13 dated 22 April 2014, stated: “the courts have not taken into consideration that in order to optimize international trade turnover and coordinate relations regulated under civil law between entities in different jurisdictions and involved in foreign economic operations, certain international trade customs that regulate the relations between the parties within the framework of such integrated international trade relations have been established. The customs governing the relations among parties involved in global or international transportation and delivery of goods and the allocation of risks are systematized by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and published as the International Rules on the Interpretation

of Trade Terms (INCOTERMS) that are applied by the parties on the basis of autonomy of the will when they incorporate relevant customs into the contract as its terms.”

INCOTERMS have become an indispensable tool for lawyers, economists and managers providing legal support for international trade.

It is important to note that the EAEU Member States – Kyrgyzstan (since 20 December 1998), Armenia (since February 5, 2003), Russia (since August 22, 2012), Kazakhstan (November 30, 2015) are members of the *World Trade Organization, WTO* (<https://wto.ru/about-WTO/members/> ), and Belarus has observer status at the WTO.

Under Paragraph 4 of Article XVI of the Marrakech Agreement, “each Member shall ensure the conformity of its laws, regulations and administrative procedures with its obligations as provided in the annexed Agreements.” As noted by Prof. Galina K. Dmitrieva, this obligation “expresses the essence of *harmonization (convergence)* of the national law of participating states with the WTO law and the laws of each other. But the result of harmonization of any kind and in any form is the same: in the national law of different states emerge the norms that are close but not the same” (Дмитриева, 37-38).

The analysis of WTO Law (Кашкин, 10-59) and its impact on the regulation of economic activity in Russia (Дмитриева) was undertaken in modern legal literature. In particular, the basic rules (principles) of state regulation of economic activity under GATS have been determined (Ершова, 14-15), the influence of Russia’s participation in the WTO on sources of regulation of economic activity has been demonstrated. (Ершова, 19-25; 8).

Agreements within the WTO regulate foreign trade and other economic activities. Analysis of WTO Agreements suggests that they can be divided into the following categories (instruments):

- *defining general, essential and fundamental provisions for trade control and coordination:* General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the Agreement on Preshipment Inspection, the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement, the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, Agreement on Special Protective Measures, Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, etc.

- *regulating certain economic activities:* the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), etc.

In conclusion, we highlight that the increasing economic integration has become the most significant phenomenon of recent years, which has affected the regulation of economic activity of the EAEU Member States and led to the formation of the foundations of *supranational economic law*.

#### **IV. THE EAEU MEMBER STATES CONSTITUTIONS AND REGULATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

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Constitutional norms containing the principles of regulation of business and any other economic activity not prohibited by law, constitutional guarantees of their implementation and constitutional restrictions are of primary importance in the process of legal regulation.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation established the foundations of entrepreneurship in the country, enshrining the principle of freedom of economic (entrepreneurial) activity and equal protection of all forms of property, freedom of competition and restriction of monopolies, an integral economic space, etc. (Articles 8 and 34).

Similar provisions are contained in the constitutions of other EAEU Member States. Thus, according to Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, "the State guarantees equal opportunities to everyone for the free use of abilities and property for entrepreneurial and other economic activity not prohibited by law. The State regulates economic activities in the interests of the individual and society; ensures the direction and coordination of public and private economic activities for social goals."

Under Article 26 of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "its citizens may have in private ownership any legally acquired property. Everyone has the right to freedom of business, free use of his property for any legitimate business activity. Monopolistic activity is regulated and restricted by law, unfair competition is prohibited."

In accordance with Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "the basis of the economic system of the Republic of Armenia is formed by a social market economy based on private property, freedom of economic activity, free economic competition and aimed, through public policy, at general economic well-being and social justice."

According to article 42 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic "everyone has the right to own, use and dispose of their property and the results of their activities. Everyone has the right to economic freedom, the free use of his abilities and his property for any economic activity not prohibited by law."

#### **LEGISLATION IN THE SYSTEM OF NORMATIVE LEGAL REGULATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

*A normative legal act* means a written official document adopted (issued) in a certain form by the actor of a law-making process within its competence and jurisdiction and aimed at establishing, amending, clarifying, enacting, terminating or suspending legal rules containing generally binding provisions of permanent or temporary nature extending to an indefinite range of persons and suitable for multiple applications.

Kazakhstan has the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 2 April 2016 No. 480-V ZRK "On Legal Acts" that regulates public relations related to the procedure of development, presentation, discussion, acceptance, registration, introduction, modification, addition, termination, suspension and publication of legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

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In the Russian legal system, the draft law "On Normative Legal Acts in the Russian Federation" is still under consideration.

The scholars rightly note that "the main practical component of normative regulation is the formation of a unified and non-contradictory system ... of legislation, strict coherence of normative legal acts, improvement of legal quality of the law-making activity, organizational and resources support of implementation of legislative norms" (Хабриева & Тихомиров, 59-60).

Laws can be described as an external form of expression of the will of the State, or the "position" of the State in the field of economy and society as a whole. The obligation to apply the law is due to the fact that it reflects the objective need to regulate public relations (Керимов, 43).

It is important to take into account that in science the category "legislation" is sometimes understood as all sources of legal regulation, and not just laws (Андреев).

In the system of legislation of the EAEU Member States, there are codified and non-codified laws.

Under the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 6 April 2016 No. 480-V ZRK "On Legal Acts", a *code* is defined as a law that combines and systematizes the rules of law governing homogeneous most important social relations.

**Codified** normative acts in the EAEU Member States include: Civil Codes, Tax Codes, Land Codes, Labour Codes, Criminal Codes, Codes of Criminal Procedure, Codes of Civil Procedure, Codes of Arbitration Procedure, Procedural (Economic Procedural Code of the Republic of Belarus), Budgetary Codes, Codes of Administrative Offences, etc. Belarus has the Banking Code of the Republic of Belarus and the Procedural and Executive Code of the Republic of Belarus.

Obviously, Civil Codes are the key acts in the EAEU countries. They are usually presented as an "economic constitution," regulating all kinds of areas of life and civil turnover, property and personal non-property relations.

A huge array of regulations governing the economy provides for the justifiability of the idea of adopting the Commercial Code. A number of States, such as France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Japan and others, along with the civil code, have adopted and enforced commercial codes (codes of commercial relations, trade regulations). In 2015, the Entrepreneurial Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted. It should be noted that in the post-Soviet

area, the Economic Code (along with the Civil Code) has been successfully applied for the regulation of economic activity in Ukraine for a number of years. It is noteworthy that in countries where the Entrepreneurial Code has not been adopted, business relations are part of relations governed under civil law (also under the Civil Code).

It is safe to say that laws play a leading role in the legal regulation of economic activity. Under the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 6 April 2016 No. 480-V ZRK "On Legal Acts", a *law* is a normative legal act that regulates the most important social relations, establishes the fundamental principles and norms stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The system of legislative support of the economy has began to develop since the first years of transition of the EAEU states to the market economy. It should be noted that the system of market legislation is sufficiently covered in scientific (Бабищевич & Маньковский, Лаптев, Ершова) and educational (Ершова) literature of recent years.

Importantly, a certain structure of impact on economic relations that, for the purposes of our research, can be presented by laws grouped depending on regulated relationships (with examples of relevant legislative acts):

- *Laws regulating the general state of the market* (Federal Law No. 135-FZ dated 26 July 2006 "On Protection of Competition", Law of the Republic of Belarus dated 12 December 2013 No. 94-Z "On Counteracting Monopolistic Behaviour and Development of Competition", the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 116 dated July 22, 2011 "On Competition") or the state of certain types of the market (Federal laws: Federal Law No. 39-FZ dated 22 April 1996 "On the Securities Market", Federal Law No. 488-FZ dated 31 December 2014 "On Industrial Policy in the Russian Federation", Federal Law No. 35-FZ dated 26 March 2003 "On Electric Power Engineering", Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 231-Z dated 5 January 2015 "On Securities Market");

- *Laws regulating privatization of state and municipal property* (Federal Law No. 178-FZ dated 21 December 2001 "On privatization of state and municipal property", Law of the Republic of Belarus dated 19 January 1993 No. 2103-XII "On privatization of state property and transformation of state unitary enterprises into open joint-stock companies");

- *Laws establishing the legal status of economic entities* (Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 208-FZ dated 26 December 1995 "On Joint-Stock Companies", Federal Law dated 8 February 1998 No. 14-FZ "On Limited Liability Companies", Federal Law dated 14 November 2002 No. 61-FZ "On state and municipal unitary enterprises", Federal Law dated 3 December 2011 No. 380-FZ "On economic partnerships"; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 13

