

SOME CONSIDERATION ABOUT EURASIAN UNION

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Abstract. *For those who want to study the phenomenon of Asian integration, the following trends and processes developed in these years are essential. Despite some local wars, triggered by the major powers for centuries and centuries, especially in recent decades, for the riches of the soil, but especially of the Asian subsoil, the phenomenon of Asian integration takes shape around powerful nuclei, economically endowed and of large civilizations that have survived over the centuries. Now, those things that were lost over time in the region for various reasons, are reconstructed into a modern version aiming at stability and the rule of law, freedom of movement in the region and the multiethnic and multi-religious crucible. Europe's first pragmatic steps were taken when a group of six countries established the European Coal and Steel Community. Similarly, the countries of the Middle East and Asia are grouped around vital resources for the future of the region - water, gas and oil.*

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1. Middle East Union

The European Union was built in stages on the ruins of the two world wars that shook Europe in the last century. Today, thinkers and initiators who developed in their own minds the phenomenon of European integration can do the same with countries in the Middle East that could rally behind a similar idea - Middle East Union (MEU). For Europe have been initially pooled two essential productions of the economy - the coal and steel, then it was created a common market and a unified agricultural policy ... This model of integration, successful for the European countries may also be adopted for the Islamic world in the Middle East, where Christianity oases can be integrated harmoniously into this process.

Turkey is a part of Europe and at the same time, part of Asia. In our opinion, given the Islamic orientation of Turks, their country does not have - yet, for a long time - chances to become a EU member. We must not underestimate the influence of the Turkish Islamic identity. Like in other historical situations that must not be repeated, religion, civilization or culture are only the mantles that hide clashes of

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interests. Observing the phenomena that are emerging in the Middle East but also in Europe and the rest of the world, we appreciate that Turkey capitalizes worldwide influence strengthening its ties with Islamic countries in Europe, Middle East and the world.

Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union

It entered into force on 5 July 2010 and provided for the introduction of a common customs duties within the three countries, the elimination of customs controls at their borders and implementation of common mechanisms of regulation of foreign trade. The project was presented by officials from Moscow in 2009 as a means of accession of three countries to the World Trade Organization, an idea which was later reconsidered. Initially, Belarus did not want to join the above mentioned customs union due to the taxes on oil products imposed by Russia, which affected the economy of Belarus, which has major refining and resale facilities including Russian oil abroad. By 5th of July 2010 the above mentioned customs union worked with imperfections. The creation of Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union has more minuses than pluses. The cause is simple: the political ambitions of newly independent states, fear regarding a return to the Soviet Union and the loss of sovereignty. Therefore, even the mere discussions of a return to a single economic space and single currency spark painful reactions.

Farther History of Eurasian Union

On 19th of September 2003 in Yalta (Ukraine), it was established by the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, the Common Economic Space (CES). The agreement was ratified by the parliaments of the participating states and provides the creation of an organizations aimed at integration, to unify customs territories of member states, i.e. to ensure free traffic of goods, services, capital and labor, modeled on the European Union (EU). Within the organization it is to be promoted a single external trade policy and it will be applied a coordinated policy regarding finances and credit. In their meeting in Yalta (Ukraine), the heads of the states participating in the agreement on the formation CES on 23rd and 24th of May 2004, several bilateral meetings were held. During the meeting between Russian and Kazakh Presidents Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbaev, were discussed, inter alia, "the next steps that the four countries have to make," first, to unify customs and tariff policies. Vladimir Putin stressed that future Russian membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be examined only through the close collaboration within the CES.

They also tackled issues related to bilateral relations, including further cooperation on energy and fuels, as well as the further schedule of political contacts. It is also known Russia's desire to see Ukraine integrated into the Community of Independent States. As Ukraine has refused to do so - for now, it

has been proposed a new structure for economic cooperation, above-mentioned. It would be grafted first on a free trade zone between Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine, an idea supported by the four founding countries. Also, the four ex-Soviet states have decided to coordinate their accession to WTO.

On July the 26th, 2010, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who was on a visit to Belarus cemented the strategic axis Damascus-Minsk-Moscow announcing that the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to join the free trade area created by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in their customs union: "We ask that you support us in our efforts aimed at joining the free trade zone created between Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan," said the Syrian president, in a meeting with former Belarusian Prime Minister Sergey Sidorski. The leader from Damascus held that his country's future presence in this area "will stimulate economic and trade exchanges between Syria and the three states".

