



The role of Kazakhstan in the Eurasian economic union

RUSLAN ZHAKUPOV *

Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, The Kazakh Ablai Khan University,
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Abstract

Aim: The study's overarching goal is to examine Kazakhstan's efforts to join international organizations. Using a multi-pronged foreign policy, Kazakhstan is preparing to play a significant role in a wide variety of international organizations, including the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

Method: The study includes a comprehensive literature review of research on Kazakhstan's participation in the Eurasian Economic Union and its relations with the other member states.

Findings: The findings prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Kazakhstan was an instrumental player in the establishment and growth of the EEU. The potential benefits of continuing to implement this initiative are substantial, and it represents one of the country's top policy priorities. Moreover, a considerable part of it has already been translated into reality.

Implications/Novel Contribution: The article offers new insight by discussing the opportunities for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to join the EEU alongside the foreign policy interests of Kazakhstan within the organization. Few studies have been done on this topic so far.

Keywords: Eurasian integration, Multi-vector foreign policy, EEU

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INTRODUCTION

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan's President N.A. Nazarbayev played a significant role in creating the framework for Eurasian integration. He published his arguments for closer ties between Eurasia's nations in 1997 under the title "Eurasian Union: Ideas, Practice, Prospects," detailing how the region could benefit from closer ties in areas such as economics, defense, the environment, and the dissemination of knowledge (Azizam, Ismail, Sulong, Nor, & Ahmed, 2015; Nazarbaev & Evrazijskij, 1997; Yoo, Lee, & Lee, 2016).

According to Thanasripanitchai (2017); Zakon Kazakhstan (2006), on March 29, 1994, President of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbayev first proposed the idea of the Eurasian Union in a speech at Moscow State University. N. Nazarbayev also pointed out that the emergence of national statehood and the necessity of integration are the two main factors shaping the post-Soviet space today. In his speech in Moscow, Nazarbayev laid out the two pillars of the future Eurasian Union: economic cooperation (in the form of the EEU) and defense cooperation (in the form of the Collective Security Treaty Organization [CSTO]). In addition, N. Nazarbayev laid out the future organization's objectives, guiding principles, and framework.

In the years that followed, the idea fostered by Astana blossomed into the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the Customs Union (CU), the Common Economic Space (CES), and, finally, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Therefore, it was not a fluke that the Treaty on the Establishment of the EurAsEC was signed in Astana in October 2000 by the leaders of five states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan). After 14 years, in Astana, an agreement was signed to establish the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), the organization that would eventually replace EurAsEC.

Furthermore, President Nazarbayev has publicly proposed, for the first time, that the capital of Kazakhstan serve as the future center of the new integration association. To put the Union's executive bodies in Astana "would

* Corresponding author: Ruslan Zhakupov

† Email: rusli@inbox.ru

be an honest tribute to Kazakhstan as the initiator of the idea of Eurasian integration," as stated by (Acheampong & Moyaid, 2016; Cuyugan et al., 2017; Nazarbaev, 2011; Wongchotewiriyakit & Ractham, 2018).

However, the very fact that the idea was proposed by the head of state and implemented jointly with the leaders of neighboring states. The constituent documents signed in Astana speak volumes about Kazakhstan's historic role in Eurasian integration. Because of this, many current ideas, methods, and regional development programs in the Eurasian space originated in Astana and continue to be implemented there. Also, significant political and economic decisions are made that have far-reaching effects on both regional growth and global systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Constituent Agreement on the creation of the EEU, the parties (Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus) agreed on the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor, conducting a coordinated, coordinated or unified policy in the economic sphere. On the basis of the Treaty, the Union was endowed with international legal personality, in particular the right to carry out international cooperation with states, international organizations and international integration associations (Dogovor, 2007; Karim, Elyas, Mahmood, & Hossein, 2017).

The Eurasian Economic Union began operations on January 1, 2015. From January 2, 2015, after the completion of all ratification procedures, the Republic of Armenia became a full member of the EEU. On August 12, 2015, after the implementation of the roadmap and the completion of the ratification procedures, the Kyrgyz Republic became a full member of the EEU. Thus, by the autumn of 2015, the formation of the EEU as part of five participating countries was completed. The creation of the EEU was the result of a search for the format and directions of equally beneficial cooperation. The EEU Member States chose to unite (synergy) the potentials of national economies in the interests of their sustainable development (Nurgaliyeva, 2016; Osra, 2017).

When Kyrgyzstan joined the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan played a significant role in this. When Kyrgyzstan faced major economic problems, Kazakhstan, along with Russia, helped to provide financial assistance in the framework of the Eurasian Development Bank.

Citizens of Kyrgyzstan associate the expectations of joining the EEU with the improvement in the position of labor migrants in Russia and Kazakhstan, the number of which now amounts to hundreds of thousands of people, and their bank transfers correspond to the sum of 16.5% of the Kyrgyz Republic's GDP (Kamran & Zhao, 2016; Temir, 2016).

If we comprehensively take the competitive advantages of the country's economy, we can distinguish the following areas: the textile industry, the mining industry, agriculture, metallurgy.