May 2003 No. 415 "On Joint-Stock Companies", Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 5 October 1995 No. 2486 "On Production Cooperative", Law of the Republic of Armenia dated 27 October 2001 No. LR-232 "On Joint-Stock Companies", Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 27 March 2003 No. 64 "On Joint-Stock Companies");

- *Laws regulating small and medium enterprises* ( Federal Law No. 209-FZ dated 24 July 2007 "On the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises in the Russian Federation", Law of the Republic of Belarus dated 1 July 2010 No. 148-Z "On Support of Small and Medium Enterprises", Law of the Republic of Armenia dated 28 December 2000 No. ZR-121 "On State Support for Small and Medium Enterprises" and Medium Entrepreneurship, Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 25 May 2007 No. 73 "On State Support of Small Business");

- *Laws establishing requirements for economic activity* (Federal Laws: Law No. 129-FZ dated 8 August 2001 "On State Registration of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs;" Law No. 99-FZ dated 4 May 2011 "On Licensing of Certain Activities;" Law No. 184-FZ dated 27 December 2002 "On Technical Regulation", Law No. 162-FZ dated 29 June 2015 "On Standardization in the Russian Federation;" Law No. 402-FZ dated 6 December 2011 "On Accounting;" Law No. 208-FZ dated 27 July 2010 "On Consolidated Financial Statements;" Law No. 89-FZ dated 24 June 1998 "On Waste of Production and Consumption;" Law No. 412-FZ dated 28 December 2013 "On Accreditation in the National Accreditation System;" Laws of the Republic of Belarus: Law No. 57-Z dated 12 July 2013 "On Accounting and Reporting;" Law No. 255-Z dated 10 May 1999 "On Pricing;" Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 183-VI ZRK dated 5 October 2018 "On Standardization", Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 195 dated 19 October 2013 "On the Licensing And Permitting System in the Kyrgyz Republic");

- *Laws governing bankruptcy relations* (Federal Law No. 127-FZ dated 26 October 2002 "On Insolvency (Bankruptcy)," Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 415-Z dated July 2012 "On Economic Insolvency (Bankruptcy)," Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 176-V FZR dated 7 March 2014 "On Rehabilitation and Bankruptcy," Law of the Republic of Armenia No. ZR-51 dated 22 January 2007 "On Bankruptcy," Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 74 dated 15 October 1997 "On Bankruptcy (Insolvency)");

- *Laws defining the procedure for self-regulation of entrepreneurial and professional activities* (Federal Laws: Law No. 315-FZ dated 1 December 2007 "On self-regulated organizations," Law No. 223-FZ dated 13 July 2015 "On Self-Regulatory Organizations in the Sphere of Financial Market...;" Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 390-V FZR dated 12 November 2015 " On Self-Regulation");

- ***Laws protecting the rights and legitimate interests of economic entities*** (Federal Acts: Law No. 294-FZ dated 26 December 2008 “On the Protection of the Rights of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs in Exercise of State Control (Supervision) and Municipal Control,” Law No. 193-FZ dated 27 July 2010 “On Alternative Procedure for Settlement of Disputes with Participation of the Mediator (Mediation Procedure),” Law No. 78-FZ dated 7 May 2013 “On Commissioners for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs in the Russian Federation,” Law No. 102-FZ dated 24 July 2002 “On Arbitration Courts in the Russian Federation;” Laws of the Republic of Belarus: Law No. 58-Z dated 12 July 2013 “On Mediation,” Law No. 301-Z dated 18 July 2011 “On Arbitration” Courts,” Law No. 279-Z dated 9 July 1999 “On the International Arbitration (Court);

- ***Laws regulating investment activities*** (Federal Law No. 39-FZ dated 25 February 1999 “On Investment Activities in the Russian Federation Carried out in the Form of Capital Investments;” Laws of the Republic of Belarus: Law No. 52-Z dated 17 July 2017 “On Investment Funds,” Law No. 53-Z dated 12 July 2013 “On Investments,” Law No. 63-Z dated 12 July 2013 “On Concessions,” Law of the Republic of Armenia No. ZR-245 dated 30 December 2010 “On Investment Funds”);

- ***Laws governing foreign economic activity.*** Notably, the aspects of relations regulated by the laws of this group are very similar. For example, Belarus has the Laws of the Republic of Belarus: No. 363-Z dated 11 May 2016 “On Export Control”, No. 346-Z dated 25 November 2004 “On Measures to Protect Economic Interests of the Republic of Belarus in Exercise of Foreign Trade in Goods,” No. 347-Z dated 25 November 2004 “On State Regulation of Foreign Trade Activities,” No. 129-Z dated 10 January 2014 On Customs Regulation in the Republic of Belarus.” For comparison: in Russia the effective laws (in part not contrary to international treaties) include: Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 173-FZ dated 10 December “On Currency Regulation and Currency Control,” Federal Law No. 164-FZ dated 8 December 2003 “On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of Foreign Trade Activities,” Federal Law No. 183-FZ dated 18 July 1999 “On Export Control.” We should also highlight the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 123-VI ZRK dated 26 December 2017 “On Customs Regulation in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 167-VI FZR dated 2 July 2018 “On Currency Regulation and Currency Control”, Law of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 52 dated 24 April 2019 “On Customs Regulation;”

- ***Laws regulating certain types of economic activities*** (Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 38-FZ dated 13 March 2006 “On Advertising,” Federal Law No. 171-FZ dated 22 November 1995 “On State Regulation of the Production and Circulation of Ethyl Alcohol, Alcohol and Alcohol-Containing

Products and on the Restriction of Consumption (Drinking) of Alcoholic Products," Federal Law No. 381-FZ dated 28 December 2009 "On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of Trade Activities in the Russian Federation," Federal Law No. 307-FZ dated 30 December 2008 "On Auditing Activity," Federal Law No. 395-1 dated 2 December 1990 "On Banks and Banking Activities," Federal Law No. 7-FZ "On Clearing and Clearing Activity," Federal Law No. 4015-1 dated 7 February 2011 "On Organization of Insurance Business in the Russian Federation," Federal Law No. 61-FZ dated 12 April 2010 "On Circulation of Medical Products," Federal Law No. 127-FZ dated 23 August 1996 "On Science and State Scientific and Technical Policy," Federal Law No. 135-FZ dated 29 July 1998 "On Evaluation Activity;" Laws of the Republic of Belarus: Law No. 56-Z dated 12 July 2013 "On Audit Activity," Law No. 425-Z dated 10 July 2012 "On State Innovation Policy and Innovation Activity," Law No. 225-Z dated 10 May 2007 "On Advertising"; Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Law No. 133-VI FZR dated 10 January 2018 "On Evaluation Activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan," Law No. 62-VI dated 6 May 2017 "On Collection Activity," Law No. 212-VI FZR dated 3 January 2019 "On Cinematography," Law No. 508 dated 19 December 2003 508 "On Advertising;" Laws of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 155 dated 24 December 1998 « On Advertising," Law No. 34 dated 25 March 1999 "On Tourism");

- *Laws regulating certain types of economic obligations* (Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 44-FZ dated 5 April 2013 "On the Contract System in the Purchase of Goods, Works, Services for State and Municipal Needs," Federal Law No. 115-FZ dated 21 July 2005 "On Concession Agreements;" Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 419-Z dated 13 July 2012 "On public procurement of goods (works, services)," Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 236-VI ZRK dated 18 March 2019 "On Defense Industry and State Defense Order").

- *Laws defining specific and special regimes for the implementation of economic activities* (Federal Constitutional Laws: Federal Constitutional Law No. 1-FKZ dated 30 January 2002 "On Martial Law," Federal Constitutional Law No. 3-FKZ dated 30 May 2001 "On the State of Emergency;" Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 392-FZ dated 3 December 2011 "On Territorial Development Zones in the Russian Federation...," Federal Law 116-FZ dated 22 July 2011 "On Special Economic Zones in the Russian Federation," Federal Law No. 244-FZ dated 28 September 2010 No. 244-FZ "On the Skolkovo Innovation Center," Federal Law No. 473-FZ dated 29 December 2014 "On Territories of Advancing Socio-Economic Development in the Russian Federation;" Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 213-Z dated 7 December 1998 "On Free Economic Zones," Law of the Republic

of Kazakhstan No. 242-VI ZRK dated 3 April 2019 "On Special Economic and Industrial Zones").

