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# EAEC: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING THE INTEGRATION PATH

The article deals with the economic aspects of the integration of states in the format of the EAEC. Based on the analysis of legal documents, indicators of foreign economic activity, a conclusion is made about the political expediency of integrating emerging markets. Attention is drawn to the fact that the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union are striving for integration both at the regional and international levels. Efforts are being made to expand the Free Trade Zones – with Serbia, Iran, Israel, India, etc. Despite certain obstacles, it is concluded that it is too early to speak about the seven-mile integration path of the EAPC member countries. The problems that prevent the development of integration processes within the framework of the EAEC are revealed. Among them, in particular, barriers, exemptions, restrictions, different levels of economies of states, trade conflicts. It is noted that the prospects of the integration project of the EAEC are related to the harmonization of the law of the Union and the legislations of national states, the development of a unified infrastructure policy, the expansion of the integration ties of member countries in such areas as nuclear energy, space, renewable energy sources, digital economy, overcoming political differences, etc.

Key words: EAEC, FTA, Customs Union, barriers and constraints, integration prospects.

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### ЕЭО: интеграциялық жолды кеңейтудің жаңа мүмкіндіктері

Бұл мақалада мемлекеттердің Евразиялық Экономикалық Одақ (ЕЭО) форматында интеграциялануының экономикалық аспектілері қарастырылады. Заңнамалық құжаттарды, сыртқы экономикалық қызметтің көрсеткіштерін талдау негізінде дамушы нарықтарды ықпалдастырудың саяси мақсаттылығы туралы қорытынды жасалады. Еуразиялық экономикалық одаққа мүше мемлекеттер аймақтық да, халықаралық деңгейде де интеграцияға ұмтылатынына назар аударылады. Сербия, Иран, Израиль, Үндістан және басқа елдермен еркін сауда аймағын кеңейтуге күш жұмсалады. Белгілі кедергілерге қарамастан, ЕЭО-ға мүше елдердің интеграциялық жеті милялық интеграциясы туралы әңгімелеу әлі ертерек. ЕЭО шеңберінде интеграциялық қадергілер: тыйым салу, шектеу, мемлекеттердің экономикаларының әртүрлі деңгейлері, сауда қақтығыстар. ЕЭО-ның интеграциялық жобасының келешегін Одақ заңын және ұлттық мемлекеттердің заңнамаларын үйлестіруге, бірыңғай инфрақұрылымдық саясатты дамытуға, ядролық энергетика, ғарыш, қалпына келетін энергия көздері, цифрлық экономика, саяси айырмашылықтарды жеңу және т.б. сияқты елдерде интеграциялық байланыстарды кеңейтуге байланысты екенін атап өткен жөн.

**Түйін сөздер:** ЕЭО, ЕСА (еркін сауда аймағы), Кеден одағы, кедергілер мен шектеулер, интеграция келешегі.

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#### ЕАЭС: новые возможности расширения интеграционного контура

В статье рассматриваются экономические аспекты интеграции государств в формате ЕАЭС. На основе анализа правовых документов, показателей внешнеэкономической деятельности делается вывод о политической целесообразности интеграции стран с формирующимися рынками. Обращается внимание на то, что государства-члены Евразийского Экономического Союза стремятся к интеграции как на региональном, так и международном уровне. Прилагаются усилия к расширению Зон свободной торговли – с Сербией, Ираном, Израилем, Индией и др. Несмотря на определенные заделы, делается вывод о том, что говорить о семимильной поступи интеграции стран-членов ЕАЭС пока рано. Раскрываются проблемы, препятствующие развитию интеграционных процессов в рамках ЕАЭС. Среди них, в частности, барьеры, изъятия, ограничения, разный уровень экономик государств, торговые конфликты. Отмечается, что перспективы интеграционного проекта ЕАЭС связаны с гармонизацией права Союза и законодательств национальных государств, выработкой единой инфраструктурной политики, расширением интеграционных связей стран-членов по таким направлениям, как атомная энергетика, космос, возобновляемые источники энергии, цифровая экономика, преодолением политических разногласий и др.

