

The Eurasian Economic Union: prospective regional integration in the post-Soviet space or just geopolitical project?

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Abstract

Despite the strong competition on the part of the European Union (EU) to become a main integrator in the Post-Soviet Space, the Russian Federation (RF) has not abandoned the idea of continuing to promote integration among ex Soviet Union's republics and as a result, on the basis of the Eurasian Economy Community (EAEC), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which is meant to become a link between Europe and Asia, has been created. This contribution aims to analyse the integration in the Post-Soviet Space and the role and perspectives of a new agent in the region, the EEU. With regard to methodology of research, such theoretical methods as analysis of literature and authors' opinions, analyses of official legal documents and statistics data and comparative analysis of institutions were applied.

Keywords: Eurasian Economic Union, European Union, Integration in Post-Soviet Space, regionalism

1. Introduction

The 21st Century is characterized as the age of power of international institutions and organizations. However, modern international institutions are rather passive in problem solving and conflict resolution. The matter of the United Nations (UN) reform, despite long discussion, has not yet been solved. In a situation where the countries cannot fully count on international organizations, regional integration becomes more and more popular.

The European model, which emerged after the Second World War in Western Europe, and which supposes the existence of supranational institutions, was a pioneer in this field and therefore many authors tend to consider European

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integration as the only normative example for other groups of countries situated outside the European Union. Nevertheless, the term ‘regional integration’ has transcended the limit of the European Union: groups of countries of both South and East Asia, Latin and North America and the former Soviet Union offer the world alternative models of regional integration.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baltic States decided to join the EU while the rest of the former members attempted to create different regional organizations in the Post-Soviet Space. Some countries hesitated between the incorporation into the EU and the integration proposed by Russia. And it is worth recognizing that the EU created a strong competition for the RF to become the main integrator in the region.

However, the RF has not abandoned the idea of continuing to promote the integration in the post-Soviet Space and as a result, on the basis of the EAEC, the EEU, which is meant to become a link between Europe and Asia, has been created.

The present investigation aims to analyse the integration in the Post-Soviet Space and the role and perspectives of a new agent in the region, the EEU. Does this young organization have perspectives to become a strong competitive regional project or does it risk to remain nothing more but another attempt on the part of Russia to return its leadership in the region?

2. Methodology

During this investigation, both positive and neo-institutional approaches were used. The positive approach serves for explaining things as they really are, and we used it with a view to analyse the integration in the Post-Soviet Space and the Eurasian Economic Union. With this purpose, the following theoretical methods were applied:

- Analysis of literature and authors’ opinions
- Analysis of official legal documents, such as the Agreement of the Eurasian Union Economic and annex therein
- Analysis of official data of Russian CIS’s and customs statistics
- Comparative analysis between the EEU’s ‘stages’ of formation and Balassa’s stages’.

In the 21st century defined by the power of institutions and international organisms, the institutional approach is used with increasing frequency. The neo-institutionalism focuses on surveys of institutions, characterized as places where different social actors carry out their practices and bases on the following core promises: methodological individualism; limitation of human beings’ intelligence; opportunistic behaviour; comparison of existing and inefficient institutions with alternative and efficient ones. Thus, during this investigation, the EEU’s institutions were analysed and compared with EU institutions.