**328** Even not exhaustive enumeration of legislation regulating economic activity (and we did not set ourselves the goal of drafting an absolutely exhaustive list of such laws) makes it possible to conclude that differentiation of legislation represents the main tendency in its development. At the same time, the recognition of this trend does not refute, but, on the contrary, implies strengthening of the fundamental principles of the economy regulation, which is the task of the general legislation, including codified legislation.

Moreover, and this is evident from the list given above, in recent years there has been a trend in developing a legislation defining special and exclusive economic regimes.

Particular emphasis should be made on legislative acts creating the legal foundations of the *digital economy* (Блажеев & Еропова). As examples, we will cite the Federal Laws: Federal Law No. 259-FZ dated 02 August 2019 "On Raising Investments Using Investment Platforms ...," Federal Law No. 123-FZ dated 24 April 2020 "On Conducting an Experiment on Establishing Special Regulation in order to Create the Necessary Conditions for the Development and Implementation of Artificial Intelligence Technologies in the Constituent Entity of the Russian Federation — the Federal City of Moscow and amendments to articles 6 and 10 of the Federal Law "On Personal Data.""

To conclude the examination of the issue legal regulation of the economy, we will note *negative trends* associated with instability, excessive dynamism of legislative changes, the lack of systematic adoption and modification of normative legal acts, poor elaboration of draft laws, which we deem to be largely due to the lack of a single concept of the legal regulation of economic activity. These problems have been investigated in the scientific literature (Габов, Лаптев). Thus, Evgeniy P. Gubin pointed out that legislation to large extent is formed unsystematically, which is predetermined by the absence of a clear legal policy, the uncertainty of tasks and ways of solving them also in the area of freedom of enterprise and business.

**REGIONAL LEGISLATION IS A DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF FEDERAL STATES.**  
As part of the EAEU, Russia is the only state with a federal form of government. All other Member States of the Union are unitary States.

In this regard, in addition to the federal legislation in the Russian legal system, *legal acts of constituent entities of the Russian Federation have a role to play in relation to all kinds of areas of economic activity.*

These acts, in particular, regulate regional support for small and medi-

um-sized businesses (Law of the Murmansk Region No. 977-01-ZMO dated 27 May 2008 "On Promotion of Development and State Support for Small and Medium Business in Murmansk Region," Law of Sakhalin Region No. 9-ZO dated 16 February 2009 "On Support and Development of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship in Sakhalin Region"), public-private partnership (Law of the Republic of Tatarstan No. 50-ZRT dated 1 August 2011 "On Public-Private Partnership in the Republic of Tatarstan"), trade (Law of the city of Moscow No. 29 dated 9 December 1998 "On Trade Activity in the City of Moscow," Law of the Samara Region No. 76-GD dated 5 July 2010 "On State Regulation of Trade Activity on Territory of the Samara Region"), tourism (Law of the Kaliningrad Region No. 354 dated 9 January 2004 "On State Support for the Development of Tourist and Recreational Sphere in the Territory of Kaliningrad Region," Law of the Republic of Crimea No. 51-ZRK dated 14 August 2014 "On Tourist Activity in the Republic of Crimea") and other important fields of public relations.

#### BY-LAW (SUBORDINATE) NORMATIVE REGULATION

Economic and other social relations cannot be regulated solely by laws. Accordingly, the analysis of the legal system of the EAEU states would be incomplete without recourse to such legal acts as by-laws (regulations and subordinate legislation). For the purpose of law enforcement, Presidents, Governments and other bodies of executive power within their jurisdiction apply bylaws (regulations) to supplement legislative regulation and ensure more detailed regulation of economic activity.

Under Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 480-V ZRK dated 6 April 2016 "*On Legal Acts*," *by-laws (regulations)* mean other, not legislative acts, regulations issued on the basis of and (or) pursuant to and/or for further implementation of legislative and other superior in hierarchy normative legal acts;

By-laws (delegated, subordinate legislation) determine the specifics of the legal status of economic entities, peculiarities of the order of their economic activity, the legal regime of specific objects of economic activity and certain aspects of the economy of States. Regulations of ministries, federal services, state committees determine administrative provisions, administrative procedures, deal with specific (sometimes very urgent) tasks within the jurisdiction of the named authorities, *etc.* As an example, we highlight Resolution of the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade of the Republic of Belarus No. 30 dated 15 April 2020 "On Regulation of Prices for Essential Goods,"

This category of sources of law characterizes the policy of Heads of States and the economic course of the Government. A relatively simple (as compared to laws) mechanisms of by-laws' adoption empowered them with the

opportunity to quickly adjust the law and order taking into account the situation in the economy, the needs of the society and other significant factors (financial crises, natural disasters, market developments, *etc.*).

The EAEU Member States have developed their own system of by-law regulation. As a rule, (Лаптев, 144) by-laws and regulations are divided into:

- 1) Adopted *pursuant to the provisions of the laws*;
- 2) Adopted by state bodies *within their competence*: discretionary powers (for example, Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 221 dated 28 February 1995 "On Measures to Harmonize State Regulation of Prices (Tariffs)," Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 615 dated 13 October 2006 "On Appraisal Activities in the Republic of Belarus").

Edicts and Decrees of the President occupy a special place among the regulatory acts of the Republic of Belarus. As an example, we highlight Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 7 dated 23 November 2017 "On the Development of Entrepreneurship," Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 6 dated 7 May 2012 "On Stimulation of Entrepreneurial Activity in the Territory of Medium, Small Urban Settlements, Rural Areas," Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 143 dated 24 April 2020 "On Support of Economy," etc.

The doctrine (Лаптев, 144) also proposes the division of by-laws (regulations) into: **basic**, derivative, auxiliary and supplementary. The basic by-laws are of certain legal significance. Derivative acts are acts approved by other normative acts (regulations) (e.g. rules, regulations, instructions, and provisions). Auxiliary acts explain, modify and revoke other normative legal acts. Supplementary acts specify the provisions of the basic act.

In conclusion, we will designate the trend that represents standardization of the legal regulation of certain types and areas of economic activity (audit, evaluation, accounting, *etc.*) on the terms of harmonization of Russian standards with international ones. Thus, the trend of standardization is manifested in the field of audit: Federal Law No. 307-FZ dated 30 December 2008 "On Audit Activity" (Art. 7) provides for the implementation of audit activities in accordance with international standards, the application of which is mandatory. In the Russian Federation International Standards on Auditing (ISA) are applied. They have been developed by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) that consists of the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) (<http://www.iaasb.org>).

#### JURISPRUDENCE (CASE LAW)

On the issue of recognition of jurisprudence or judicial acts (precedents) as a source of law, scholars have divided into two factions, the views of which

vary from rejection to qualification as an independent category (Лаптев, 234-237). We agree with Prof. Yuriy K. Tolstoy who points at the inadmissibility of considering specific decisions of the courts as the source of law and at the same time that “only multiple judicial precedents can be recognized as the source of law for a certain category of cases” (Толстой, 479).

The actual functioning of the legal systems of the EAEU Member States verifies inevitable existence of such a source of law as *jurisprudence* that is capable of interpreting legislation and developing common approaches to the application of laws.

Obviously, a particular judicial precedent is not a source of law (although, for example, under Фкншду 170 of the Arbitration Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, reference to the decisions of the Presidium of the Supreme Court is allowed in the motivation part of the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation). The source of law is the legal position developed by the judicial system and used in the consideration of disputes.

Acts of the Constitutional Courts occupy a special place, since the laws or their separate provisions declared unconstitutional are invalid, unenforceable and must be reviewed in compliance with the established procedure. This provision proves the normative force of acts of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation capable of changing the existing legal order.

#### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM OF THE EAEU MEMBER STATES

*Large associations of entrepreneurs play a significant role in the legal system in the countries that have united and formed the Eurasian Economic Union. For example, in Russia there are:*

*Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP)* (<https://pcpp.pf>) is a Russian-wide organization representing business interests both in Russia and internationally. RSPP unites thousands of major Russian companies representing industrial, scientific, financial and commercial organizations in all regions of Russia;

*All-Russian public organization of small and medium enterprises "OPORA ROSSIИ [SUPPORT OF RUSSIA]"* (<https://opora.ru>) is a platform for effective professional dialogue between owners and managers of small and medium enterprises and representatives of federal executive bodies, regional authorities and municipalities, controlling and supervising bodies, infrastructure of support for small and medium enterprises, as well as representatives of the expert community;

*The All-Russian Non-Governmental Organization "Delovaya Rossiya" [Business Russia]* (<https://deloros.ru>), representing the interests of private

non-resource companies that are seeking leading positions in their industries.