**Ключевые слова**: ЕАЭС, ЗСТ, Таможенный Союз, барьеры и ограничения, перспективы интеграции.

### Introduction

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), despite obvious problems, is formed as a pole of integration, considering the whole range of factors (economic and socio-cultural) that make up the identity of this part of the continent. Elites, the population and the business of the ENPP countries generally approve of Eurasian integration, but at the same time, the attitude towards it has become more restrained lately. Politicians, businesspersons, ordinary citizens, reflecting on the participation of their countries in the EAE, are more likely to expect rapid positive effects of integration on the well-being of their countries, companies, families [Petrovic, Antevski, Vesic, 2008; Temirbekova, 2015; Migranyan, 2015]. Meanwhile, one should not consider that economic integration is a panacea for solving all problems [Heimenz and Langhammer, 1990; Cassel, Welfens, 2006; Pitelis, 2010]. This is rather a set of tools, the use of which requires special competencies in the process of cutting the modern integration contour.

World practice has a vast experience of participation of states in economic integration associations [Viner, 1950]. An example is the experience of integrating and creating a model of the European Union [Meade, 1955; Cameron, 2010; Porter, Ketels, 2013], models of NAFTA and ASEAN and other integration associations of states. [Linder, 1966; McCarthy, 2007; Peters-Berries, 2010].

As for the Unified Energy System, as everybody knows, everything started in 1995, when Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and later Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed an agreement on the establishment of the Customs Union. On this basis, in 2000, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) was established. In 2010, the Customs Union started functioning. In 2012, the Common Economic Space emerged with the participation of the Customs Union countries with the subsequent accession of Armenia and Kirghizia to it. In 2014, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union – the EEMP, to which Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined. [Vinokurov, Tsukarev: 2015]. Meanwhile, the task of building an integral model for the integration of the EAES, fully considering both world experience and the entire complex of diverse and diversified goals of integration in the region, has not yet been resolved.

The purpose of this article is to identify barriers to the strengthening of the contours of the Eurasian economic integration and to identify mechanisms for their elimination.

The object of this study is the Eurasian Economic Union; the subject is modern integration processes.

Hypothesis: The EAEC, created to improve the economic situation of the countries that entered it, brings its positive results, but they could be more significant, if the barriers to further integration are removed.

## Materials and methods

In the implementation of our goal, aimed at identifying barriers to the strengthening of the contours of the Eurasian economic integration and identifying mechanisms for their elimination, the current regulatory documentation of the EAEC is being analyzed, as well as the measures taken by the governments of the Union's participants, discussed at various meetings and summits.

The methodological basis for the study was both general scientific and special methods of scientific knowledge. Priority was given to the use of content analysis.

# Literature review

Integration processes in the world economy are widely and intensively studied by the scientific and expert community and are discussed in the domestic and foreign press. Among the researchers of the CIS countries it is necessary to single out such scientists as S.B. Aliev, E.S. Vinokurov, V. Dolinin, A.B. Temirbekova, A.A. Migranyan and others, who made a significant contribution to the theory of integration, showed the objective nature of integration processes, the significant role of the state in the formation and regulation of integration processes in modern conditions. Among foreign researchers there are such scientists as: J.E. Meade, S.B. Linder, D. Cassel, R. Welfens and others, who made a significant contribution to the theory of integration. In information sources in Europe and the US, the development of the Eurasian integration project is covered both at the level of political journalism and in the expert community. In the materials of the largest Western publications (The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Le Figaro, etc.), references to the Eurasian integration are timed, mainly, to the key dates of the Union's development (education, acceptance of new members), but the negative connotation prevails in the articles devoted to the EAGE, the creation of the EAEC is regarded as an attempt to return to the former statehood - the Soviet Union.

# **Results of discussion**

The creation of the EAEC is a significant achievement of its participants after several «integration false starts» of the 1990-2000s. Integration brings certain benefits to the countries of the Union – the incomes of the population are converging; the relative trade turnover and investment flows are growing. At the same time, the EAEC is not an irreproachable «success story». The phase of rapid initial progress of 2010-2015, characterized by a breakthrough in several areas, has come to an end. After a series of first successes, Eurasian integration in 2015-2016 faced several problems and challenges. In the conditions of deterioration of the external conjuncture, it will be much more difficult to solve these problems than before. The current stage of integration can be called the period of the maturation of the Eurasian integration association, which requires all participants more patience and careful work.