3. Evolution of integration on the post-Soviet Space

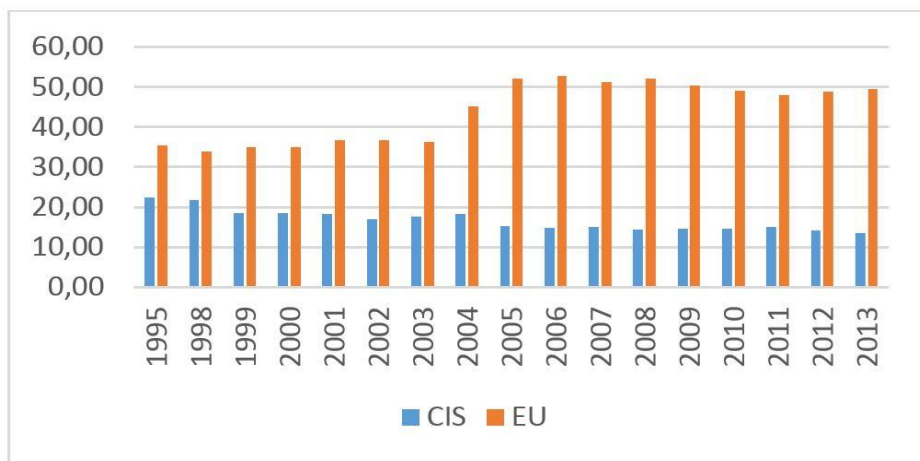
After the dissolution of the USSR, the RF promoted the integration on the Post-Soviet Space. However, it is worth mentioning that despite its ambitions to become the main integrator in the area, the RF has not always been the only initiator of all projects: there was also the proposition promoted by other post-Soviet countries, which did not agree with the Russian domination, like the GUAM (Organization for Democracy and Economic Development). The projects of integration in the post-Soviet Space are represented in Annex1.

Observing Table 1, we can argue that most integration attempts were not successful. Several reasons for these failures can be mentioned. First and foremost, it is worth stressing that most integration projects in the post-Soviet Space, unless the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), were between former members. Thus, from this point of view, it can be said that the SCO is the most progressive form and has prospects because it admits the incorporation of other powerful agents in the region. Second, the economic level of the member countries and the political regime were quite different. Even some states (such as Uzbekistan, Belarus or Turkmenistan) still kept some elements of planned economy; the speed of reform also differed (however, the diversity among participating countries was not greater than among EU members during the 2004 enlargement), (Chubik and Pelipas, 2004). Third, the collapse of the USSR and the creation of independent countries caused territorial disputes in the post-Soviet area, which, on its turn, became a serious obstacle for the integration processes in the region. Moreover, Russia's recovery and reinforcement of its position on the international stage and its claims for leadership in the region had a contradictory impact (there were both allies and opponents). Fourth, and finally, despite all agreements, there was competition between some members (like 'sugar wars' between Russia and Ukraine), which influenced their mutual exchange. Thus, speaking of integration in the Post-Soviet area, it can be concluded that the integration existed on paper while in reality it did not present any political or economic power (Obydenkova, 2011; Libman and Vinokurov, 2012; Hansen, 2013).

Thus, the failure of the post-Soviet integration processes is confirmed and despite the fact that the RF chose the CIS countries as priority partners, its role as a main integrative leader did not have any success. Other world powers, as the USA, the EU and China try to influence the region by creating a tough competition for Russia. As a result, commercial relations with the CIS showed a negative dynamic and the weight of exchange with the CIS in the common trade of the RF kept declining year after year (see figure1), despite the growth on mutual exchange being the main indicator of the efficiency of integration processes in the world practice.

The exchange between Russia and the CIS with respect to Russian common trade since 1995 decreased from 22.5% to 16.6%, while the trade with the European Union grew fast turning it into the main commercial partner of the Russian Federation. In 2006 the trade with the EU reached its maximum of 52.7% of all the Russian trade, decreasing slightly by 2013 to 49.5 % (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Russia's trade with the CIS and the EU (in %).



Source: Own representation on the basis of Russtat, available at <http://www.gks.ru>.

The worst periods for the trade growth regarding previous years were in 1999 (due to the collapse in the RF in 1998) and 2009 (due to the world crisis of 2008). The strongest growth of the Euro-Russian trade was registered in 2004-2005; it was then when the partners rapidly developed the idea to create common spaces.¹ The trade with the CIS started to show negative results starting in 2011, which, related to Russia's incorporation to the WTO, led to a tougher competition for the enterprises of the post-Soviet Area (see Figure 2).