**332** The National Chamber of Entrepreneurs has been established in Kazakhstan. Under the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 129-V dated 4 July 2013 “On the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan,” the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs is an organization in the form of a union of business entities established in order to provide favorable legal, economic and social conditions for the implementation of the entrepreneurial initiative and development of mutually beneficial cooperation between the business community and public authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as stimulation and support of associations of entrepreneurs and (or) legal entities in the form of an association (union).

In all EAEU Member States, Russia (<https://tpprf.ru/ru>), Kazakhstan (<https://delorus.ru>), Belarus (<https://www.cci.by>), Kyrgyzstan (<http://cci.kg>), Armenia (<https://armcci.am>) have operating Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The legal status and powers of these organizations are determined by the relevant laws.

Thus, under Law of the Russian Federation No. 5340-1 dated 7 July 1993 “On Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Russian Federation,” the Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a non-governmental non-profit organization established in the organizational and legal form of the union to represent and protect the legitimate interests of its members and to facilitate entrepreneurship, economic and foreign trade activities, implementation of other purposes and objectives provided for by this law.

Under Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 208-Z dated 16 June 2003 “On Chamber of Commerce and Industry”, a Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a voluntary association of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs. Such an association is a non-governmental non-profit organization established to promote entrepreneurial activities in the Republic of Belarus, integration of its economy into the world economic system, creation of favorable conditions for strengthening of foreign economic relations of business entities with foreign partners.

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# Legal nature of the Eurasian integration scheme

**SUMMARY:** I. Introduction II. Legal regulation of integration processes involving the USSR III. Eurasian legal model of integration: evolution in the XX-XXI century IV. The Eurasian Economic Union as an international intergovernmental organization of integration type V. Eurasian integration law: main characteristics VI. Bibliography

## I. INTRODUCTION

Integration processes occurring in the modern world have different dimensions: political, economic, social, legal, spatial, etc. Each of the components of integration is important for understanding this social phenomenon as a whole; however, they have a relatively independent value and therefore can be the subject of special scientific analysis. International legal regulation of integration is not only one of the main elements that give an idea of the subject, but also the most important condition for the functioning of the integration phenomenon. Without the law, integration can be anything: a project, hypothesis, program, Declaration, etc., but the legal form ensures the achievement of specific goals of the social project and the desired results. Accordingly, the study of the legal aspects of various integration projects allows us to implement both practical and theoretical tasks.

Inter-state integration is a particular expression of a broader unifying trend, which is manifested most often at the universal and regional levels, but now we can see the emergence of new integration formats. Mega-projects are emerging that include States located on different continents and regions (APEC), while sub-regional centers of cooperation are being formed within individual regions, seeking to find new forms and mechanisms. Finally, individual States put forward proposals similar to the Chinese “One belt, one road initiative”, aimed at promoting a new model of international cooperation and development based on China’s participation in strengthening existing regional bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and structures of interaction. According to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin,

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<sup>1</sup> Scientific Supervisor of the Institute of the Legislation and Comparative Law under the Government of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Law, Professor, Honored worker of Science of the Russian Federation.

this initiative is designed to strengthen the creative cooperation of the States of Eurasia, to ensure harmonious and sustainable economic development and economic growth throughout the Eurasian space. It echoes the Russian idea of creating a large Eurasian partnership, which precisely implies “integration of integrations”, that is, close integration of various bilateral and multilateral integration processes in Eurasia<sup>2</sup>.

It is clear that the implementation of these initiatives should be based on international legal regulators, both interstate and with the participation of international integration organizations located in the respective regions.

The subject of this section is defined as the “Eurasian integration scheme”, a concept that can not be considered sufficiently defined. First, the term “Eurasia “and its derivatives” Eurasian”, “Eurasian integration”, etc., have different meanings. The scholars use two terms “Greater Eurasia” and “Lesser Eurasia”. The first refers to the entire vast continent-Eurasia, covering countries and territories spread out in both Europe and Asia. The second term is used in a narrower sense and means the space that includes the States of the former USSR, or rather the part of them that is covered by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In addition, some CIS Member States in 2014 established a new interstate organization - the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which has recently been associated with the expression “Eurasian integration”. Naturally, in this paper, “Eurasian integration” will be identified with this modern integration phenomenon.

In view of the fact that the process of formation of the Eurasian model of economic integration stretched for almost two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this paper will consider the international legal forms of cooperation between States in the post-Soviet space that preceded the creation of the EEU. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the traditions characteristic of the legal development of the USSR, since its member States in the recent past were parts of a single State - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and they could not but preserve the continuity of certain legal principles, images of Soviet law. This fully applies to the experience of international legal regulation of relations between the USSR and its close States of the world socialist system. Of course, the political-legal and ideological stereotypes of the Soviet socialist experience are left in the past, but at least a brief overview is necessary for understanding the modern legal ideology of Eurasian integration.

The main attention is paid to the analysis of the features of the concept of the “Law of Eurasian integration” and its implementation in the activities of the EEU, its bodies and Member States.

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**2** See: Vladimir Putin Speech at the opening ceremony of the working program of the second International forum “One belt, one road»//<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60378>

## II. LEGAL REGULATION OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES INVOLVING THE USSR

In 1917, as a result of the revolution, the Russian Empire ceased to exist on the political map of the world. In its place, a number of States were formed, in 1922 the Federation - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)-. Before World War II, the USSR participated in bilateral and multilateral relations to restore and strengthen its economy and state system. The Soviet Union was invited to the League of Nations in 1934, from which it was excluded in 1939.

After the end of the Second World War, in the victory over the aggressors during which the USSR made a decisive contribution, the United Nations Organization (UN) was created. The USSR took an active part in the development of the UN Charter and the creation of this universal international organization. The UN Charter has made an important contribution to the progressive development of international law, securing the foundations of the postwar international relations such as sovereign equality of States, non-use of force and threat of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, equality and self-determination of peoples, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and conscientious implementation of international obligations. Although the UN Charter did not provide for any special provisions on the development of integration between States, it aimed to implement international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature. The UN Charter allowed for the existence of regional agreements or organizations, however, it established the legal conditions for their functioning in only one special area – on issues of maintaining international peace and security, suitable for regional actions. On other issues of international relations (economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, etc.), States retained the ability to freely determine the international legal forms of their organization, under the obvious condition of compatibility of their activities with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Even during the Second World War, a movement for the unification of Europe began to form in Western Europe, which soon after its end received various forms of expression, but the post-war confrontation between Eastern and Western Europe led to the division of the unifying European movement into two directions - Eastern and Western-.

In Western Europe, the processes of political and economic unification begin almost simultaneously. In particular, in 1947, France and Great Britain signed the Duncerne Treaty of Union and mutual assistance, which was intended to ensure their safety from the threat from Germany. A little later, in 1948, the Western European Union (WES) was established, providing for

cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and defense spheres. In 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington. In the same year, 1949 in response to the decisions of the Hague European Congress, the Charter of the Council of Europe was signed to deal with a wide range of issues, with the exception of defense issues.

The first regional economic organization was the Organization for European economic cooperation (ECO), established in 1948 to assist in the implementation of the Marshall Plan to restore the economies of Western Europe that were damaged during the Second World War. The first step on the path of Western European economic integration was the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 by six States (France, Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries). In 1957, the European Economic Community and Euratom were established in Rome by the same countries.

After the end of the Second World War the USSR and some East European countries established the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in 1949, which sought to develop economic cooperation. Military-political cooperation between the Eastern European States resulted in the creation of the Warsaw Pact Organization (WPO) in 1955. Both organizations ceased to exist in 1991. Despite the relatively short period of existence of international organizations of socialist countries by historical standards, they left their mark on the history of international law. Thus, the Soviet doctrine expressed the idea of the existence, along with the general democratic model of the global international system, of a socialist conceptual model of the global international system, which was based on the principle of socialist internationalism, which, according to Professor G. I. Tunkin, expressed fraternal cooperation and friendly mutual assistance<sup>3</sup>. The study of COMECON activity allowed Soviet scientists to propose the concept of "the Law of socialist economic integration"<sup>4</sup>, which was based on the recognition of the crucial role of the sovereignty of the Member States of this organization and the generally recognized principles and norms of international law. Despite the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political, legal and ideological stereotypes of the Soviet socialist experience have been left in the past, their mention in the historical context is necessary for understanding the modern legal ideology of Eurasian integration. Moreover, some agreements concluded by COMECON Member States on economic activities and certain issues of legal cooperation remain in effect to this day.