The agreement on the Unified Energy System (2015) aims to create the conditions for the stable development of the economies of the member states to improve the living standards of the population, the formation of a single market for goods, services, capital and labor resources within the Union, comprehensive modernization, cooperation and competitiveness of national economies in conditions global economy.

Spheres of foreign economic cooperation of the countries – participants are declared: customs regulation; foreign trade policy; technical regulation; sanitary, veterinary-sanitary, quarantine phytosanitary measures; trade in services; taxation; cooperation in energy, transport, intellectual property, industry, agro-industrial complex, public procurement, labor migration, administrative cooperation. The elaboration of a coordinated policy in these areas is the prerogative of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, working in cooperation with the councils of heads of state bodies of the Parties created by it, special commissions, working groups.

As an achievement of the first stage of the integration path from January 1, 2015, since the entry into force of the agreement on the EEA, active negotiations on the formation of a free trade zone (FTA) should be considered. The labor market has been created and is developing. The unified market of services of the EAEC has absorbed more than 40 sectors (construction services, wholesale and retail trade services, services related to agriculture, etc.) and tends to a gradual and coherent expansion. Work is underway to create a single market for medicines and medical products.

Recently, the general digital agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union, discussed at the meeting of the Eurasian Economic Commission (ECE), is being formed. [ECE, 02.02.2018] Its timeliness is obvious: today the leading states of the world invest

serious resources in the development of digital economies, increasing their competitiveness, based on integration interactions, they are looking for ways to obtain economic dividends, development of technological entrepreneurship. In the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, it is a coordinated effort to counter hacker attacks, cyber-fraud and terrorist activities, opportunities to simplify control over the transport of goods, and issue certificates to citizens of one country in the territory of another in a digital format. Of course, common standards and coherence of national solutions will be required.

The results of partners in the Eurasian Economic Union related to the improvement of customs legislation are noticeable. Finally came into force a single Customs Code, unifying customs operations and customs declaration. The basic directions of the foreign trade policy with a view of stimulation of business activity are formulated. There are about 40 technical regulations. Many requirements are coordinated to sanitary, veterinary, Phyto control.

The area of interaction in the sphere of movement of services, capital, labor has been expanded [Aliyev, 2015]. A draft program of transport policy, draft concepts for a common electricity market, industrial and agrarian policy were developed. Much has been done with respect to labor migrants. Employees of the EEA member states are not required to obtain a work permit in the state of employment, education documents are recognized without the procedures for recognizing these documents (except for pedagogical, legal, medical, pharmaceutical activities). The term of temporary stay (residence) of workers of the EEA member states and family members on the territory of the state of employment is determined by the term of the labor or civil law contract. The social security (social insurance) of workers of the EEA member states and their family members is carried out under the same conditions and in the same manner as the citizens of the state of employment (except for the pension, which will be governed by the relevant individual international agreement). Workers of the EEA member states and members of their families also have the rights to freely transfer funds, receive medical assistance, receive education, and protect property. [Aliev, Ibraev. Leontiev, 2016]

It is encouraging to see indicators of mutual trade, which begins to overcome the downward trend, which was due to a fall in energy prices and a slowdown in economic growth in the EEA countries. It is known that in 2015, mutual trade decreased by 25.5%. However, in 2017 it increased by 26, 7% compared to 2016.

The growth of industrial production in the states of the Eurasian Economic Union was 2.5%, compared to 2016, in agriculture – 2.7% [Dolinin, 2017]. In January-November 2017, the growth of export deliveries of the Republic of Armenia to the market of the Unified Energy System of Armenia was registered by 40.4%. The volume of exports of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the common market of the EAEC increased by 31.3%. Export deliveries of the Kyrgyz Republic to the EEA countries increased by 25.7%. Export of goods of the Republic of Belarus to the state of the EEA increased by 20.9%. The volume of exports to the market of the Russian Federation increased by 27.8%. [ECE, 2017]. All this is an obvious effect of the applied integration efforts.