The Customs Union between Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, a project dating for a long time and which was postponed because of disagreements between Moscow and Minsk, was launched on the 6th of July 2010, with the entry into force of a single Customs Code in these countries. The next stage of their integration requires the abolition of customs borders, a goal to be reached on the 1st of July 2011. Originally it was meant that from the 1st of January 2012, the three countries should form a single economic space, characterized by common rules regulating their economic activity.

2. Recent history of Eurasian Union

The Eurasian Union idea was brought to public attention on the 11th of October 2011 by the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin at the time, immediately after he announced that he wanted to submit candidacy for president of Russia for the 2012 elections. At the same time, Vladimir Putin, announced the release from the 1st of January 2012 of the Common Economic Space mechanisms, and until 2015, the idea of the Eurasian Union was to begin to materialize. Initially this organization was to include the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were to join later. Vladimir Putin wants to establish Eurasian Union modeled on the European Union because Russia could thus control a third of the world's natural gas reserves.

The core idea was first proposed as a concept by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, during a speech in 1994, a speech delivered at a university in Moscow. On the 18th of November 2011, the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation signed an agreement setting out the roadmap for future integration and established the Commission Eurasia (modeled on the European Commission) and the Eurasian Economic Area; both started their operations on the 1st of January 2012.

Also on November the 18th, 2011, the three presidents signed the Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration, which aims primarily to create a Common Economic Space between the three states, as a result of the existing Common Customs Space - Agreement signed already in 2009 and operational since the 1st of July 2011, on which Kyrgyzstan declared its intention to join. Eurasian Economic Commission became operational from the 1st of January 2012 and has Viktor Khristenko as President, the Russian Minister of Industry and Trade. The representatives of the three countries stated that the Eurasian Economic Union shall not sign, nor will return to the former Soviet organization and operation, existing until 1991.

From a strategic standpoint, the project aims to create an "integrated region" which is aimed at increasing the influence of the Russian state in the Eurasian region. Such a bloc would function on the basis of "common positions on topics of interest for our region" and their coordinator will be Russia. It is expected that, besides the post-Soviet states, Eurasian Union membership should be expanded to include other countries that have been historically or culturally close, such as Bulgaria, Finland, The Czech Republic, Mongolia and Hungary. According to Vladimir Putin, the Eurasian Union would be based on the "best of the values of the former Soviet Union," but critics argue that this integration aims at restoring the former Soviet empire.

The Eurasian Union project can also be regarded as a reaction to the slow but steady progress of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a progress fueled by the fear that this could be a tool to influence Chinese economic growth. Seen in this way, the Union would not be a tool for balancing the influence of the West (EU), but rather of the East (China).

3. Eurasian Economic Council

It is the main body of the Customs Union and Common Economic Space between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The project of creation on this basis of the Eurasian Economic Union is in action in Moscow and was the central theme of the 2013 meeting in Astana. Faced with such an approach, Ukraine and other neighboring countries have been forced to look closer to the integration. Kyrgyzstan has already submitted the application to join the future Common Economic Space. Tajikistan has expressed its intention (currently just stated) to adhere to this formula of cooperation. "Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, sitting together at the same table with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan had the opportunity to see how the Union works," said Dmitry Peskov.

Eurasian Economic Union has enough projects in its portfolio and the idea of introducing a single currency no longer seems fantastic now. In this regard, symbolic was the fact that Nazarbayev has received his senior guests in the

"palace of money" as his residence is referred to, which also appears on the bill of 10,000 tenge (about two thousand rubles). After the talks in Astana, within the Eurasian Economic Council, Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of Kazakhstan said: "We have strengthened the basis for creating the Eurasian Economic Union, which will be launched on the 1st of January 2015". Meanwhile, Kazakh President stressed that the process of association of the countries occurs strictly on economic grounds and will lead to an overall benefit.

4. Opinion about Eurasian Union

Russian opinion

In early November 2012, Speaker of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Sergey Naryshkin, stressed in a statement, the possibility of a new federal body - the Eurasian Union, with its own parliament, on the European Parliament model - which then caused negative reactions Kazakhstan. Kazakh Secretary of the ruling party "Nur Otan" Erlan Karin commented Naryshkin's words as "just a desire of the Russian party".

Eurasian Union may be regarded as Moscow's reaction to the European Union, but also as a regional actor opposing the repeated trends of EU enlargement. Russia will become in this international organization a sort of link between Europe and Asia, thus maximizing their negotiating position towards Westerners. Vladimir Putin wants the creation of Free Trade Area, which will inherently lead to the establishment of an Economic Community. The latter may progress to more advanced forms of integration such as industrial policy, single or even what the European Union has yet to implement - unique energy policy. What Putin wants to create through this Union in terms of Realpolitik is that Russia could be "one of the centers of power of the contemporary world. A system of partnership between the Eurasian Union and the EU may give rise to presumptions needed to create a change in the geopolitical and geo-economic configuration of the whole continent (Eurasia) with clear positive consequences globally."

