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**Master's Thesis of GSIS**

**The Discord surrounding  
Eurasian Economic Integration**  
*: Case-study on Belarus and Kazakhstan*

유라시아 경제통합에 관한 담론:  
벨라루스와 카자흐스탄 사례연구를 중심으로

**August 2023**

**Graduate School of International Studies  
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**The Discord surrounding  
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# Abstract

This research analyzes national preferences of Belarus and Kazakhstan who are members of the Eurasian Economic Union. By using Moravcsik's rationalist framework, this research will identify two different states' geopolitical and economic interests within the membership of the EAEU. This framework will also reveal the behavior of two states participating in international cooperation which is resulted from a reasonable process of selecting choices on national preferences and interests. By examining geopolitical and economic interests of two states mentioned above, this paper will reveal clear national preferences of two former Soviet Union states.

To begin with, this paper introduces the background of Belarus and Kazakhstan on geopolitical factors and economic factors to join the EAEU. This analyzes intentions of two states. Secondly, national preferences of two states show ideas on the international and domestic situations that the member states encounter before and after the time of membership in the EAEU. Thirdly, this paper shows various factors which effected Belarus and Kazakhstan's choices to join the Eurasian economic union. With three findings this research gives a comprehensive view on Belarus and Kazakhstan, and importantly, the EAEU.

Moreover, this research discovers meaningful results from the two status on economic and geopolitical interests. Belarus, with its geopolitical interests, show support for Russia, pro-Russian national preferences. In economic interests, Belarus's bilateral trade with Russia is important, pro-Russian monetary policy, and domestic economic factors affect heavily. With the comparison of two factors, this paper points out that for Belarus, economic interests are mor weighted than the geopolitical interests.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan shows different national preferences with Belarus. For Kazakhstan, the membership to the EAEU is more related to geopolitical concerns. Kazakhstan considers geopolitical interests seriously, with the multi-vectorism as their official diplomatic agenda and their devotion to increase its political voice in Eurasia region, under the name of the EAEU. Then, for economic interests, factors such as direct economic benefits impacted Kazakhstan to participate in the EAEU, particularly with foreign direct investments for their domestic growth.

Lastly, this paper will pave the roads for future analysis and studies on the EAEU and its member states. The regional cooperation between Eastern Europe and Central Asia could become a fruitful research areas. Thus, this research will show how states gains membership based on different national preferences. By this attempt, this paper will not only show how these preferences differ based on their national policy, identity, and perspectives towards the region but also how these national preferences are different in terms of geopolitical and economic interests.

**Keyword : EAEU, Eurasia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Regional Integration, Russia**

**Student Number : 2021-29820**

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# Abbreviation

**CIS** - the Commonwealth of Independent States

**CU** – Customs Union

**CSTO** - the Collective Security Treaty Organization

**EAEC / EurAsEC** - Eurasian Economic Community

**EACU** - Eurasian Customs Union

**EAEU / EEU** - Eurasian Economic Union

**EES** - Eurasian Economic Space

**EAP** - Eastern Partnership

**EDB** - Eurasian Development Bank

**EEC** - Eurasian Economic Commission

**ESDF** - Eurasian Stabilization and Development Fund

**EU** – European Union

**FDI** – Foreign Direct Investment

**GUAM** - Organization for Democracy and Economic Development

**SEEC / SEES** - Supreme Eurasian Economic Council

**SES** – Single Economic Space

**SCO** - Shanghai Cooperation Organization

**Union State** - the Russia-Belarus Union

# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Study Background**

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia were members of the Soviet Union, and they found themselves together in the Eurasian Economic Union. The EAEU is quite similar to the European Union. Although this organization had its ambitious goals and glorious blueprints, it soon faced several obstacles. For example, the annexation of Crimea and ongoing Russo-Ukraine war have forced the EAEU members to consider reassessment on their economic relations with Russia. Especially, numerous economic sanctions on Russia, which have already been imposed since the year of 2014, have negatively affected EAEU member states, and this was even exacerbated by the recent Russia-Ukraine war started from 2021.

