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RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

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Abstract

Considering the prospects of expanding the interaction of the Eurasian Economic Union with a number of countries. At present, the number of countries cooperating within the framework of the Union is rapidly increasing, which confirms the relevance and significance for the development of this organization in the international arena. A clear example is the recent signing of a free trade treaty between the EAEU and Serbia on October 25, 2019. Besides, the political and legal aspect is also essential for these events. It seems reasonable to study the origins of the formation and development of the Union in order to ensure further analysis of developments in the context of expansion of cooperation within the framework of the EAEU and to forecast the prospects for such development. The history of unification of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union is a complex and multistage process. In order to identify the most effective method of forecasting the results of cooperation and its prospects within the framework of the EAEU, it seems reasonable to consider not only the historical aspect, but also the objectives of a detailed institutional system within this interstate organization, as well as its role and importance in the integration into the EAEU. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the scale of convergence of the strategies of the member states since their accession to the EAEU, as this factor also reflects the prospects for the development of the Eurasian Economic Union.

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Keywords: Eurasian Economic Union, interstate organization, integration processes, retrospective analysis.



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1. Introduction

The problem of analyzing such an interstate integration association as the Eurasian Economic Union is mainly triggered by the fact that the EAEU was formed in the territories that were formerly part of a single state. These territories were originally part of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union. Drawing a parallel with the European Union, we may recall the Roman Empire, which united a significant part of the European nations. Later, the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation was proclaimed, which at different times and to a different extent of unity also united many peoples of the countries of the modern European Union (Pikov, 2002). The Eurasian Economic Union, in turn, can have a greater potential for integration due to objectively common history of the EAEU member states, which, in turn, ensures a completely different level of interaction. Indeed, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that there are many inequalities among the EAEU member states regarding the potential of these countries. Thus, due to its size, population and a number of other factors the GDP of the Russian Federation is quite different from the average level of the rest of the member states.

Another distinctive feature of the Eurasian Economic Union is the detailed institutional system, which was created taking into account the practice of the European Union (Morozov, 2018). The institutional system of the EAEU is clearly structured and balanced, which undoubtedly plays a key role in the wide implementation of the international legal personality of the Union (Grebnev, 2016), and has a positive impact on the efficiency of interaction between the EAEU member states.

2. Problem Statement

A key aspect of formation and successful functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union is the historical relations between its member states. Today's member states of the Eurasian Economic Union – the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan – covered most of the territory of the Russian Empire and were part of it until the collapse.

Together with close historical relation the successful development and functioning of the EAEU provides a detailed institutional system of the Union, which was also formed taking into account the peculiarities of historical interaction between the member states and their previous common territorial organization.

3. Research Questions

The subject of this study is the integration of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the context of their historical relations with Russia. The study considers in detail the historical relations of Russia with such EAEU states as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus.

Regarding Armenia, the issue of the history of Eastern Armenia was considered separately, since at the beginning of the 19th century there was no unified Armenian state, and most Armenians lived in the territory of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. The main entities of the territory of Eastern Armenia were the Yerevan Khanate and the Nakhichevan Khanate, which came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire in accordance with the Turkmanchai Peace Treaty. Khachikyan (2009) writes about the state in which

Armenians were protected by law in the Russian Empire. This situation also contributed to Armenian migration to Eastern Armenia, which allowed the Russian part of Armenia to considerably develop its economy. Armenia was quite quickly integrated into the administrative-territorial plan: “The Russian-style administrative-territorial division into regions and provinces was carried out” (Khachikyan, 2009, p. 54). The East Armenian territories that were part of the former Russian Empire declared independence on 28 May 1918, but were captured by Turkey and Soviet Russia in 1920. The Soviet Republic of Armenia was formed on 29 November 1920. In 1922 Armenia became part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Later in 1936, Armenia became the union Republic of the Soviet Union (Dowsett et al., 2019).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union on 29 May 1991, Armenia signed a treaty on the accession of the Republic of Armenia to the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, which was undoubtedly justified by the historical relations of states and their desire for further cooperation, but already as independent states.

Regarding the issue of Kazakhstan’s accession to the Eurasian Economic Union, it is worth noting the duration of Kazakhstan’s accession to Russia. Dmitrienko (2013) attributes the beginning of this process to the thirties of the 18th century and its completion in the late fifties of the 19th century. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Kazakhstan became a battlefield of Bolshevik troops and units, the so-called the White Russians. As a result of the civil war, today’s Kazakhstan became part of the Autonomous Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, which was an administrative and territorial entity of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. After a series of transformations, on 5 December 1936, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic was formed as the union republic of the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics. During the crisis of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in a referendum in Kazakhstan, 94.1% of Kazakhstani voters voted for the preservation of the USSR and for the preservation of the Kazakh Federal Socialist Republic, which demonstrates the scale of Kazakhstan’s interest in subsequent close cooperation with Russia. Peaceful development trends in the history of the two countries have long created a mutually beneficial, development-oriented atmosphere for Kazakhstan’s accession to the EAEU.

The issue of Kyrgyzstan’s historical relations and integration with Russia has been worth considering since the mid-19th century. In 1855 the Issyk-Kul people voluntarily accepted Russian nationality (Ormonova, 2014), in 1862 – Chuy, and in 1863 – Tian-Shan Kyrgyz. The others followed suit. By the autumn of 1863, North Kyrgyzstan, on which territory most Kyrgyz lived, voluntarily joined Russia. After the collapse of the Kokand Khanate, the southern Kyrgyz became part of Russia. According to T. Usabaliev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kyrgyz SSR, the integration of Kyrgyzstan into the Russian Empire was extremely progressive for the future of the Kyrgyz people. Later was the Soviet period of Kyrgyzstan, which ended with the events of 1991. On 31 August 1991 the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan decided to adopt the declaration On Independence of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, but like Kazakhstan, the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz Republic in this declaration advocated the conclusion of a new union treaty, in other words, the reform of the Soviet Union, rather than the termination of its existence or the fundamental independence of the Kyrgyz Republic from the other union republics and the Soviet Union.