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**3** See: Tunkin G. I. Law and force in the international system. M., 1983, P. 110.

**4** See: Velyaminov G. M. Socialist integration and international law. M. 1982, p. 7-24.

### III. EURASIAN LEGAL MODEL OF INTEGRATION: EVOLUTION IN THE XX-XXI CENTURY

After the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, a vector of further geopolitical development was identified among its former republics. Thus, the Baltic republics have declared their desire to integrate into Western military-political and economic structures and have fully implemented it over the past period. The remaining part of the republics at the end of 1991 united in a new interstate association - the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)<sup>5</sup>, which by its legal nature closely resembles a traditional international inter-governmental organization (IGO), although its clear definition of international legal status is not recorded in the constituent or other documents<sup>6</sup>.

In the constituent acts of the CIS, the idea of integration of the former Soviet Republics is expressed rather weakly. In the Agreement on the establishment of the CIS, the participating States committed themselves to developing equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between their peoples and States in various fields (politics, culture, education, etc.), including in the economic sphere, by concluding separate agreements. The CIS Charter specified economic cooperation as one of the goals, and the areas of joint activity of the member States indicated cooperation in the formation and development of a common economic space, Pan-European and Eurasian markets, and customs policy<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the CIS did not set the task of Eurasian integration, it had to contribute through cooperation to various forms of economic integration of States (the common economic space and the Eurasian market). After twenty-nine years, this task of cooperation between the CIS Member States can be considered solved in the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), but not completely.

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**5** The CIS was established on December 9, 1991 by the heads of the three Soviet republics-Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine-by signing an Agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was later joined by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, Georgia (withdrew from the CIS in 2009). In 2018, Ukraine closed its representative offices in the headquarters of the CIS, but did not submit an official statement of withdrawal// See: The Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of independent States//the Russian newspaper, 19 December 1991 r./<https://rg.ru/1991/12/19/sng-site-dok.html>

**6** Article 1 of the Agreement on the creation of the CIS in 1991 states the formation of the CIS, but does not say anything about its legal nature. In the CIS Charter of 1993, article 1 states that "the Commonwealth is based on the principles of sovereign equality of all its members", which indirectly, apparently, indicates its identity with other IGO based on this principle. It is further clarified that "the Commonwealth is not a State and does not have supranational powers", which indicates that the new interstate entity is not a Federation and can not be considered as a supranational international organization like the European Communities that existed at that time. The Republics of the former Soviet Union had to go their own difficult way to supranational international organization. They try to perceive the idea of integration, not similar to the Western European one. The Charter of the CIS, see: International law in force. In 3 volumes. Comp. Yu. M. Kolosov and E. S. Krivchikova. Vol. 1.- Moscow, 1996, pp. 719-730.

**7** See: Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)// <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/1903017>

Several agreements concluded between the CIS States were intended to promote the development of integration processes between them. So, the basis of formation and functioning of the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation was launched on 6 January 1995, the Agreement on the Customs Union between the States. On January 20 of the same year, the Republic of Kazakhstan joined this Agreement. In 1996, the Kyrgyz Republic joined this Agreement, the Republic of Tajikistan did the same in 1999. In the future, the legal framework of the Customs Union was supplemented by such agreements as the Agreement on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian fields (1996), the Agreement on the Customs Union and the Common economic space (1999), and a number of others. In 2000 the international legal and institutional framework of the Customs Union was strengthened by signing the Treaty establishing the Eurasian economic community (EurEcCom), an international organization aimed at effectively promoting the process of formation of economic community by the member States of the Customs Union and the Common economic space, as well as the implementation of other goals and objectives defined in the previously mentioned agreements on the Customs Union, the Treaty on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian fields, the Treaty on the Customs Union and the Common economic space, in accordance with the stages outlined in these documents.

The name of the new international organization used the concept of "community" as a determinant, which suggested that there were semantic parallels with the "European communities", the forerunners of the current European Union (EU). A significant characteristic of the European communities was recognized as a supranational character, manifested both in their institutional basis (supranational bodies, supranational powers) and in the international legal framework (the formation of the original supranational legal system – "Community law").

However, nothing like this could be said about the EurEcCom, which by its institutional and legal characteristics did not stand out among other international intergovernmental organizations, which may have been explained by the fact that it did not set itself the task of forming any integration community, but pursued a more modest "promotion of the process of forming the Customs Union and the Common economic space". This circumstance predetermined to a certain extent its temporary interim nature, which was confirmed in the decision taken at the meeting of the Interstate Council (supreme body of the Community) in Minsk on October 10, 2014, when the heads of member States (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) decided to terminate the Eurasian economic communis-

ty in connection with the beginning of the functioning of the EEU on January 1, 2015<sup>8</sup>.

The Treaty establishing a single customs territory and formation of Customs Union of 6 October 2007 was a constituent international legal act stipulates the principles of interaction of the States parties (the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan) in the process of formation of the customs Union<sup>9</sup>. On the same day the Agreement on the Customs Union Commission was signed, which established a single permanent regulatory body of the Customs Union. The creation of this body was an important milestone in the development of the institutional structure of the Customs Union (CU), since the order of its formation and the powers assigned to it could already be recognized as having a supranational character. Subsequently, a number of international agreements were adopted that form the international legal basis of the Customs Union. In particular, the package of agreements was signed on January 25, 2008 (for example, the Agreement on unified customs tariff regulation, etc.). On November 27, 2009, the CU participants signed the agreement "On the Customs Code of the Customs Union".

On December 9, 2010, the three CU Member States signed 17 documents on the creation of the Common economic space (CES), among which was the action Plan for 2010-2011 for the formation of the CES of the three States, which provided for the development and signing of twenty international agreements for the creation of the CES within two years, by January 1, 2012. The entire package of documents forming the CES was ratified by the parties and entered into force for the Member States on January 1, 2012. Finally, on November 18, 2011, three CU Member States signed an Agreement on the Eurasian economic Commission (EEC), which replaced the CU Commission. The EEC was established as a single permanent regulatory body of the CU and CES. Its main tasks are to ensure the conditions for the functioning and development of the CU and CES, as well as to develop proposals in the field of economic integration within these entities. The Commission's decisions were part of the legal framework of the CU and the CES. Such decisions were applied directly in the territories of the participating States.

On the same day, the presidents of the CU and CES Member States signed a document that opens the next stage of integration. We are talking about the Declaration on Eurasian economic integration, which announced the transition from January 1, 2012 to the next stage of integration construction – the Common economic Space (CES), based on the rules and principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and open at any stage of its

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<sup>8</sup> See: The Decision on termination of the Eurasian economic community// [www.evrazes.com/news/view/958](http://www.evrazes.com/news/view/958)

<sup>9</sup> The Agreement on the creation of a single customs territory and the formation of the customs Union dated October 6, 2007 was ratified by Federal law No. 187-FZ of 27.10.2008..2008. No. 44. Article 4993.

formation for other States to join. The final goal of this stage is to create the Eurasian economic Union (EEU) by 2015. Thus, the transition period to a new interstate Union, and thus to a new stage of Eurasian integration, was precisely defined, although not in the treaty, but in a declarative document, which indicates the political nature of the obligation assumed by the participating States.

We should focus on the institutional aspect of the current situation in the EurAsEC. The use by Member States of the principle of “multi-level and multi-speed integration” has led to the fact that out of the five Member States of the EurAsEC, only three Member States whose economies were prepared for integration into the Customs Union and the creation of a Single economic space (SES) have become members of the CU and CES. The concepts of “Customs Union” and “Common economic space”, formulated in international agreements adopted within the framework of the EurEcCom, had an economic meaning, implying generally recognized stages or forms of market economic integration of national economies of the uniting States (customs Union, common market, etc.). In the international legal sense, such an interstate economic association can be considered as a specific international legal regime based on an international treaty (or a group of international treaties) whose goals are achieved by complying with international obligations assumed by their member States. The specificity of such an international legal regime is that its participants agree to use specific methods of implementing their international obligations, the purpose of which is to bring together the national legislation of the participating States by means of unification and harmonization in the areas regulated by these international agreements.