The collapse of the Soviet Union divided the gigantic coalition to multiple states in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Along with the independence from the Soviet Union, while there were some attempts to create a regional cooperation framework that deals with security and economy in both, practical results were created by Russia, especially by implementing Custom Unions (CU) with Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Despite the weakened power and influence of Russia, particularly had a significant pessimistic impact on Russian and other former Soviet states' economies. Still, there were cooperative actions within the Eurasian economy, and this has been sustained thoroughly. It could be understood that the former Soviet Union has recreated under the name of the EAEU, with security role yielded to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (hereafter CSTO).

It has been proved that the Soviet Union's collapse did not make Russia the

weakest figure, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) who were able to keep their own sovereignty, couldn't be free from their economic dependence on Russia. This made them to have neither other options nor alternatives, but to join the regional economic community constructed by Russia. The former Soviet Union member states' economic dependence on Russia has already affected their economic situations to a large extent, where this extent of the EAEU could function as a facilitator in CIS economic integration.

Despite Russia's continuous change in his international status after the end of Soviet Union's history, members in the EAEU have shown no sign of leaving from the process of economic integration, such as the Russian-led EAEU. Even when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 which had a huge negative impact on Russia in its both political and economic situation, members of the EAEU did not criticize much and showed no movement to leave. Russia is still at war with Ukraine in 2023, but other member states are all gathered in the EAEU's supreme council to boost economic cooperation in regional block on May 25, 2023.

In this situation, It is vital to study the process of forming national preferences participating in the process of economic integration such as the Eurasian Economic Union. According to Moravcsik, the process for international cooperation is not conducted by a single factor preference, but through a series of processes, complex factors form national preferences, so it can be applied to states to study components of preference. Despite Russia's unstable status than enjoying the glory of the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan and Belarus still have no choice but to participate in the Russian-led economic integration process. So their actions and states aspects suggest the contextual and historical background for the research of this paper.

## 1.2. Purpose of Research

The Former Soviet Union states initiated their own creative policies to join in the global market, but the existing Western-centered capitalist mechanism did not embrace them. They were left behind without being incorporated into the global economy and securing competitiveness. Since former communist states were facing difficulties to join the free market, the discourse of the economic community in the region was becoming a crucial interest. Ironically, however, the degree of regional economic revitalization occurred after the CU in 2010 between three states: Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia after almost 20 years from collapse of Soviet Union.

However, after this initial process for integration, Russia suffered a relative decline in the international community due to their actions such as the Crimea peninsula annexation in 2014. It has been even worsened due to Russo-Ukraine war and Russia is currently under severe economic or political sanctions from the international community. Due to their belligerent actions, Russia lost all its bargaining power in the international community.<sup>1</sup> Some say that they have fallen into the trap of not only negotiating power with the Western power, but also not being able to build alliances with other emerging economic states at all.

Nevertheless, Belarus and Kazakhstan have still continued to participate in the Russian-led regional economic integration process such as the EAEU. In this context, despite Russia's weakened influence in the international community, Belarus and Kazakhstan have been participating in the Eurasian economic integration process, and this phenomenon will be analyzed by assessing the political

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<sup>1</sup> Bershidsky (2019, March 16). Russia's annexation of Crimea 5 years ago has cost Putin dearly. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-03-16/russia-s-annexation-of-crimea-5-years-ago-has-cost-putin-dearly>

and economic factors. To be more specific, Belarus is highly dependent on its national union and economic and diplomatic relations with Russia, so it is expected to support Russia and accompany EAEU. Kazakhstan, similar to Belarus, also shares high economic trade with Russia and will continue to participate in the EAEU despite Russia's narrowing position in the international community, Kazakhstan will use the EAEU as a space for its political voice in the Central Asia.