There is also a need to address the historical relations between Belarus and Russia. The states, on which territory the majority of Slavic peoples have historically lived, have close relations since the establishment of the Ancient Russian state. During the spread of the Rurikovich influence on Slavic tribes and the establishment of the Grand Prince Throne in Kiev, there was one strong principality – Polotsk on the territory of the present-day Belarus. Later it was frequently featured in medieval Russian history. According to Belarusian historians Novik et al. (2013), the tribes that lived on the territory of modern Belarus are mentioned in the chronicles as participants of the Grand Prince Oleg of Kiev's *скыфву* to Byzantium in 907. In the aftermath, the territories of Belarus were long a kind of periphery between the powers until Polish and Baltic lands were absorbed by the Russian Empire. Belarus met the 1917 revolution as part of the Russian Empire. Later, after the collapse of the Belarusian People's Republic, which lasted less than a year under the conditions of the perfect post-revolutionary rift, the Belarusian Union Socialist Republic was formed. Belarus was one of the countries that signed the so-called Belovezhsky Agreement, establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States together with Russia and Ukraine.

The problem of further unification of states before the formation of the EAEU shall also be considered in this study. After the collapse of the USSR, part of the states of the post-Soviet space was united by the Commonwealth of Independent States, which to some extent contributed to the preservation of territorial unity and close relations between them. As long ago as in 1994, the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev announced the idea of creating the Eurasian Union. The idea was to ensure full integration of new states on a mutually beneficial economic basis. From the Commonwealth of Independent States, the new union was to be characterized by a clearer and more detailed institutional system, as well as a significant amount of regulatory authority.

However, the rapprochement of Eurasian states began as early as 1995, when Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia signed the Customs Union Treaty. According to the Russian scientist Likhachev (2010), the collapse of the USSR entailed huge economic costs based on the chaotic collapse of the unified economic space of the former USSR. On 29 March 1996, in Moscow, the Presidents of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation signed the Treaty on Deepening Economic and Humanitarian Integration. Naturally, the acquisition of any independence (autonomy, sovereignty) is accompanied by the strengthening of local forces. Referring to Likhachev (2010), "new national elites were formed that formulate their interests" (p. 6), which is expected to lead to such a problem as large-scale disintegration, which was partially overcome by the creation of the Customs Union.

The problem of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 made the participants of the Customs Union face the question of finding new forms of cooperation to ensure stability and efficiency of economic cooperation. A new stage in the development of the post-Soviet space was launched on May 29, 2014. At the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the Presidents of the member states of the CU and the UAE signed the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which in essence is the emergence of a completely new form of interaction between historically close states.

A separate part of the study is also devoted to the prospects for the development of the Eurasian Economic Union taking into account the efficiency its institutional system, as well as the scale of

integration of the states within the framework of the EAEU. At present, the EAEU has a balanced self-sufficient institutional model, objectively justified by the current level of integration of the five member states. The institutional system of the EAEU at the moment is as follows: the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as the Court of the Eurasian Economic Union. At the same time, in comparison with the European Union, the potential of the institutional system of the EAEU is not fully involved, in particular the competence of the Court of the EAEU, but it is worth taking into account the term of operation of the EAEU as it is a relatively young entity (Morozov, 2018). However, the Eurasian Economic Union has many prospects, including the development of an institutional system that will subsequently ensure the far more effective integration of its member states.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify historical aspects of the formation of the EAEU as an interstate integration association, as well as to determine the prospects for further development of the Union on the basis of the efficiency of the institutional system and the scale of cooperation between the states within the EAEU.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study included popular scientific methods of research: analysis, including retrospective analysis, dialectics, as well as synthesis, induction and deduction. The comparative-historical method was used in this study as the practical method.

6. Findings

Based on the above, the following conclusions can be made.

First, one of the key aspects of the creation of the EAEU is the common historical background, which allows the EAEU countries to cooperate at a completely different level. The special feature of the EAEU countries is that compared to other countries of the post-Soviet space, these countries had a much closer relationship with the Russian Empire, and with regard to the history of the Soviet Union – after the collapse of the unified state organization, the current EAEU member states sought to effectively transform the Union into a different form of joint state organization – federation or confederation.

Secondly, the efficiency of functioning and prospects of development of the Eurasian Economic Union are caused not only by the common historical past of the member states, but also by the effective institutional system formed within the framework of the EAEU, through which effective interaction aimed at achieving the goals of the Union can be carried out.

7. Conclusion

As a relatively young interstate integration association the Eurasian Economic Union has many prospects. The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union is the result of the centuries-long historical

development, which faced many ups and downs. The EAEU member states have repeatedly demonstrated their readiness for interstate cooperation and integration.

Based on the historical past of the member states and the balanced institutional system within the Union, the Eurasian Economic Union is well positioned to further development and greater integration of the member states within the EAEU. It seems reasonable to expect in the near future not only to increase the level of interaction between the member states, but also to expand the EAEU by including culturally and historically related states. It can be concluded that the message of the President Nursultan Nazarbayev addressed in 1994 was partially implemented.

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