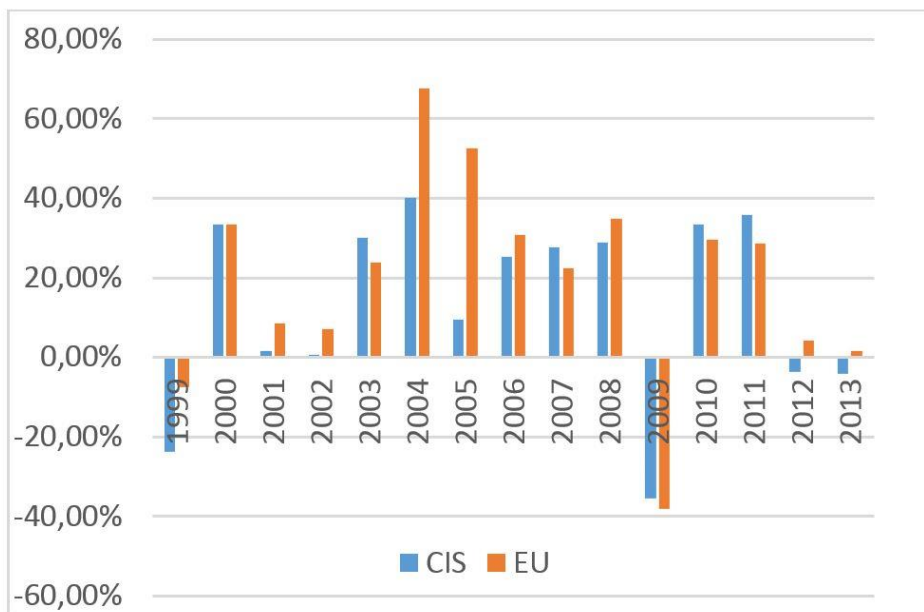
This kind of situation cannot satisfy in any way the ambitions of the Russian Federation. Therefore, it can be said that the new integration in the area of the former Soviet Union based on the EAEC is an attempt on behalf of Russia to return to leadership in the region and strengthen its positions at the international level.

¹ In 2003, the EU and the RF signed the agreement on the creation of four Common Spaces: Economic Common Space; Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice; Common Space on External Security; Common Space on Research, Education, Culture.

4. Formation of the Eurasian Economic Union

From the economic point of view, integration is the process by which we search for the gradual elimination of discriminatory measures between economic units and the formation of a common market between the different States (Balassa, 1964). Total or full economic integration involves harmonization of the financial system with the establishment of the single currency, unification of economic policies of the participating countries and common economic institutions. Nevertheless, it should be noted that some scholars like Baldwin (2012) explored Balassa's (1964) theory and empirically showed that Balassa's (op.cit.) 'stages' were not followed in any regional integration arrangement. The stages of the construction of the Eurasian Union, according to Balassa (1980), are present in Annex 2.

Figure 2. Growth of Russia's trade with the CIS and the EU respective previous years (in %).



Source: Own representation on the basis of Russtat, available at <http://www.gks.ru>.

Observing Annex 2, we can conclude that, for the EEU, the characteristic of the harmonization of economic policies and common currency has not been followed in practice. At the same time, the existence of the EEU's common institutions points out the total economic integration.

The idea of creating the Eurasian Economic Union was proposed by the President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbaev, in the 1990s. However, at that time, the proposal was not accepted and the President of Russia, V. Putin, returned to the project in 2011. Looking at Table 1, we can say that the integration of the region is developed in stages and the next step is the creation of a Monetary Union. There is a premise of united currency that will enter into force no later than 2025, and will be called altin.² This does not exclude the possibility that in time, the Union would be transformed into a political and military alliance capable of competing with NATO and China (Berres, 2014).

However, it is worth mentioning that a deeper integration does not always mean more effective integration, beneficiary for all members; for example, the creation of the Monetary Union requires a lot of effort and has its pros and cons. Therefore, the integration participants have to decide the extent to which they plan to get there and at what point they prefer to stand for it, taking into account its national, geopolitical, and economic interests. Today, according to their agreement, the Eurasian Economic Union members prefer to be limited to the economic objectives (article 4): creation of conditions for the member countries' economies development; the claim for the creation of the common market of goods, services, capital and human resources in the framework of a proper Union; the multilateral modernization, cooperation and competitiveness growth of national economies in the global economy (Agreement on the Eurasian Union Economic, article 4). In the Agreement of the Eurasian Economic Union, the main institutional basis of the Union, its regulation of work and functions are established (Table 1).