Another important aspect of this project is that Member States may negotiate with third parties through the organization, which can provide them a better position at the negotiating table, but should not be forgotten that the voting procedure within the Eurasian Economic Union will not be consensus. Each state has a proportional voting power (moderate) with its economic power. It is easy to understand why it came to such a measure: among all the members, Russia is the most powerful state in economic terms, so it will be very easy to obtain the blocking minority when a decision will not bring an advantage or obtain the necessary majority for a proposal to be approved.

Russia will again have an advantage given that Europe will have to negotiate with countries such as Belarus or Kazakhstan largely through Russia. A third aspect,

which the Kremlin leader wanted to mention, is that Member States will have access to the European energy market more easily through the Eurasian Union. Indeed this aspect is important, but what is not mentioned, but obvious, is that these countries will negotiate and will have access through the Russian structures and only with the consent of the Russian state, which will lead to an augmentation of Russia's position which is already strategic in Europe. The most effective response from the European Union in order to avoid creating of such a competitor would be solving of current problems, namely reestablishing EU members' trust its structures.

Other countries that could become members of the Union are: Ukraine, Moldova and other CIS member states. The proposal came in the first-mentioned State as a result of the traditional negotiations on gas prices. The answer of Ukraine, through his prime minister, Mykola Azarov, was initially a negative one, arguing that it can not be part of the Customs Union because it would have to review all agreements with its partners in the World Trade Organization. A clear disadvantage of entry of Ukraine into this Customs Union would be that it will not be able to conclude FreeTrades Agreements with the European Union without the consent of the other members, which would clearly weaken its negotiating position. We can not speak of Russian Federation or its projects without mentioning the energetic aspect. When the Eurasian Union will effectively function it will have as members countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine etc.. Then Eurasian Union will control 33% of the world reserves of natural gas, compared to the 25% that Russia currently holds. In such circumstances Gazprom would be the best favoured actor, since it could expand its interests beyond northern Russia or Barents Sea area, to Kazakhstan, which would put pressure on the European investors. Within such a scenario, we could not talk about a race of gas in Central Asia area since this region will be mostly influenced by Russia.

We should not overlook the fact that this Eurasian Economic Union is not the first international project, which Russia tries to implement after the fall of the USSR, so it remains to be seen if the Union will be a truly effective one, efficient and strong and integrated enough to compete both with western and eastern planet. The creation of the Eurasian Union becomes effective from the 1st of January 2015, and Russia maintains that the former Soviet republics are to be gathered in one place not out ideological reasons, but for economic and social reasons.

On March 20, 2015, being at the trilateral summit with Kazakh and Belarusian counterparts in Astana, the Russian President Vladimir Putin urged on the creation of a monetary union of his allies within the Eurasian Economic Union, a means, in his view, to reduce the negative consequences of the Russian economic crisis for these countries: "We believe the time has come to discuss opportunities to form a

monetary union. If we work hand in hand, it will be easier to react to external economic and financial threats and protect our common market.

Belarusian Opinion

President of Belarus responded that Minsk prefers not to get involved in the issue of the Eurasian Parliament. "We took the following position: we do not get involved, we do not say anything. We leave giants - Russia and Kazakhstan - to decide: we will have a Parliament or not." This would mean, in the view of some analysts that things are not clear enough regarding the future union thought by the Russian Federation and that in such start in the relations between the founders may be differences of thinking about the 'format' of the Eurasian Union.

Kazakh opinion

In mid-October 2012, the Internet was flooded with a sensational news about Nursultan Nazarbayev the Kazakh president's speech in Turkey, in Istanbul, during the ceremony of raising the flag of the Council of Turkey (which includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey): "There will come the time all Turks will unite," said Nazarbayev, quoting Atatürk. "Therefore I wish to greet all Turks brothers. Between Altai and the Mediterranean Sea are living over 200 million brothers. If we all unite, we will be a very effective force in the world," Nazarbayev said.