Overall, this research could reveal the dismantling process and history of Russia in Eurasia region and review Russia's unrivaled position in the process of Eurasian economic integration. Russia's hegemony still acts as an inseparable interest for regional members, which can be understood to be a mechanism to continue in this area. Advantages and benefits given by cooperation with Russia have been vital factors for decision-making to Eurasian member-states.

Even Russia was put to economic sanctions and been isolated from international society, states in Eurasia has made rational decision for sovereignty and national interests by forming national preference from economic and geopolitical perspectives. By referring Moravcsik's view, each member states have their own components to form national preference for Eurasian economic integration and Russia's changing status is just exogenous background which cannot significantly impact the process to form national preference for regional economic integration.

Rather, the comprehensive and multi-dimensional view can explain the motivation for Eurasian economic integration and multiple reasons can be found to make their series of decision-making. It can be evaluated that the need for contextual case studies is raised to confirm the reasons for the remaining regional economic integration of EAEU member countries, especially Belarus and Kazakhstan, which have complex interests in regional space. Plus, in the future, milestones can be

provided to predict what variables can be considered when establishing an approach strategy for the Eurasia region.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Belarus, Kazakhstan, and EAEU**

The existing literature provides various perspectives and approaches to understanding this regional economic union. Studies deal with the purpose of establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union, its history, economic benefits, and comparison with the European Union in quantitative or qualitative terms. This part will contain two major literature focused on the EAEU. First one is academic sources from the Korean scholars, then followed by foreign scholars. By using this approach, this paper could cover a comprehensive and broad academic background to establish an academic background to further discuss the current topic and to evaluate the importance and need to conduct this research.

Among Korean scholars, the concept of the EAEU has been lately discussed as the organization itself has emerged in the 2010s. However, the concept of the Eurasia and Eurasian economic zone does not seem to be new, as the creation of the economic order of the former Soviet Union states were continuously shown. Currently, it is divided into two academic sources; the first one is academic source itself made by Korean scholars, and the second one is information reports made by government<sup>2</sup> and its subordinate organizations.<sup>3</sup>

From various academic sources, this paper will explore two major different academic sources. The first academic sources are, which directly deal with the EAEU and its concept, member states and effects and consequences of the implementation of the EAEU in Eurasian region. Kang et al (2018) confirms that the economic

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<sup>2</sup> 대한민국 외교부. (1990~2022). 외교백서.

<sup>3</sup> 대한무역투자진흥공사(KOTRA). (2021). 유라시아경제연합(EAEU) 주요 이슈 및 통합과정 점검.



integration of the Eurasian region could be beneficial to not only South Korea but also for the global economy and trade which could boost the regional trade scale.<sup>4</sup> Authors also stress that inefficient cross-border transportation needs to be solved in order to increase regional connectivity and related economic institutions. Kim (2019) also points out that the EAEU targets to build an exclusive economic zone led by Russia, to rebuild its regional hegemonic status.<sup>5</sup> He asserts that in order to strengthen the EAEU, the cooperation between the EAEU and the SREB is in need, to solve obstacles of the transport corridor.

In addition to that, Kim et al (2014) introduces the historical developments of the EAEU and what effects could the EAEU bring to the Eurasian region.<sup>6</sup> Authors argue that despite of difficulties and obstacles that the former Soviet Union states have to be economically integrated, there are obvious benefits for them as well. They emphasize small size integration could lead to large size integration if regional projects are networked and overlapped among member states. Kim (2015) highlights the creation of the EEC which is heavily influenced by Russia. The author points out that Russia's currency ruble, could heavily influence the economy of the EEC that includes other Eurasian states.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, other authors such as Ko (2014) also mentions that the installation of the Eurasian Economic integration is crucial for Central Asia but contains weakness of the agreement as relations between Russia and Central Asian

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<sup>4</sup> 강길성 & 원용길. (2019). 유라시아 경제통합과 역내 연결성. 국제경제연구, 25(2), 23.

<sup>5</sup> 김영진. (2019). 유라시아경제연합과 실크로드경제벨트의 연결 가능성 - 경제협력의 기회와 장애. 동북아경제연구, 31(2), 1-36.