Table 1. Main institutions of the EEU

Institution	Composition	Meetings frequency	Competence
Supreme Eurasian Economic Council	Heads of States-members and people invited by the President of Council: experts, members of the Governing Commission, the president of the College of the Commission	No less than once a year	It is the superior institution. To investigate the main issues of the functioning of the Union, to develop the strategy, directions and prospects of development of integration, and to make decisions related to the realization of the

² Altin (of the Turkish language and Tartar alti – six or altin – I pray) – the face-value of the ancient Russian monetary system. The currency was minted for the first time in 1654, in copper. The silver altin appeared in 1704.

			objectives of the Union.
Eurasian Intergovernmental Council	Heads of Government of the states-members and other individuals and experts invited	No less than twice a year	Ensure and control the fulfilment of the present Agreement, international agreements, and decisions of the Supreme Council, to give instructions to the Commission, to accept the draft budgets of the Union, etc.
Eurasian Economic Commission	Collegiate body, the executive body of the Commission and Council that organizes the departments of the Commission composed of experts and officials	Permanent	Ensure the conditions of the daily operation and development of the Union, to elaborate proposals in the framework of the integration within the Union
Court of the Eurasian Economic Union	Judges, officials	Permanent	Ensure the common application by the countries-members and organs of the Union of international agreements within the Union, international agreements with third countries and decisions of the organs of the Union.

Source: Own representation based on the Agreement (Articles 8, 12, 14-17) and the annex therein.

Looking at Table 1, we can say that in appearance, institutions resemble those of the European Union. However, note the absence of the Eurasian parliament (although the leaders regularly negotiate its creation) that highlights the big difference from the institutional framework of the EU. So, talking about Eurasian institutions, they are characterized by the absence of the direct representative of the citizens of the Union. Sivickiy (2015) argues that Belarus and Kazakhstan block Russia's suggestions of forming a Eurasian parliament because they do not want politicization and see it as a direct threat to their national sovereignty. In addition, the Supreme Council has the wide circle of powers and

functions, which shows the predominance of vertical powers in the Union and the weak delegation of the authority.

For now, the Eurasian Economic Union consists in five countries. Armenia was incorporated at the beginning of January 2015 and Kyrgyzstan was incorporated at the end of May 2015. The Eurasian Economic Union nowadays is 182.1 million people and 14% of terrestrial parts of the world. However, the latest news admits the possibility that Kyrgyzstan will leave the organization (Schwartz, 2016). It is worth mentioning that despite the hopeful prospects promised by the new Eurasian Union, the exchange between members of the Customs Union in 2013 fell to 11.1% in comparison to 2012. The decline of trade between Russia and Belarus reached 14.5% and was by far the most significant (see Figure 3).

Table 2. Matrix of trade turnover between the countries, members of the Eurasian Union (Million \$ in 2013 and the percentage difference compared to 2012)

	Russia	Belarus	Kazakhstan
Russia		33582.6	26470.8
		-14.50%	2.80%
Belarus	33582.6		855.4
	-14.50%		0.60%
Kazakhstan	26470.8	855.4	
	2.80%	0.60%	

Source: Own representation based on official statistics data of Eurasian Economic Commission, available at <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/>.

Such a situation can be explained by the structure of the Union's trade: most of the exchange comes from the trade between Russia and Belarus (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Structure of Custom Union's commercial turnover



Source: Own representation based on official statistics data of Eurasian Economic Commission, available at <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/>.

The fall of the Russian-Belarusian trade in 2013 was caused by the incorporation of the Russian Federation in the WTO: it turned out that under the new circumstances, the majority of the Belarusian companies were not able to compete with the businesses of the EU and China.