"We Kazakhs live in the homeland of the entire Turkish nation. Once, in 1861, the last Kazakh inn was killed, we were a colony of Tsarist Russia, then of the Soviet Union. Over 150 years, the Kazakhs were on the verge of losing national traditions, customs, language, religion. With God's help in 1991, we declared independence. Your ancestors, leaving the historic homeland of Turkish Kaganate, they took the name of the Turkish people. Until now, the Turks call them the best Gighits - "Kazak". We are those „Kazakhs”, Nazarbayev stressed. The call to unity of the peoples of Turkish nation in Asia is not an empty promise. We have already taken many steps in this direction: a) Turksoy Cultural Organization was created; b) from the initiative of Kazakh President, the Council of Turcophone States Heads was formed; c) in Baku and Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish States started work; d) in Astana the Turkish Academy works. This is a foundation on which largely thanks to the initiatives of Nursultan Nazarbayev, will be built the future common home of peoples of Turkish origin. From 1991 to 2011, so for 20 years, the number of Kazakhs in their own country increased from 43 to 72% of the country's population.

"Of course, the creation of the Eurasian Union is a complex issue," admitted the President of Kazakhstan, admitting that it is about problems that cannot be solved from one day to another: "There are disparities and discontent, but these issues will be addressed along the way. The main thing is that there is a political will."

Romanian opinion

Joining the Eurasian Union would give Moldova more opportunities than joining the European Union, considered more experts from Moldova and Russia, who attended an international conference in Chisinau in May the 21st, 2012. "Moldova has had close relations with Russia since the medieval period, the linking including common religion," said the Bishop of Balti and Falesti, Marchel. According to him, besides the economic benefits it would provide Moldova, the Eurasian Union does not impose conditions such as the legalization of sexual and religious minorities. According to the Barometer of Public Opinion in June 2012, 57% of Moldova's population would vote for joining the Eurasian Union, and if it had to choose between the two unions, 38% of respondents would prefer joining with former Soviet states and only 35% would opt for the European Union.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev declared on September the 10th, 2012, at the end of his meeting with Moldavian Prime Minister Vlad Filat in Moscow that Russia is ready to consider Moldova joining the Eurasian Customs Union only if Chisinau authorities want this. "Membership in any union should be conscious, but not imposed, and should be considered the national interest of that state," added Dmitry Medvedev, referring to Eurasian Customs Union, Free Trade Zone in the Community of Independent States and to the European Union.

Turkish opinion

Then, when on December the 16th, 1991, at 4 o'clock p.m., Kazakhstan's Parliament proclaimed independence, after an hour the president of Turkey at the time, Turgut Ozal, telephoned to congratulate Kazakh people. "The Turkish state has been the first to be glad for our independence, recognized our independence. Our people will never forget this," said, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Eurasian Economic Union

Going forward with the practical application of a theoretical concept, Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus have established basic principles of the new Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). This was announced on December the 23rd, 2013 in Moscow, by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the opening of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the level of heads of state: "In the two months that have elapsed since the last meeting in Minsk, we managed to obtain new results for the integration between our countries, the Russian leader said, indicating that in these two months "was elaborated the project of the institutional part of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union".

The Russian Head of State explained that the document defines the legal status, the organizational framework, objectives and mechanisms of the Eurasian Union: "We have established the basic principles of the Eurasian integration project. The key principle is that through its activity, the new Union should respond fully to

the national interests of all its members. We have created the Eurasian Union to strengthen our economies, to develop harmoniously and close to them. Our alliance will enhance the competitiveness of our countries and, ultimately, will have an impact on the increase of the national welfare of all countries participating in this agreement. In turn, the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, said that the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) should be an international organization in order to be able to operate effectively. Belarusian leader wished to draw attention that it is "dangerous and wrong" to launch EEU before the conclusion of the Customs Union formation. Meanwhile, President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, pleaded against politicizing the new Union, which "is inexcusable". The Treaty on its establishment should contain only economic provisions. Areas such as border security, immigration policy, defense and security system, as well as issues concerning health, education, culture, legal assistance in civil, administrative and criminal causes are not relevant for economic integration and may not be incorporated in the format of an economic union".

A roadmap has been submitted for Armenia's accession to the Customs Union that groups Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, indicating that a similar document is in the stage of coordination regarding the accession of Kyrgyzstan to this format of regional economic cooperation. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin mentions that for several years, his country "has wanted to strengthen and deepen the Eurasian integration. We want that integration processes should not contradict, but complement to each other". Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting, which was attended by the presidents of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan ended on the 29th of December 2013.

On May the 29th, 2014, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty for the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union, an organization which was formally established on the 1st of January 2015, as announced by the Russian Presidency. The treaty was signed in Astana by the presidents of the three countries - Vladimir Putin, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Alexander Lukashenko. On this occasion, the presidents of the three countries discussed issues related to the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Customs Union Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan. Eurasian Union is Russia's reply to the pressures of the European Union's eastward expansion. Russia, Armenia, Belarus and Kazakhstan belong to the Eurasian Union project and in 2015 Kyrgyzstan is expected to join too. Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, would have wanted Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the EU too but these countries have preferred to leave the Russian sphere of influence and get closer to the EU. Hence the economic and political conflict between Russia and Western countries ...