To manage integration processes and functioning of the CU and CES within the EurEcCom was established special bodies – the Eurasian economic Commission and the Interstate Council of the CU and SES (at the level of heads of State and heads of Governments of the CU and the CES), which after the beginning of the SES was renamed the Supreme Eurasian economic Council, understood as the EurEcCom Interstate Council (the supreme body of the CU) at the level of heads of State and heads of Government. This indicates that the organizational and legal structure of the EurEcCom at that time acquired a hybrid character. In fact, the EurEcCom, as a traditional IGO, maintained its organizational and legal structure and continued to function normally. At the same time, there was some organizational and legal separation of the CU and the CES, since the EEC increasingly acquired the features of not just an international body of the IGO, but a mini-international organization that is not formally dependent on the EurEcCom. According to the agreement on the EEC, the latter became a single permanent regulatory body of the CU and the CES. The analysis of the EEC's powers (the ri-

ght to conclude international treaties, etc.) gave every reason to assume that it had signs of international legal personality, which is usually not typical for bodies of international organizations. It is obvious that such an “institutional and legal anomaly” was formed as a result of the peculiarities of the integration process in the EurEcCom. it was temporary until the issue of choosing a new international legal model for Eurasian integration was resolved<sup>10</sup>.

#### **IV. THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION AS AN INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION OF INTEGRATION TYPE**

On May 29, 2014, at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Astana (Kazakhstan), the leaders of the three States— V. Putin (President of Russia), A. Lukashenko (President of the Republic of Belarus) and N. Nazarbayev (President of Kazakhstan) signed the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which entered into force on January 1, 2015. The agreement on Armenia's accession to the EEU was signed on October 10, 2014 in Minsk (Belarus), which actually became a member of the EEU on January 1, 2015.. On December 23 of the same year, Kyrgyzstan signed a similar agreement in Moscow, on August 12, 2015. The agreement on Kyrgyzstan's accession to the EEU has entered into force. Thus, 5 former Soviet republics, now independent States, are currently members of the EEU<sup>11</sup>.

The international legal concept of Eurasian economic integration, as articulated in the founding Treaty of the EEU, synthesized previous experience of using the model of inter-state market integration (customs Union, integration in economic and humanitarian spheres, the common economic space, the economic community, single customs territory). The Treaty establishing the EEU proclaims ensuring the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, conducting a coordinated, or unified policy in the sectors of the economy defined in this Treaty and in international agreements concluded within the framework of the Union established on its basis.

On the basis of the Treaty establishing the Eurasian economic Union was formed, which is an international organization of regional economic integration with international legal personality<sup>12</sup>. The EEU pursues economic goals, both internal and external. They provide for the creation of conditions for

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**10** Kapustin A.Ya. Treaty on the Eurasian economic Union - a new page of legal development of the Eurasian integration// Journal of Russian law.2014, no. 12 (216), pp. 98-107.

**11** Treaty on the Eurasian economic Union, see: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/420205962>

**12** The concept of “regional economic integration organization” is found in international legal acts. For example, article 1 of the 1985 Vienna Convention for the protection of the ozone layer defines a “regional economic integration organization” as an organization formed by the sovereign States of a given region that is competent in matters governed by this Convention and its protocols and is duly authorized, in accordance with its internal procedures, to sign, ratify, accept, approve or accede to the relevant documents.

the stable development of the economies of the Member States in order to improve the living standards of their population; the desire to form a single market for goods, services, capital and labor resources; comprehensive modernization, cooperation and increasing the competitiveness of national economies in the global economy. At the same time, the Member States have committed themselves to create favorable conditions for the implementation of the EEU's functions and to refrain from measures that could jeopardize the achievement of the goals of this international organization.

The basic principles of functioning of the EEU show that this international organization is based on respect for the sovereignty of the Member States and a combination of compliance with the most important principles of general international law with the principles of market economy and market integration. Thus, the EEU builds its activities on the following principles: respect for generally recognized principles of international law, including the principles of sovereign equality of Member States and their territorial integrity; respect for the peculiarities of the political structure of Member States; ensuring mutually beneficial cooperation, equality and consideration of the national interests of the Parties; compliance with the principles of market economy and fair competition; functioning of the customs Union without exceptions and restrictions after the end of transition periods.

The Treaty establishing the EEU reproduced the experience of building institutional systems of interstate integration associations in other regions of the world, which are characterized by an organizational and legal structure, including the following bodies: the highest body functioning at the level of heads of state; an intergovernmental body; a permanent regulatory body, if provided for by the constituent act, with supranational powers; expert, advisory and scientific advisory committees and commissions, as well as other subsidiary structures; a dispute resolution body with specific competence and acting either on the basis of a special treaty or other international legal act, or on the basis of a constituent international Treaty. It established an extensive system of bodies aimed at achieving goals, including: the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (participation of heads of Member States); the Eurasian intergovernmental Council (participation of heads of government); The Eurasian economic Commission, which is the permanent regulatory body of the Union and the Court of the Eurasian economic Union, whose main function is to ensure uniform application by Member States of the constituent Treaty, international treaties within the Union and the Commission's decisions. The basic principles of functioning of the EEU show that this international organization is based on respect for the sovereignty of the Member States and a combination of compliance with the most important principles of general international law with the principles of

market economy and market integration. Thus, the EEU builds its activities on the following principles: respect for generally recognized principles of international law, including the principles of sovereign equality of Member States and their territorial integrity; respect for the peculiarities of the political structure of Member States; ensuring mutually beneficial cooperation, equality and consideration of the national interests of the Parties; compliance with the principles of market economy and fair competition; functioning of the customs Union without exceptions and restrictions after the end of transition periods.

Unlike some other interstate integration associations, the institutional structure of the EEU does not include a parliamentary or inter-parliamentary body, which is often regarded as a supranational structure in nature. Depending on the order of formation (by sending representatives or delegations of national parliaments or elected by the population of the Member States of the integration association), it will be either an inter-parliamentary cooperation body (association of national parliaments), or a supranational body representing the interests of the peoples of the Member States of the integration association. In any case, it is a question of the future for the EEU. The reason why the founding States did not create such a body is that the EEU was designed as an exclusively international economic organization without any hint of political functions.

The key supranational body of the Eurasian economic integration and the EEU, respectively, is the Eurasian Economic Commission. It provides conditions for the functioning and development of the EEU, as well as the development of proposals in the field of economic integration. The Commission consists of a Council and a Board. The Board of the Commission provides general regulation of integration processes, as well as general management of the Commission's activities. The Board of the Commission consists of one representative from each Member State, who is the Deputy head of government and has the necessary powers in accordance with the legislation of his State. The Board of the Commission is the Executive body of the Commission. It consists of members of the Board, one of whom is its Chairman. The Board of the Commission is formed from representatives of Member States based on the principle of equal representation of Member States. The Board of the Commission manages the departments of the Commission. A member of the Board of the Commission must be a national of the Member State to which it is represented.

The Commission within its powers takes decisions, having legal character and binding on the Member States orders, which are administrative in nature, and also can take non-binding recommendations. Decisions of the Commission are included in the Law of the Union and are subject to direct

application in the territories of the Member States. Decisions, directives and recommendations are adopted by the Board of the Commission and the Commission Board within the powers established by the Treaty and international treaties within the Union and in accordance with the Treaty establishing EEU and Regulations of the Commission.

The Court of the EEU as a constantly functioning body combines public and private legal functions, which plays a huge role for the development of Eurasian integration and the functioning of the common market, which is largely based on the actions and efforts of economic entities. The purpose of the Court's activity is to ensure, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty establishing EEU (Treaty), uniform application by the Member States and bodies of the Union the Treaty, international agreements within the EEU, international agreements of the EEU with a third party and decisions of the EEU bodies. The Court is composed of two judges from each Member State. The term of office of a judge is nine years.

The Court considers disputes arising on the implementation of the Treaty, international agreements within the EEU and (or) decisions of the EEU bodies, either at the request of a Member State, or at the request of an economic entity, which means a legal entity registered in accordance with the legislation of a Member State or a third state, or an individual registered as an individual entrepreneur in accordance with the legislation of a Member State or a third State. The Court at the request of a Member State or on the EEU provides an explanation of the provisions of the Treaty, international agreements within the EEU and decisions of the organs of EEU, as well as the explanation at the request of employees and officials of the EEU and of the Court, the provisions of the Treaty, international agreements within the EEU and decisions of the EEU bodies related to labour relations.