5. Eurasian Union as a specific model of integration

By analysing the classic literature on integration (Wiener and Diez, 2005), we can assume that the existence of supranational institutions is a compulsory criterion for the construction of regional integration. However, in East Asia, the mere idea of limitation of sovereignty, in this case, its delegation to supranational level is compared to the revival of colonization. The ideal of East Asia's integration is not a universal and maximum possible integration, but a selective and controlled integration in an economy under the control of sovereign national governments (Boykov, 2007). Baldwin (2012) argues that one of the lessons of Europe's experience is that institutions produce feedback effects that favour deeper institutions, even if these forces are not strong enough to induce members to accept higher levels of supranationality.

When comparing European and Eurasian integration, it is necessary to take into account that Europe has a mature political culture, political cooperation of social groups and citizen movements, and formalized channels created to protect common interests, while in Asia, vertical communication and lack of differentiation of interests prevail (Avery, 2007).

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) was created according to the World Trade Organization rules using the experience of the European Union with the intention to turn it into the link between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, on the one hand, from the very beginning, in order to create the new Union, they chose the European model whose essential criteria, according to Wiener and Diez (2005), are supranational institutions, integration's complexity (starting with economic field to other areas of cooperation) and forming common 'demos'³. Brusis (2014), in turn, argues that the formal design of the Eurasian Economic Union institutions is hardly unusual due to the Eurasian organizations which used to imitate the EU in terms of the names and goals of regional integration agreements. Hancock (2009) considers Eurasia a rare example of what one could call 'plutocratic' regional agreements, where the smaller members delegate the decision-making power not to a supranational body, but to a larger member.

However, it is necessary to take into account the specific location of the Eurasian Union, which involves both European and Asian traditions, which makes the integration softer and less profound than the one observed in the European

³ It means the society of integrative community with the loyalty towards the common political centre.

Union. According to Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel (1999), the Asian model allows only partial and selective usage of supranational decision-making methods and from this point of view, integration in the area of the former Soviet Union rather acquires Asian features than European.

Despite the existence of supranational institutions, the members are considerably cautious with delegating their authorities, defending the sovereignty of independent governments. The problem and, at the same time, one of the features that distinguish the Eurasian Union from other integration entities, is the fact that the Union consists of countries that used to be part of the same country. Thus, speaking of the integration process, it is primarily about restoring old links that existed between members. Actually, after the fall of the USSR, the relationships between the former Soviet republics never broke: they maintained free movement of people, labor market rules, and provided a special regime for obtaining citizenship, etc. Moreover, the majority of the Eurasian Union population used to be USSR citizens USSR and therefore they have not lost their soviet identity, which could, on its turn, facilitate the creation of 'common demos'. Nevertheless, scholars argue that these ties will disappear in time just like the common Soviet culture will. In turn, these states will become part of either Europe or the Islamic world (Gleason, 2010; Malashenko, 2011; Tsygankov, 2012).

It is worth mentioning that the European Union includes countries of different size and geopolitical weight, while the Eurasian integration is characterized by the supremacy of Russia (Russian GDP is 304 times higher than Kyrgyz, 200 times higher than Armenian, 30 times higher than Belarusian and 9 times higher than Kazakh)⁴. In this way, problems related to the resolution and reconciliation of strategic goals emerge: for Russia, it is hard to be a partner with equal rights (Grinberg, 2013). The economic and military prevalence of Russia in comparison with other members of the Union can cause concerns with weaker participants. It should be noted that most regions have a hegemon. It means that a country has a dominant position by virtue of certain military, economic or political resources that it possesses (McKeown, 2009). Thus, the USA is a hegemon in North America, Brazil in South America, Germany, France in the EU, etc. Comparative regionalism studies have shown that these hegemons, or regional plutocrats, defined as economically dominant states able to provide substantial benefits to other members (Hancock, 2009), have historically been required for successful regional economic integration (Mattli, 1999). In the Eurasian region, Russia is clearly the plutocrat. Thus, Libman and Obydenkova (2013) prove that the concerns of Russian hegemony influence those countries that most actively participate in Eurasian regionalism. Meanwhile, others argue that Russia is not sufficiently strong to entice other states to join regional organizations (Libman, 2007).