<sup>6</sup> 김영진, & 윤인하. (2014). 유라시아의 지역통합 : 유라시아연합 구상의 조건과 과제. 동유럽 발칸연구, 38(5), 201-230.

<sup>7</sup> 김영진. (2015). 독립국가연합(CIS) 유라시아경제연합(EEU) 출범 -지정학적 요인 큰 "루블 경제권" 러시아 경제에 성패 달려. CHINDIA Plus, 102, 60.

nations have not been highly enhanced in terms of economic integration.<sup>8</sup> Kim (2019) cross-compares the EAEU and BRI, which are led by two regional hegemonic states, Russia, and China. The author regards that these two regional integrating approaches could be cooperated if certain objectives are met together. However the author also highlights legal barriers and different national interests that block two parties to work as a whole.

Notably, the view towards the EAEU or the EEU is different among Korean scholars as well. Most scholars have a shared vision that Russia is the key player of this regional organization. For example, Kim (2012) points out that the identity of the EAEU and its realization could be deepened if its political and economic identity is formed via regional integration.<sup>9</sup> The author argues, the EAEU could work as a regional voice if Russia continues to set the EAEU as one of its core diplomatic objectives. Sung (2015) views the EEU as a new post-Cold war phenomenon that delivers re-integration of the Eurasian region.<sup>10</sup>

Plus, Kim (2012), observes the implementation of regional integration such as customs union between Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, could be understood as Russia's attempt to rebuild its Russia-centered order.<sup>11</sup> Woo (2017) believes the EAEU contains Putin's geopolitical ambitions who aims to build this union up to higher level similar to APEC, ASEAN, and EU.<sup>12</sup> The author mentions certain

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<sup>8</sup> 고상두. (2011). 유라시아의 체제전환과 국가건설: 이론적 논의와 평가지수. 국방연구(안보문제연구소), 54(2), 67-90.

<sup>9</sup> 김병호. (2012). "유라시아연합"의 정체성과 실현가능성: 향후 설립에 따른 정치,경제적 효과를 중심으로. 러시아연구, 22(1-1), 99.

<sup>10</sup> 성원용. (2015). 유라시아 경제공간의 해체와 재통합: EEU 출범을 바라보는 관점에 대한 분석. 서울대학교 러시아연구소.

<sup>11</sup> 김일겸. (2012). 관세동맹의 정치적 함의 -중앙아시아를 둘러싼 신거대게임의 판도 변화. 중동연구, 31(2), 79-110.

<sup>12</sup> 우준모. (2017). 글로벌 시대 서구와 러시아의 갈등: 푸틴의 '유라시아연합'(Eurasian Union) 건설노력의 함의. 분쟁해결연구, 15(1), 209-235.

solutions to make the EAEU's potential values, and stresses the role of Russia within solutions that will develop further. Lee (2019) argues that Russia is looking forward to expanding its political status in the international community by putting Russian Eurasianism to its adjacent regions. He points out that China's BRI could affect the EAEU thus Russia will institutionalize the EAEU in order to lower the possibility of the dependency towards China.<sup>13</sup>

Since the influence of Russia to both, the EAEU and the Eurasian region is quite influential, some scholars focus on this issue as well. Ko (2014) shows that Russia advocates multilateralism to cooperate with Central Asian states, while strengthening its ties with the CIS. Kim (2022) also argues that Russia pushes Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP) to integrate the Eurasian region via the EAEU.<sup>14</sup> Lee (2016) talks that Russian Eurasianism is recreated with the neo-Eurasianism which is operated with the Eurasian Union initiative, which could be a new slogan for Russia since the 1990s.<sup>15</sup>

It is also prominent to go over academic works focusing on member states of the EAEU. Not all member states are shown here, but pivotal states for the research have been analyzed previously. Park (2020) discusses about the motivations of Uzbekistan to join the EAEU regarding economic expectations and negative aftereffects.<sup>16</sup> Also, Park shows results and effects on the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's manufacturing industries after joining the EAEU.<sup>17</sup> Woo et al (2015)

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<sup>13</sup> 이상준.(2019).유라시아 지역에서 러시아와 중국의 협력과 대립 가능성: 러시아 확대 유라시아 구상과 중국 일대일로를 중심으로.러시아연구,29(1),219-246.