The EEU Member States may refer to the jurisdiction of the Court other disputes, the resolution of which is expressly provided by the Treaty, international agreements within the Union, international agreements of the Union with a third party or other international agreements between the Member States. A dispute is not admissible by the Court without prior reference to the applicant Member State or the Commission to resolve the issue in the pretrial order, by consultation, negotiation or other means provided by the Treaty and international treaties within the Union, except as expressly provided in the Treaty.

In general, the institutional system of the Eurasian economic Union, provided for by its constituent Treaty allows Member States to achieve their integration goals.

## V. EURASIAN INTEGRATION LAW: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Article 6 of the founding Treaty of the EEU introduces a new category – “the Law of the EEU”, which, apparently, draws a line under the task of codifying international agreements that make up the regulatory framework of the Customs Union and the Common economic Space, set out in the Declaration on Eurasian economic integration of November 18, 2011. Thus, with the adoption of the founding Treaty of the EEU and the attached agreements were completed the period of formation of international legal bases of Eurasian integration “blindly”, that is, the development of integration agreements with the maturation of conditions for the settlement of certain questions and the accumulated body of legal material was ordered and given to a certain denominator, which received its conceptual completion in the concept of “Law of the EEU”<sup>13</sup>.

The Law of the EEU accordingly to article 6 of the Treaty, includes two types of international legal sources: treaties and acts of the EEU authorities, law-making which has two intergovernmental body of the Union - the Supreme Eurasian economic Council, Eurasian intergovernmental Council and the supranational (or that is in the eyes of the public as such) - the Eurasian economic Commission. The Treaty base of the EEU is systematized on the principle of “General to private”. There are clearly three types of international agreements as sources of Union Law – the constituent Treaty of the EEU, international agreements within the Union, and international agreements of the Union with a third party.

The constituent Treaty has a special place in the emerging legal system of the EEU. The constituent Treaty has the highest legal force in the system of international agreements of the Union. The Treaty provides that in the event of a conflict between international agreements within the Union and this Treaty, the latter shall have priority.

International agreements within the Union are concluded between Member States on issues related to the functioning and development of the Union. In other words, they do not change the provisions of the constituent Treaty, but supplement them, that is, they have their own subject of regulation, although not exceeding the limits set by the constituent Treaty. However, if Member States want to make changes to the constituent Treaty, they are given the opportunity to do so. Article 115 of this Treaty provides that it may be amended and supplemented by the Member States, which are drawn up in separate protocols and are an integral part of the Treaty.

International agreements of the Union with a third party are concluded with third States, their integration associations and international organizations.

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<sup>13</sup> The Law of Eurasian economic integration in the focus of international law.// State and Law, no. 6, 2017, June, pp. 79-88.

Apparently, such international agreements under article 7 can be of two types: international agreements concluded by the Union independently with other subjects of international law and international agreements of the so-called "mixed nature", when such agreements will be concluded jointly with its Member States. At the same time, the issues of concluding international agreements of the Union with a third party will be determined by a separate international agreement within the Union. The legal status of international agreements of the Union with a third party in the Law of the Union is very original. Such international agreements should not contradict the main goals, principles and rules of the Union's functioning. At the same time, if the main goals of the Union, its basic principles of functioning are clearly defined in the constituent Treaty, then it is difficult to recognize the same quality for the concept of "rules of functioning of the Union". In fact, we can talk about the entire set of legal norms regulating the Union's activities (the founding Treaty, international agreements within the Union, decisions and orders of the EEU bodies (the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, the Eurasian Economic Commission). However, despite some vagueness of this wording of article 6, paragraph 2, of the constituent Treaty, we can not but note its huge creative potential, since it gives a fairly broad discretion in its interpretation by the Court of the EEU, in the case of an appeal to it for clarification. The only limitation is that according to the Statute of the Court of EEU, the Court clarifies the provisions of the international agreement of the Union with a third party, if this is provided for by such an international agreement.

Finally, the Law of the Union includes acts of a kind of secondary order, namely international legal acts adopted by the bodies of the EEU. These acts include: decisions and orders of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council and the Eurasian Economic Commission, adopted within their powers provided for in the founding Treaty and international agreements within the Union.

The founding Treaty stipulates that decisions and orders of the Union's bodies must not contradict this Treaty and international agreements within the Union. In order to resolve contradictions between the decisions of the bodies, the decisions of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council are given priority over the decisions of two other bodies. In turn, the decisions of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council are given priority over the decisions of the EEC.

Beyond the article 6 of the Treaty establishing the EEU, there are still some international legal acts and norms of international law that are likely to play a role in the legal regulation of the Eurasian integration process and take their place in the legal system of the EEU.

First of all, we are talking about judicial acts adopted by the Court of the Eurasian economic Union. According to the Statute of the Court, it makes a decision based on the results of the consideration of the dispute and provides an advisory opinion on the request for clarification. It should be emphasized that the Statute of the Court is careful to formulate the legal nature and meaning of judicial acts. Thus, the advisory opinion on the request for clarification is recommendation in its nature. In turn, the Court's decisions will be binding on the parties to the dispute or the EEU Commission. In this case, the Court's decision may not go beyond the issues specified in the application. In addition, the Court's decision does not change or (or) cancel the existing rules of Law of EEU, legislation of the Member States, or create new ones.

Thus, despite the fact that the new Court of the EEU has lost a number of important powers in comparison with the Court of the EurEcCom, its decisions and advisory opinions will play an important role in the process of applying the rules of Law of the EEU. When analyzing the issue of the legal nature of judicial acts of the Court of the EEU, it should be borne in mind that according to the Statute, the Court applies in the course of justice, along with the constituent Treaty of the EEU, international agreements within the Union and other international agreements to which the States parties to the dispute are parties; decisions and orders of the Union's bodies, generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international custom as evidence of universal practice recognized as a legal norm. Thus, the legal system of the EEU will be synchronized and coordinated with general international law. However, it should be noted that the wording used is slightly puzzling, since it is generally accepted in the doctrine of international law that generally recognized principles and norms of international law exist in the form of international customs. It cannot be excluded that such a tautology is deceitful in that the Court is implicitly given the opportunity to give its own functional definition of the concept of "generally recognized principles and norms of international law" for the purposes of international legal regulation of the integration process.

Finally, the concept of the Law of the EEU will inevitably include the rules of "soft law" adopted by the EEU bodies and Member States, which will also influence the international legal regulation of the Eurasian economic integration.

## NOTES

- The CIS was established on December 9, 1991 by the heads of the three Soviet republics-Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine-by signing an Agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of independent States, which was later

joined by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, Georgia (withdrew from the CIS in 2009). In 2018, Ukraine closed its representative offices in the headquarters of the CIS, but did not submit an official statement of withdrawal// **See:** The Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of independent States//the Russian newspaper, 19 December 1991 r./<https://rg.ru/1991/12/19/sng-site-dok.html>

- Article 1 of the Agreement on the creation of the CIS dated 08.12.1991 states the formation of the CIS, but does not say anything about its legal nature. In the CIS Charter of 1993, article 1 states that “the Commonwealth is based on the principles of sovereign equality of all its members”, which indirectly, apparently, indicates its identity with other IGO based on this principle. It is further clarified that “the Commonwealth is not a State and does not have supranational powers”, which indicates that the new interstate entity is not a Federation and cannot be considered as a supranational international organization like the European Communities that existed at that time. The Republics of the former Soviet Union had to go their own difficult way to supranational international organization. They try to perceive the idea of integration, not similar to the Western European one. The Charter of the CIS, **See:** International law in force. In 3 volumes. Comp. Yu. M. Kolosov and E. S. Krivchikova. Volume 1. - Moscow., 1996, pp. 719-730.
- The concept of “regional economic integration organization” is found in international legal acts. For example, article 1 of the 1985 Vienna Convention for the protection of the ozone layer defines a “regional economic integration organization” as an organization formed by the sovereign States of a given region that is competent in matters governed by this Convention and its protocols and is duly authorized, in accordance with its internal procedures, to sign, ratify, accept, approve or accede to the relevant documents.

The Agreement on the creation of a single customs territory and the formation of the customs Union dated October 6, 2007 was ratified by Federal law No. 187-FZ of 27.10.2008. 2008. No. 44. Article 4993.

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# Autores

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## **ENTIN MARK**

Head of European Law Department at MGIMO-University, Professor at Ural Federal University and leading expert at Russian Institute of Strategic Studies. He is currently Vice-President of Russian Association of International Law and President of Administrative body of Russian Association of European Studies, member of expert councils of State Duma, Supreme Court, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ombudsman of the Russian Federation. His fields of professional interests are: world politics and economics, International and Integration Law and Law of Human Rights, International Organizations, the European Union and Eurasian Economic Union, foreign policy of Russia and the EU.