Certain hopes are currently placed on the implementation of the Basic Directions for Economic Development of the Eurasian Economic Union. In this document, the promotion of national long-term and medium-term goals for enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of the economies of member countries is postulated as the main tasks; the formation of additional sources of economic development based on the implementation of the competitive advantages of the Member States and the Union; increase mutual openness and importance of economies of member states by reducing exemptions, restrictions and barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor; promoting the strengthening of the positions of Member States in the market of third countries and in international organizations [ECE, 2015].

The document outlines the main directions of economic development, namely: ensuring macroeconomic stability; creation of conditions for growth of business activity and investment attractiveness; innovative development and modernization of the economy; ensuring the availability of financial resources and the formation of an effective financial market of the Union; infrastructure development and implementation of transit potential; development of human resources; resource saving and energy efficiency; regional development (interregional and cross-border cooperation); realization of foreign trade potential.

The mutual document defines the mechanisms for implementing the adopted strategy: ensuring the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, including by reducing restrictions and barriers; conduct a coordinated (coherent, unified) policy in accordance with the Treaty on the Union, including in the areas of the economy that have the integration potential. The effect of participation in the Union by 2030 for Member States is estimated to be up to 13 percent of the additional increase in gross domestic product.

Significant efforts are being made to create Free Trade Zones, especially since such big countries as India, Egypt, Iran, Singapore, etc. have shown interest in this. For example, the Agreement on a free trade zone with Vietnam, signed in May 2016, for 10 years, the zeroing of duties on almost 90% of goods, which will increase the turnover more than twice. The agreement provides for the obligations to protect intellectual property rights, cooperation in the field, e-commerce, as well as in public procurement, mutual liberalization of trade in services, investment and the transfer of individuals [RIA Novosti, 2015]. At present, Vietnam is experiencing high rates of growth in the supply of goods of mass demand to the EAE region.

Since mid-2014, Iran and India have increased the share of direct trade ties with the EEA. The creation of a free trade zone with Iran will give GDP growth to all states of the union. Russia, according to some estimates, can receive an additional \$ 1.3 billion [Vesti RU, 2018] However, by now this figure in both cases reaches at least 85% [Believ, 2015].

The attractiveness of the establishment of the Eurasian Union Free Trade Zones with India and Iran is, unfortunately, complicated by the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. This also acts as a deterrent to the entry of the Azerbaijan itself into the Eurasian Union. Therefore, Armenia sees the EAEC as an institution that allows to rely on Russia's support, incl. in the sphere of economic security, to hope for improvement of their economic performance. It is no coincidence that the country does not consider signing an agreement on a free trade zone with the EU, it is only an expanded partnership between Armenia and the European Union. Such a declarative nature of the partnership agreement was signed by the parties on November 24, 2017. It touches upon the issues of customs, foreign trade, investment, macroeconomic policy, and other branches of the economy.

Taking a balanced position, the countries participating in the EAEC try not to rush events with the expansion of their membership. There are quite objective reasons for this. Restraining factor for joining the Union of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan is China's active economic expansion in this region. China is now a major investor in modernizing the economies of these states, besides offering to implement a large-scale project to build a railway between China and Central Asia [Mekhtiyev, 2018; Edovina, 2017]. This is an objective factor that distances the Central Asian republics from the EAEC.

Memorandum of cooperation, as a result, the status of an observer is what Moldova was capable of, determining its participation in the EEMP. Given the strong position of the pro-Western majority in the Moldovan parliament, it will not be easy to achieve more. But even this approach allows Moldova to participate in the discussion of those issues that are of interest to it, speak out on technical regulations for products that go through our border. Statistics show that most of the Moldovan goods are supplied to the EEA countries, which do not sell in the European Union: 98% of all exports of apples, 77% of canned vegetables, and 66% of medicines [Tribuna.ru, 2017]. And a significant part of the supplies falls not only on the Russian market, but also other states of the Eurasian Union – Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia.