The textile industry is one of the priorities of the country's economy. This sector of the economy is considered promising in connection with the demand for goods in the budget price segment of Russia and Kazakhstan. Within the framework of the EEU, the Kyrgyz textile industry can slightly press Chinese products, although domestic enterprises operate mainly on imported material (Chinese or Turkish).

METHODOLOGY

Most experts rightly believe that Armenia's accession to the EEU is more political than economic reality. On the one hand, the security issues of Armenia, surrounded by such states as Azerbaijan and Turkey, should come first. Armenia connects the main security guarantees with Russia and its membership in the CSTO. Yerevan is positioning itself as a strategic ally of the Russian Federation in the Transcaucasian region. Confirmation of the special status of Armenia is intended to be its entry into the EEU.

As part of the study, a systematic literary review of the work related to the activities of Kazakhstan in the Eurasian Economic Union and its relations with other member states of the organization is carried out. The results were generalized in order to describe the phenomenon of the "Eurasian idea" and its development before the institutionalization of the new organization from the Kazakhstan point of view. In this regard, the concept of Eurasianism is taken as the basis of the study - a philosophical and political doctrine that emphasizes the continuity and interaction of the cultures of the peoples inhabiting the Eurasian space. At the same time, a review of the

activities of participating States in the historical dynamics of their joint development is carried out using the system-chronological method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As for the accession of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to the EEU, according to some experts, this is hardly probable. In particular, Uzbekistan left the Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2006, refusing integration projects initiated by Russia and Kazakhstan. At the same time, membership in the EEU is not so beneficial for Tajikistan due to possible restrictions on trade with countries that are not part of this economic space (Li, 2016). But, in our opinion, membership in the EEU for Tashkent and Dushanbe is an attractive project from an economic point of view because it provides access to the labor markets of Kazakhstan and Russia.

Although there may be a security problem with the expansion of the EEU, since with the removal of visa and customs barriers after the opening of borders, Kazakhstan and Russia could potentially become more vulnerable due to the danger of radical Islamist groups entering. But, on the other hand, in the case of the accession of new states of Central Asia, it will be possible to coordinate activities to combat drug trafficking, Islamic terrorism, and illegal migration throughout the Asian part of the post-Soviet space.

Tajikistan continues to study the issue of the country's entry into the Eurasian Economic Union. Since the Eurasian Economic Union is a structure that includes the main trade and economic partners of Tajikistan - Russia, Kazakhstan and other CIS countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, all integration processes taking place within the framework of this union are certainly interesting for Tajikistan.

Currently, Tajikistan actively cooperates with all member countries of this association, both in a bilateral format and within the framework of regional organizations. In terms of foreign trade, Russia ranks first, then Kazakhstan. Russia and Kazakhstan occupy leading positions in the total trade turnover of Tajikistan (Wikipedia, 2005).

At present, there is a permanent working group in the Ministry of Economic Development of Tajikistan to study issues related to integration processes within the EEU. This is not only customs cooperation. This is a very wide range of cooperation, and this process is not completed and is constantly being studied.

Therefore, in general, in the current geopolitical situation, the Central Asian expansion of the EEU acquires a significant place in the further development of this organization, since the accession of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will open new opportunities for access to new markets and sources of raw materials, as well as new ways of security cooperation.

But, as is known, for Kazakhstan, the EEU is primarily a platform for economic cooperation, since from the very beginning, Kazakhstan, in accordance with a multi-vector foreign policy, denies any form of violence policy over the economy. Therefore, in the context of the current global processes, it is of fundamental importance that the EEU is represented by N. Nazarbayev as an economic project, in the context of broad interaction with the European Union and other significant associations.

And at the same time, in the opinion of the President of Kazakhstan, the EEU will not be in any way directed against the so-called Chinese economic expansion, since the strategic partnership with China remains among the priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

At this stage, the member countries of the EEU are creating Free Trade Zones and are focused on the mechanism of linking the EEU with the Silk Road Economic Belt. This task of finding a consensus is very difficult, but nevertheless, a common EEU export strategy is being developed. At the same time, it is important that all the EEU countries share the goals of the integration association and adhere to the developed Strategy of the development of the economic union until 2030 (Lapenko, 2015).

For Kazakhstan, as for other countries of Central Asia, it is important to participate in the implementation of integration projects, to effectively use new opportunities and benefits of regional cooperation, trying to minimize risks and threats. In the long run, this may be a guarantee for the creation of new clusters of the economy and, ultimately, lead to the growth of other sectors of the economy.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Thus, the role of Kazakhstan in the formation and development of the EEU as one of the active participants in this formation is indisputable. Further prospects for the implementation of this initiative are large-scale and represent one of the priority directions of the country's development, moreover, a considerable part of it has already been translated into reality. Eurasian integration clearly demonstrates that the formation of similar national models does not abolish the political independence of the states of the region. At the same time, numerous prerequisites are created for a modernized type of their relationship, which is based on trust, partnership, and the application of the same principles and criteria to both economic and political interaction.

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