The creation of the Eurasian Economic Union allows a high level of integration. Member states have taken such obligations to guarantee free movement of goods, services, capital, labor, and to create common policies in the areas of energy, industry, agriculture and transport.

New Eurasian currency - the Altyn

On this occasion Russia has given a warning to its Western partners that it is ready to go on a diplomatic and amiable course, while its interests are violated in the West. This announcement complements a previous announcement, which stated that Russia is about to develop its own universal payment system after Visa and MasterCard have tried to block transactions with Russia; Visa and MasterCard got back on this decision, but the prejudice has already been created.

Decisions are taken by the interested countries by which the new Russian sovereign system of payment should be linked to the Chinese and Japanese sovereign payment systems, accepted in over 70 countries. This payment system is to be adopted by the Eurasian Economic Union, part of it- modeled on the European Union - Eurasian Union. Finally, the Eurasian Union could also become a military union, as the counterparty to NATO. The initiative to create a new currency - Altyn – which is to be adopted by member countries of the Eurasian Union, came from Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012 already, and Vladimir Putin agreed. Altyn means gold. The word is of Turkish origin; the family of Turkish languages includes languages spoken by Siberian peoples, by Tatars, Mongols and Kazakhs. Russia has always been a multinational country and Turkish languages were among the most widely spoken all over the country. In ancient and medieval times, Russians have economic exchanges and very close ties with Asia and the Middle East. The Silk Road and other important trade routes in the East passed through Russia. Medieval Russians current spoke Turkish languages together with their own language. Altyn was the name of an ancient gold coin used widely by Russian in their trade with Turkish or Arab neighbours. Later, in the Middle Ages the altyn or, altynnik "has become one of the most common currencies in Russia. With this currency, the Eurasian Union, together with China (whose currency is the yuan), sends a signal that gold standard is again aimed at for covering the value of the coins in international trade, which will lead to the disappearance of the dollar as world reserve currency.

Instead of conclusions. Chinese view and consequences

Unfortunately, China's regional position on the Asian continent, and its strong involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization - where Russia is a member - prevents The Great Country from the East to participate effectively as a member to the creation of the Eurasian Union. On December the 19th, 2013,

"Renmin Ribao", the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party published two articles criticizing the Eurasian Union, praising instead a Chinese plan called "The Silk Road".

In the first article, Beijing shows that it does not oppose to Russia's increased presence in Asia and the US, but suggests that a better integration of the two superpowers actions within the project supported by Beijing. Even the Transcaucasian countries - Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan - should join the "Silk Road" claims "Renmin Ribao". The titles of the two articles are: "China, the US and Russia - three different strategies for Central Asia" and "Economic Belt of the Silk Road" - China's competitive advantage in Central Asia".

In the second article it is stressed that "The Eurasian Union idea is to maintain Russia's status in the post-Soviet space. This project primarily involves the union of former Soviet republics. The United States have already proposed the new integrating Silk Road project, centered in Afghanistan. Washington intends to unite South and Central Asia, Transcaucasian countries and even Mongolia and Xinjiang in China. This project is an important component of the strategy to "return" to the US in Central Asia or to "restore the balance" in the Asia-Pacific. US want to control the Eurasian region and China launched a project called The Economic Belt of the Silk Road, announced in early September 2013, by the Chinese vice-president then, now President Xi Jinping during a tour of it in Asia. The article identifies the benefits of The Economic Belt of the Silk Road Silk in relation to the projects of Russia and the USA. Unlike Vladimir Putin's Eurasian Union and the New Silk Road imagined by the US, the Chinese project is aimed at both eastern and western, northern and southern Asia and from it would benefit nearly three billion people, while from the Russian project would benefit 10-15 times less.

Leaders of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) signed on the 10th of October 2014 an agreement on the Armenian Union's entering the union formed by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan for which Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan states have expressed their interest. EEU is aimed mainly at increasing the economic cooperation between the Member States. According to the treaty, the signatory states must guarantee free movement of goods, services, capital and labor and implement a coordinated strategy in the fields of energy, industry, agriculture and transport. The issue of Armenia's participation was extensively discussed because of the conflict with Azerbaijan, related to Nagorno-Karabakh region. As far back as in May 2014, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said that Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said in a letter that the provisions of the Treaty of Armenia's Accession to the EEU should apply to its territories within the borders internationally recognized by the United Nations.

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