The advantages of integration cooperation in the EAEC are in many respects the creation of the Customs Union. The entry into force of the Customs Code makes it possible to simplify and speed up customs formalities and improve customs regulation qualitatively. Priority in the declaration of goods is now an electronic way, the release itself in most cases – automatic (based on a risk analysis). The entire procedure should be completed in 4 hours (before this time was a day). The number of documents submitted for customs clearance is reduced. It is not required to declare transit for the movement of goods by air from one part of the territory of the EAGE to another through the territory of non-members of the Customs Union.

At the same time, the issue of setting up joint customs posts of the EAEC member countries becomes urgent, as the President of Russia, V.V. Putin [Putin VV, 2017]. Recall that the Kazakh-Kyrgyz crisis was resolved only through joint customs control, preventing the inflow of counterfeit goods from China. Such problems took place on the Belarusian-Russian border, through which counterfeit Polish goods went.

The EAEC is to improve the mechanism to remove obstacles, limit barriers, exemptions and restrictions that impede Eurasian integration. In the «White Paper» prepared by the Eurasian Economic Commission, there are almost 60 of them. Seizures (total17) are deviations from the general rules for the formation of the internal market of the EAES. Barriers (their 9) are considered obstacles to the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital, labor. Restrictions (total 34) are obstacles to the movement of goods, services, capital, labor, arising from the inconsistency of national legislation with the law of the Union. Tabularly it looks like this:

| State party                | Barrier | Withdrawal | Restriction | Total |
|----------------------------|---------|------------|-------------|-------|
| Republic of Armenia        | 2       | 6          | 33          | 41    |
| Republic of Belarus        | 3       | 7          | 33          | 43    |
| The Republic of Kazakhstan | 3       | 8          | 33          | 44    |
| Republic of Kyrgyzstan     | 0       | 7          | 33          | 40    |
| Russian Federation         | 6       | 8          | 34          | 48    |

Table 1 – Number of obstacles applied by the UNEG member states

Source: Barriers, Exemptions and Restrictions of the Eurasian Economic Union. Report //http://barriers.eaeunion.org/api/info/ document/38/file [White Paper, 2017]

Elimination of these obstacles is possible in the way of harmonization of legislation, timely detection of new barriers and restrictions, conducting professional consultations on pre-trial settlement of trade and economic differences, etc.

Despite the considerable reserves, it is too early to talk about the seven-mile step in the integration of the EAPC member countries. Too different economies of the states belonging to this union. One can agree with A. Devyatkov that «as countries with developing and predominantly raw materials economy they are not so much partners as competitors to each other, in particular, in attracting investments» [Gazeta.ru, 2018 a].

A serious problem is non-tariff, administrative barriers. They violate the EAEC Treaty, forcing importers to undergo a repeated examination procedure for products, for which there are documents issued by accredited bodies of the member countries of the Economic Union. As part of mutual trade, this creates unfair competition, undermining business confidence.

Marking of goods imported into the territory of the Unified Energy System by means of identification is necessary, which will allow «removing entire sectors of the retail trade from the shade, increasing the collection of taxes» [Gazeta. ru, 2018b], excluding the appearance of duplicates of goods and the possibility of re-entry of goods to the market, including with expired shelf life.

## Conclusion

The integration association needs a single infrastructure industrial policy, which will contribute to an increase in the rates of growth in industrial production, its competitiveness, the development of innovations, cooperative cooperation, and the increase in the volume of mutual trade.

The presence of countless problems does not mean, however, that it is necessary to deviate from this integration project.

First, the Customs Union was held as a rather high level of integration (there are few examples of efficiently functioning customs unions in the world).

Secondly, the EAEC allows its member countries to preserve traditional sales markets.

In addition, there is a real opportunity to expand integration links in such areas as ecology, nuclear energy, renewable energy sources, space, tourism.

Time will tell if the EAEC, having overcome the political differences of individual member countries, harmonizing the law of the Economic Union with national legislation, streamlining the activities of customs and control (supervision) bodies, to enter new horizons of integration.

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