<sup>14</sup> 김선래. (2022). 러시아의 '확장된 유라시아 파트너십' 개념과 중러 협력. 러시아연구, 32(1), 25-54.

<sup>15</sup> 이문영. (2019). 러시아의 유라시아주의와 제국의 지정학. 슬라브학보, 34(2), 179-214.

<sup>16</sup> 박지원. (2020). 우즈베키스탄의 유라시아경제연합 가입: 경제적 기대효과와 부정적 여파의 분석. 러시아연구, 30(1), 63.

<sup>17</sup> 박찬현. (2018). 유라시아경제연합 가입 이후 카자흐스탄의 제조업 경쟁력 분석. 한국노여노문학회 학술대회 발표집, 2018(10), 377-390.

focuses on two former states of the Soviet Union, Belarus and Ukraine who also joined the EAEU. Toirova et al (2016) analyze CIS and their regional trade situations and challenges of the regional integration. These findings implicate that, there is a slowly emerging economic benefits, effects, and losses for member states of the EAEU, under the de facto leadership of Russia.

Especially, there were some academic articles have been written on Belarus. Ko (2011) introduces the concept of the nation building and evaluate states within the Eurasian region.<sup>18</sup> Lee (2014) claims that Belarus has experienced transnational nationalism which led them to possess a common vision of their objectives and priorities.<sup>19</sup> Yoon (2011) further discovered that Belarus under the Lukashenko's presidency, has been putting its own efforts to conduct pragmatic diplomacy to be integrated into Russia while also cooperating with Western states.<sup>20</sup> Jeh et al (2011) emphasizes that Belarus was able to develop their economic capability since the 2000s due to many reasons, including its economic ties with Russia to import cheaper natural goods.<sup>21</sup>

Besides, Kazakhstan has been also discussed by numerous scholars since the 2000s. To begin with Kim (2008) broadly introduces Kazakhstan in the Central Asia<sup>22</sup>. Kim (2009) highlights the possibility of Kazakh economy and politics in the near future as well.<sup>23</sup> Lee (2021) emphasizes the concept of the Kazakhstan's Foreign

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<sup>18</sup> 고상두. (2011). 유라시아의 체제전환과 국가건설: 이론적 논의와 평가지수. 국방연구(안보문제연구소), 54(2), 67-90.

<sup>19</sup> 이지연. (2014). “만들어지고 있는” 민족/국가(nation): 포스트소비에트 벨라루스의 민족주의와 국가정체성. 러시아어문학연구논집, 47, 245-271.

<sup>20</sup> 윤영미. (2011). 벨라루스(The Republic of Belarus)의 국가발전 양상: 대통령 중심제 구축과 실용주의적 외교정책을 중심으로. 세계지역연구논총, 29(1), 257-288.

<sup>21</sup> 제성훈, & 윤성학. (2011). 벨라루스의 경제개방과 경제성장. 동유럽발칸학, 13(2), 367-391.

<sup>22</sup> 김일수. (2008). (중앙아시아의 거인)카자흐스탄 / 김일수 외.

<sup>23</sup> 김일겸. (2009). 카자흐스탄의 정치와 경제 = Казакстан / 김일겸 지음.