⁴ World Bank Data, 2013.

The Eurasian Economic Union is a comparatively young organization and it can therefore use the experience and avoid the mistakes made by more mature organizations. However, its immaturity characterizes it as an unstable system, despite signed agreements and presence of supranational institutions. Integration processes are not finished yet and the possibility of reversible processes is not excluded.

However, some scholars like Hartwell (2013), Kuzmina (2015), Zagorski (2015), consider the EEU as the most ambitious and the most successful model for regional integration in the post-Soviet area. Nevertheless, Hartwell (2013) stresses that the EEU enters the most difficult phase of its existence; and the policymakers have to decide how deep should this integration be. Should it include a monetary union or should it remain focused on trade and labour flows only?

The history of European integration is a testament to the importance of convergence of member states' interests at different stages of integration. This convergence will be even more salient for the Eurasian integration process, because so far it has been more reliant on initiatives and agreements between heads of state. The convergence of preferences in key policy areas (such as trade regulation) will therefore be a crucial factor in the progress of Eurasian economic integration (Blockmans, Kostanyan and Vorobiov, 2012). Zagorski (2015), for example, highlights that the EEU is different from its predecessor organizations and thanks to its limited circle of participants of only three states, it is possible to develop a comprehensive set of rules in a short period of time. Moreover, the EEU represents the first integration project in the post-Soviet region that actually has an *acquis*.

Unfortunately, many scholars concur that EEU members have different goals in terms of the Eurasian integration: the regionalism contradicts nation-building projects, that for Russia the creation of the EEU is not so much an economic project but rather a geopolitical one with a purpose to remove post-Soviet countries from the economic alternative of associating with the EU and China and, indeed, to consolidate its role as a leading power (Kubicek, 2009; Zagorski, 2015; Satpayev, 2015; Sivickiy, 2015). Furthermore, they all highlight that the economy of the EEU is rather weak. Thus, Sivickiy (2015) argues that its members have different economic levels of development as well as different market-economy transformation processes at the national level; this ranges from a serious obstacle to the successful implementation of the EEU project (the economy of Belarus is still dominated by the state). Moreover, Russia and Kazakhstan are distinctly oriented towards raw materials while Belarus inherited a developed manufacturing industry from the USSR; also, it is only Russia that is a member of the WTO. To modernize their economies, Russia and Kazakhstan need to access to new technologies and there is no way to achieve this goal through the Eurasian integration. As for transition economies, their rates have been very

fluctuant. This is the result of a high dependence on the global market, particularly on the global demand for natural resources and primary products (Nica and Potcovaru, 2014). Also, most transition economies are not very diversified; they are not able to spread risks of lower global demand in particular industries on the entire domestic economy (Aleksashenko, 2012).

Erokhin (2014) argues that, today, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) seems to be the only alternative to the alliance of USA and the EU. Taking into account that the Western financial market is now limited for Russia because of sanction, BRICS becomes the largest source of investment. The size of the EEU is too small to become a real alternative to Russia's relations to China, to BRICS countries, or to grow into the regional power, comparable with the EU.

At the moment, the EEU is an example of regional integration in spite of the fact that its members are situated on two parts of the continent. Still, it is worth noting that the Union is an open organization and allows the possibility that, apart from the former Soviet republics, other countries can join. In this case, the integration in the former Soviet area can acquire a sub-regional character. The contract concerning the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) allows for the possibility of widening the circle of its member states. Presently, there are two possible variants of collaboration between individual states and the EEU: either a *full EEU-membership* (Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Tajikistan) or the *establishment of a free trade area* (Vietnam, Turkey). Regarding Tajikistan, which to this day has not given a clear answer to the question of whether it wants to join the Eurasian Economic Union, its accession would result in a number of positive consequences for this country, such as the preservation and expansion of the volume of exports and the legal protection of labour migration (Kuzmina, 2015). The possibility of incorporating Vietnam and Turkey is there; but the relevant projects are rather dubious and hard to carry out in practice.