## **ENIKEEVA ZALINA**

Master of Art Program, “Economic Governance and Development” Osce Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (2015 – 2016), Thesis: “Impact Assessment of the Participation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the World Trade Organization”. Bachelor of Arts in Economic Program, American University of Central Asia. Research Fellow / Academic Program Coordinator in the Institute of Public Administration and Politics. Recent publications: “Digital Integration in Banking System of the Eurasian Economic Union Member-States”; “Application of Non-tariff Measures in the Eurasian Economic Union”; “EAEU and Silk Road Economic Belt: Is it Really a “Win-Win” Co-operation? The Case of Central Asia.”

## **ERSHOVA INNA V.**

Dr. Sci. (Law), Professor, Head of Business and Corporate Law Department of the Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), Expert of the Center for Scientific and Expert Analytics Institute of Scientific and Expert-Analytical Activity Russian State Academy of Intellectual Property. Honoured jurist of Russian Federation, Honorary Worker of Justice of Russia, and Honorary Worker of Higher Professional Education of the Russian Federation. Chairman of the Dissertation Council of the Kutafin Moscow State Law

University (MSAL). Head of the Business Law Section of the Association of Legal Education of Russia. Deputy Chairman of the Federal Educational and Methodological Association in the system of higher education in the enlarged group of specialties and areas of training Jurisprudence. Member of the Commission for the Development of Professional Competencies of the Association of Lawyers of Russia.

### **FLEGONTOVA TATIANA**

Deputy Director of Institute for International Economics and Finance, Russian Foreign Trade Academy. Recent publications: Activation of the Integration Agenda of the EAEC in the Context of Changing the Regional Architecture in the APR; EAEU and China: Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation Facilitates Trade Procedures; E-commerce Regulation in China: Risks and Opportunities for International Cooperation.

### **GUTIÉRREZ DEL CID ANA TERESA**

Profesora Investigadora del área de Política internacional del Departamento de Política y Cultura de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco. Doctora en Relaciones Internacionales por la UNAM. Es miembro del Sistema Nacional de Investigadores y de la Comisión Dictaminadora de Relaciones Internacionales de la Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales de la UNAM. Autora de artículos y diversas publicaciones sobre relaciones internacionales.

### **KAPUSTIN ANATOLY**

Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation. Scientific Supervisor, Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law under the Government of the Russian Federation (Moscow). President of the Russian Branch of the International Law Association (ILA). Member of the Executive Council of the ILA (London, UK). Member of expert councils on International Law: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia; Ministry of Justice of Russia.

### **KUZMINA ELENA**

PhD in political sciences, Head of Sector of Center for post-Soviet Studies. Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences. Member of the committee on economic integration of the countries of SCO and CIS of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. Member of the Euroasian association of the international researches. Participation in international (the EU, ESCAP) and Russian (RGNF, the Russian Federal Property Fund, MEDT, Minpromtorg) grants on scope of economic development and cooperation of the Post-Soviet countries.

### **OROPEZA GARCÍA ARTURO**

Doctor en Derecho por la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), e Investigador del Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM. Vicepresidente del Instituto para el Desarrollo Industrial y el Crecimiento Económico (IDIC). Es Investigador del Sistema Nacional de Investigadores (SNI) y Árbitro de Solución de Controversias por parte de Brasil dentro del mecanismo del Mercosur. Especialista en temas globales de integración y comercio internacional. Autor y Coordinador de más de 30 obras en la materia, con especialidad en las regiones de América Latina, América del Norte, Asia del Este y China, entre sus últimas publicaciones se encuentran: Corea. Una visión jurídica y geopolítica en el siglo XXI; China. La construcción del poder en el siglo XXI y China- Estados Unidos ¿La guerra sigilosa?.

### **PANTELEEV ANDREY**

Head of Economic Policy Strategies Section at the Eurasian Economic Commission Macroeconomic Policy Department. Monitoring the results of the EAEU Member States socio-economic development; implemented economic policy measures, working out the recommendations on economic policy for the EAEU Member States, systematization of the results in analytical products (reports, reviews, references) and drafts of EEC acts. Associate Professor at Financial Management Department, Russian Customs Academy. Master of Economics and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

### **SHKOLYAR NIKOLAY**

Doctor titular en ciencias económicas, Catedrático en economía internacional por la Universidad Rusa de la Amistad de los Pueblos (Moscú). Tiene el título honorífico de “Economista de Honor de la Federación Rusa”. Su experiencia abarca aspectos académicos, científicos y prácticos. Durante 20 años ha trabajado como profesor en diversas universidades de Rusia y en el extranjero. Ha impartido numerosas conferencias internacionales y ha publicado varios textos académicos, más de 100 artículos y siete libros. Entre ellos: Coordinador del libro “Rusia-América Latina: Modernización de relaciones económicas”; Coautor del libro “México-Rusia: culturas y sistemas jurídicos comparados”; Autor del libro “México: el potencial del desarrollo económico”; Autor del libro “Estrategia de la salida al mercado de México”. Tiene experiencia laboral en el Ministerio de Desarrollo Económico de Rusia e instituciones rusas en el exterior con proyectos de investigación y promoción comercial. De 2009 a 2018 fue Consejero de la Embajada de Rusia en México. Actualmente es Investigador Líder del Instituto de América Latina de la Academia de Ciencias de Rusia, se dedica al análisis de relaciones económicas de Rusia con América Latina. Es experto del Consejo de Asuntos Internacionales de Rusia.

### **SHAKHNAZAROV BENIAMIN**

Associate Professor of the Department of Private International Law at Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL). Advocate of the Moscow Bar Association. Author of more than 50 academic publications and 10 educational and methodical study guides. The sphere of scientific interests includes issues of Private International Law, Intellectual Property Law, IT Law, International Trade Law.

**SPARTAK ANDREY N.**

Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor and Head of Chair in the Russian Foreign Trade Academy, Ministry of Economic Development. Professor in the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. He is also the Director the all-Russian Market Research Institute, Chairman of the Committee on the economic integration and foreign economic activity in the RF Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Member of several Consultative Committees in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Head of Working Group on elaboration of the Strategy for economic development of CIS member States in the period till 2030. Head of Expert Group for the National project "International cooperation and exports". Has former research experience in the Russian-European Information Centre (Moscow), European Institute of Public Administration , in the capacity of the UNIDO expert. Has been intensively involved in research and expert support on the issues of post-Soviet economic integration, creation and functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union, conjugation of building of the EAEU and Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the CIS region, trade policy agenda for Russia and the EAEU.

**TZILI APANGO EDUARDO**

Profesor-Investigador de tiempo completo en el Departamento de Política y Cultura de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Xochimilco. Analista de las relaciones internacionales de China, relaciones China-América Latina, China y los bienes públicos globales, dinámica del Asia-Pacífico, China en las instituciones internacionales, China y Asia Central (Ruta de la Seda y Ruta de la Seda Marítima).





**D**esde el inicio de la historia la región de Asia Central se ha destacado por ser una zona geográfica de características únicas que han contribuido de manera significativa a la definición de los eventos geopolíticos euroasiáticos. El territorio que ahora se reconoce como Asia Central, integrado por cinco países: Kazajistán, Kirguistán, Tayikistán, Turkmenistán y Uzbekistán, por sus condiciones geográficas en general y orográficas en particular, ha venido acompañando desde siempre el relato histórico de la humanidad y de sus imperios más trascendentes.

Asia Central, ahora, en plena era de una Revolución Digital que todo lo cubre y lo empieza a determinar, si bien su ubicación estratégica ha sido compensada con los avances tecnológicos en una nueva geopolítica del siglo XXI, determinada por un cambio de eras que transitan del Atlántico al Pacífico, y su reto ya no llama a escalar montañas o aventurar con dromedarios la dificultad de sus desiertos; el reto de ayer, hoy más vigente que nunca de conectar con fluidez y seguridad los *bagajes* de dos continentes, sigue requiriendo de la participación de un centro asiático, de ese puente geográfico-geopolítico entre Europa y Asia.

Como dice Octavio Paz, “lo que pasó, está pasando todavía”, y Asia en General y Asia Central y Oriental en particular, llaman a un redescubrimiento de su importancia geopolítica y geoeconómica.

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