Policy Concept 2020-2030, which clearly aims to construct a diplomatic diversification due to its multipolar geopolitical environment in Central Asia.<sup>24</sup> Lee (2007) tells that Kazakhstan's the multivector foreign policy could foster diplomatic relationship with both US and China, protecting its neutral status.<sup>25</sup> Lee (2021) also highlights multivector diplomacy and multilateralism of Kazakhstan, which will expand the diplomatic coverage of Kazakhstan which was limited to Russia previously.<sup>26</sup>

Compellingly, there are several Korean scholars have worked on the Russo-Ukraine war and its impact to the EAEU. Yoon (2022) describes that Russia's invasion to the Ukraine not only made Russia being economically sanctioned by the international community, but also creating tensions among CIS, with territory conflicts.<sup>27</sup> The author stresses the impacts of the EAEU is full of contradictory elements, thus it could be affected by new geopolitical changes in near future. Heo (2023) concentrates on Russia-Belarus relationship which dates back to the year of 1991.<sup>28</sup> With Belarus being heavily subject to Russia in both economy and security, he argues that Belarus' position as client state to the Russia also impacted the Ukrainian war.

There are also academic sources that discuss the relationship between South Korea and the EAEU. Lee et al (2017) analyzes the South Korea's investment to the

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<sup>24</sup> 이지은. (2021). 리더십 교체 이후 카자흐스탄 대외정책 : 토카예프 정부의 '대외정책개념 2020-2030'을 중심으로. *아시아연구*, 24(4), 171-190.

<sup>25</sup> 이홍섭. (2007). 카자흐스탄의 대외정책: "전방위 외교정책"의 모색. *슬라브 연구*, 23(2), 87.

<sup>26</sup> 이지은. (2021). 카자흐스탄의 전방위외교와 다자주의 - 중앙아시아 국제환경, 국가 속성, 국가 정체성 요인을 중심으로. *슬라브 연구*, 37(2), 31-56.

<sup>27</sup> 윤성학. (2022). 우크라이나 전쟁과 중앙아시아의 지정학적 변화: 유라시아경제연합과 일대일로를 중심으로. *러시아연구*, 32(1), 79-105.

<sup>28</sup> 허승철. (2023). 러시아-벨라루스 관계와 우크라이나 전쟁. *Rösiaö Munhak Yöngu Nonjip = Rusistika*, 281-307.

EAEU and its business environment.<sup>29</sup> These authors claim that, in the world of uncertainty and economic turbulence, the necessity to increase the economic cooperation with the EAEU has been greater than ever. Also they imply that the importance to sign the FTA between South Korea and the EAEU can be another trade related areas that two parties should work on. Park (2017) mentions industries such as new energy, IT-related and manufacturing areas, and health areas could be a common grounds for South Korea and the EAEU.<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, Yoon (2018) demonstrates the EAEU's integration process and its evaluation, and then goes to explain what Korea's strategic policies could be to cooperate with.<sup>31</sup> He claims that the EAEU has commenced its fundamental institutions to obtain their objectives, the effect of the regional integration has been slowly appeared from the year of the 2017. He also stresses the challenges of the EAEU such as lower level of the economic integration, and South Korea's specific plans to approach the common goals. Lee et al (2021) views that FTA between South Korea and the EAEU could work together in terms of digital economy, futuristic industries, and areas of the fourth Industrial Revolution.<sup>32</sup> These works show that the EAEU is also significant to South Korea for future economic cooperation.

The foreign existing literatures provide in depth level to construct the fundamental question of this research. Collected literatures are diverse, immense, and particularly highly discuss the current status of the EAEU since it contains more awareness, effectiveness, and lastly national importance. For the European Union,

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<sup>29</sup> 이재영, 이철원, & 민지영. (2017). 한국의 대유라시아경제연합(EAEU) 투자 현황과 비즈니스 환경 분석. *오늘의 세계경제*, 2017(1), 1-12.

<sup>30</sup> 박정호. (2017). 한·유라시아경제연합(EAEU) 산업협력 증진방안 / 박정호 [외].

<sup>31</sup> 윤성학. (2018). 한-유라시아경제연합(EAEU) FTA의 주요 쟁점과 추진 전략. *Acta Russiana*, 10, 3-30.