Another specific feature of Eurasian integration is that it was created as a geopolitical response to the EU enlargement towards the East, and China's expansionistic tendencies towards Central Asian countries (Asanbekov, 2014). Recently, some scholars have argued that integrating with the EU would be more advantageous than joining Russia for post-soviet independent states (Movchan and Guicci, 2011; Shepotylo, 2013).

The next specific feature of Eurasian Economic Union is that many scholars prove that all its members have autocratic regimes. Thus, and according to Melnykovska (2012), Cameron and Orenstein (2012), and Vanderhill (2013), Russia uses regionalism as a tool to support fellow regimes. Meanwhile, Libman (2007), Allison (2008) and Collins (2009) assume that the leaders of the Eurasian integration countries are against domestic opposition to protect themselves and to ensure the mutual support of authoritarian regimes rather than for real common economic benefits. Bugajsky (2008) believes that if Eurasian countries are ruled by fellow autocrats, it is easier for Russia to control them. Obydenkova and

Libman (2014) criticize this perspective, proving that members with autocratic regimes become problematic partners for Russia due to the low credibility that this commitment provides.

In the real world, two main approaches to integration in the former Soviet area can be highlighted: some political powers, especially European and North American, consider it as a process of expansion of Russian hegemony and restoration of the USSR; others define it as open regionalism of neighbouring countries. In the literature, Sushko (2004) and Savietz (2012), for instance, stress that Russia uses Eurasian integration as a tool for its foreign policy in order to enhance control over neighbouring countries. In addition, some argue that a number of aspects require cooperation, if not integration, with neighboring states, such as environmental concerns, common transportation routes, oil and gas pipelines (Gleason, 2001).

6. Summary and conclusions

We have analysed integration in the post-Soviet area and concluded that most attempts were unsuccessful. That is to say, there was more integration on paper which ultimately had neither political nor economic successful outcomes.

Although in order to create the EEU, the European model was chosen, the integration of post-Soviet area acquired some features of the Asian model; it has been gentler and less profound compared with the European Union, and puts the emphasis on state sovereignty. In addition, the new Union consists of members that were previously part of the same country, which distinguishes it from other models of integration. So, talking about the process of integration in the EEU, the recovery of the old links that had existed between members is essential.

Despite the existence of supranational institutions similar to the European Union, their functions are not as extensive and the members of the EEU are quite careful in delegating their powers. In addition, we note the absence of the parliament, which does not allow to directly represent the interests of the citizens of the EEU as in the European Union.

Moreover the members of the EEU do not seem to have a common economic policy. Thus, in spite of the serious situation in Ukraine which led to the confrontation between the EU and the Russian Federation, members of the Eurasian Union carried out their own policy with the European countries, which contradicts the principles of the common economic policy within the Union.

Finally, it can be concluded that despite EEU's leaders affirmation that the EEU was created more as an economic rather than political union, the analysis of trade proves the contrary: the integration in the post-Soviet area is thereby considered as nothing but one more attempt on the part of Russia to return its leadership in the region and strengthen its position at the international level.

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Annex 1. Integration in the post-Soviet space