<sup>32</sup> 이창수, 박지원, 송백훈, & 제성훈. (2021). 유라시아경제연합(EAEU) 통합과정 평가와 한국의 협력전략. *전략지역심층연구*, 2021, 1-246.

the emergence of the EAEU needs to be professionally researched, since this is a new regional integration occurring in the adjacent region. Also, Russia's current status will heavily influence the EAEU and its member states, resulting in future of the EAEU. Therefore, this part will also go over certain important papers related to the EAEU, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and what has changed since the Ukrainian war.

First, there are cases in which the EAEU is compared with other international organizations, or other international organizations. For example, Popescu (2021) compares the EU and the EAEU to see which areas two parties could work upon, in order to increase inter-regional cooperation.<sup>33</sup> The author mentions that the pragmatic partnership between the two regional giants is the most plausible and this could secure both peace and stability. Vinokurov E. (2018)<sup>34</sup> provides an overview of the EAEU, including its brief history of post-Soviet integration since the 1990s, the economies of each member state, and their dependence on the EAEU's economy.

Moreover, Yeliseyeu (2019) reviews the EAEU's principal achievements, failures, and challenges with good examples, bad, and public perception data.<sup>35</sup> Based on interviews with experts and officials, Yeliseyeu's research focuses on institutional functionality and each member-state's status towards the EAEU regarding economy, politics, security, and society. De Micco (2015) broadly introduces states' options and choices to enter whether the EU, DCFTA, or the EAEU.<sup>36</sup> The author highlights the fact that, based on the memberships, states will

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<sup>33</sup> Popescu. (2021). European Union vs. Eurasian Union – a brief comparative analysis and perspectives for cooperation. Bucharest University of Academic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.

<sup>34</sup> Vinokurov E. (2018). Introduction to the Eurasian Economic Union. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>35</sup> Yeliseyeu Andrei. (2019). The Eurasian Economic Union: Expectations, Challenges, and Achievements

<sup>36</sup> de Micco. (2015). When choosing means losing The Eastern partners, the EU, and the Eurasian

have both gains and losses. Also, the author mentions that aligning the EU and the EAEU would be the most challenging work to do.

Besides, Yarashevich (2014) focuses on the motivation for joining the Single Economic Space (SES) and Custom Unions (CU), specifically with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan as member states from political economy view.<sup>37</sup> The post-communist integration of Eurasia has had significant political economic ramifications, including economic gains from regional commerce and finance and the relationship between employment possibilities and political stability. The political backgrounds for elections had promoted regional economic integration: Belarus' election was in December 2010, Russia in March 2012, and Kazakhstan in April 2011.

Similarly, Isachenko et al (2010) use "Global Trade analysis project (GTAP)" general equilibrium model to analyze the valuation and interpretation of the Custom Unions.<sup>38</sup> This research is also expected to get simulation about the effects on the trade of Customs Union members and used quantitative methodology. But as mentioned above, study about Customs Union made conclusions that the Custom Unions would not significantly affect the economic development of three member states. In this context, the expectation of the effect by joining the regional organizations was simulated but this kind of study could miss the qualitative meaning of asserting the economic integration.

Additionally, Polglase-Korostelev (2020) analyzed the relationship between

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Economic Union. Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies

<sup>37</sup> Yarashevich, V. (2014). Post-communist Economic Integration: Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. *Journal of Economic Integration*, 29(4), 582–623. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43150571> (Accessed 2022.07.21)

<sup>38</sup> Isachenko, T., & Krjuchkov, R. (2010). Estimating the impact of the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union. *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 13(3), 391–408. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43293375>



Belarus and Russia using Gravity model to evaluate the effectiveness of union states and Eurasian economic integration.<sup>39</sup> The conclusion says the uncertainty of their relationship will push Belarus to find external partners but for now their relationship has been intensified by external pressure and domestic political instability. It shows the dependency of each states including Russia and Belarus after COVID-19 and from realistic view, uncertainty between them still prevails and external cooperation is needed for sovereignty of Belarus.