Integration Project	Participants	Objectives	Critical
The CIS (Community of Independent States) / 1991	-12 former Soviet Republics - Ukraine is participant and founder country but not a member -Turkmenistan associate member - Mongolia observer Retired: Georgia	- Collaboration in all fields (economic, political, humanitarian, etc) - Full development of all the members in the framework of the common economic area, cooperation between states and integration - Assurance of human rights and freedoms -Collaboration in the assurance of international peace and achieve general and complete disarmament - Mutual legal assistance -Peaceful resolution of conflicts and disagreements between the states-participants	According to V. Putin, the CIS was created for the ‘civilized divorce’ of the post-Soviet countries. Most of the objectives set remained on paper The organization could not prevent and solve conflicts in the post-Soviet area The dominance of Russia in the organization bothered other members The absence of supranational structures did not allow to deepen economic integration between the countries
The CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) / 1992	Russia Republic of Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Retired: Uzbekistan Georgia Azerbaijan	Defense of the territories of the member-states through the mutual efforts of the armies of any political threat of external war, global terrorism, drug trafficking, and disaster	Some experts assume that the structure is the political military alliance created as a counterweight to NATO. However, members declare that they consider the body not as an military alliance but as a regional organization that deals with a wide variety of problems in the field of security. As the organization has never participated in any military operation on behalf of the union in the war, sometimes considered to have no prospects
The GUAM (Organization for democracy and economic development) / 1997	Ukraine Georgia Azerbaijan Moldova Uzbekistan Retired: Uzbekistan	Establishment of democratic values, states of law and respect for Human Rights Assurance of sustainable development The security and stability at both international and regional levels Deepening of the European integration Development and collaboration in the fields of mutual interest	The Russian Federation considered this organization rather as an alliance against Russia or ‘organization of orange nations’ backed by the US (Yazikova, 2005). Other, less radical experts saw the organization as the counterweight to Russian supremacy. During its history, the organization had only five summits which demonstrates the irregularity of meetings. Many times, the organization has been characterized as ineffective and useless. In 2009, the president of Moldova stated that the GUAM as a regional organization is a non-starter and has no prospects

The State of the Union (the Union between the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus) / 1996	Russia Belarus	The creation of the economic, political, customs, humanitarian, monetary common space	Despite the efforts of both parties, the commitment to the creation of a monetary union was not achieved. During its history, the Union experienced both cooling and rapprochement in relationships. Although according to AyvarosBogdanos (2011), the rapprochement between the partners in 2011 was related to the difficult economic situation in the Republic of Belarus
OCAC (The Organization of Central Asian Cooperation) / 2002	Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Uzbekistan Tajikistan Russia	Collaboration in all fields Realization of common policy in the field of customs control Creation of common economic space Mutual Support in matters of external threat	In 2005 the members decided to join the EAEC and the organization ceased to exist.
EAEC (The Eurasian Economy Community) / 2000	Russia Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Uzbekistan Tajikistan Observers: Armenia Moldova Ukraine Retired: Uzbekistan	Creation of the Economic Union (deep integration) Collaboration in the UN	According to V. Putin, this is the most successful project in the post-Soviet area which achieved all its objectives. The Project has been the basis of Eurasian Economic Union The different level of economic development of member countries and Russia's domain
SCO (Shanghai Pact) The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation / 1996	Russia China Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Uzbekistan Tajikistan Observers: Afghanistan India Iran Mongolia Pakistan	Strengthening of friendship, confidence and good neighbourly relations between states Development of multilateral cooperation with the goal of supporting and ensuring the peace, security and stability in the region Fight against terrorism, separatism, drug traffic, arms trade, transnational crime, illegal emigration Collaboration in all fields of mutual interest	The organisation is considered more like a club of interests than an organisation with political and economic influence in the region, due to the dominance of bilateral relations between participants and lack of results of established objectives

	<p>Coordination of approaches for integration into the world economic system</p> <p>Assistance to ensure the freedoms and Human Rights</p> <p>Developing and maintaining relations with other international organizations</p> <p>Collaboration and prevention of international and regional conflicts and dispute resolution</p> <p>Mutual search for the solution to problems of XXI</p>
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Source: own representation.

Annex 2. Integration in the post-Soviet area on the basis of EAEC (according to Balassa)

Depth	Characteristics					Work from (year)	Participants
	There is neither customs tariff nor barriers for free trade	Common exterior customs tariff	Free movement of factors of production	Harmonization of economic policies. Common currency	Common Institutions and unification of policies		
Area of free trade	X					2011	Armenia Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Russia Tajikistan Uzbekistan
Customs Union	X	X				2010	Armenia Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Russia
Common market (Common Economic Space)	X	X	X			2012	Armenia Belarus Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Russia
Economic Union	X	X	X	There is neither harmonization		2015	Armenia Belarus

				of economic policies nor common currency			Kazakhstan Russia
Total Economic Integration					There are common institutions (see table 2)		

Source: own representation, based on Balassa's stages (1980, p. 860).