There are also academic sources on practical and financial sides of the EAEU and its member states. Havlik et al (2018) show FDIs on EAEU, DCFTA, AND EU-CEE to see what differences between these parties are.<sup>40</sup> This research shows that EAEU states still lack interests from foreign investors due to its low attractiveness. For instance, Kubayeva (2015) states the EEC could be develop and become like the EU, in the long-term<sup>41</sup> She also reveals that member states of the EAEU views this organization differently and shows that Belarus and Russia have benefited whereas Kazakhstan has least benefited. Pomerlyan et al (2023) demonstrate that the EAEU positively affects trade flows, but negatively impacts the employment, does not really impact on other economic indicators.<sup>42</sup>

Also, other scholars have mentioned about the Ukraine crisis and its relationship with Belarus, The EAEU and Kazakhstan. Solchanyk (1996) paves the academic background on the relationship between Russia, the Ukraine and the CIS.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Polglase-Korostelev, G. 2020. The Union State: a changing relationship between Belarus and Russia. Journal of the Belarusian State University

<sup>40</sup> Peter Havlik, Gábor Hunya and Yuri Zaytsev. (2018). Foreign Direct Investments: A Comparison of EAEU, DCFTA and Selected EU-CEE Countries. Research Report 428. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies. Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche

<sup>41</sup> Kubayeva, Gulaikhan. (2015). Economic Impact of the Eurasian Economic Union on Central Asia. Central Asia Security Policy Briefs

<sup>42</sup> Pomerlyan & Belitski (2023). Regional integration and economic performance: evidence from the Eurasian Economic Union. Eurasian Geography and Economics 0:0, pages 1-29.

<sup>43</sup> SOLCHANYK, R. (1996). Ukraine, Russia, and the CIS. Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 20, 19–43.

The author does give some conflicts between these states, such as the Crimea matter. Kryvoi et al (2015) regards Belarus as a subordinate state to Russia, thus the EU needs certain plans to solve this deadlock situation.<sup>44</sup> They argue that the EU's sanctions did not really change Belarus that much. Kuzio et al (2023) briefly shows why Russia invaded the Ukraine, and this is also derived from Russian policy that regards eastern Slavic Russian world that is a core part of the EAEU.<sup>45</sup>

In fact, The International Working Group asserts that the EAEU was founded as a result of "*Putin's Big Idea*", and that Russian pressure persuaded other countries to join the fledgling Eurasian alliance.<sup>46</sup> Previously, Kiev has used Western-Russian ties to its benefit on the political and economic fronts.<sup>47</sup> Only Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan signed the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty due to Putin's political motivation.<sup>48</sup> ICG depicts numerous motivations for the birth of the EAEU from Russian perspectives, but ICG did not address the motivations of the other member nations to ratify the treaty.

Overall, the existing literature provides valuable insights into the EAEU and its member states, including their economic dependence on the union, institutional functionality, and achievements and challenges. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific contextual analysis behind Kazakhstan and Belarus's

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41036683>

<sup>44</sup> Kryvoi, Y., & Wilson, A. (2015). FROM SANCTIONS TO SUMMITS: BELARUS AFTER THE UKRAINE CRISIS. European Council on Foreign Relations. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21571>

<sup>45</sup> Kuzio, T. (2022). Why Russia Invaded Ukraine. Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development, 21, 40–51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48686695>

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Piper. (2011). Russia's neighbours balk at Putin's "big idea". Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/russia-union-idINL6E7NL15K20111222>

<sup>47</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2022). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

<sup>48</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), The Eurasian Economic Union: Power, Politics and Trade, 20 July 2016, Europe and Central Asia Report N°240, available at:

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/578f659b4.html> (Accessed 20 March 2023)

decision to participate in the Eurasian economic integration process.<sup>49</sup> Although some literatures researched about Eurasian Economic Union established in 2015 but more research focused more on the static and quantitative motivation of joining Eurasian economic integration.

This is a crucial aspect to explore, as a solid comprehension on the driving factors behind their decision can shed light on the nature of their relationship with the Eurasian integration and the potential benefits and drawbacks they may face. In the era of ongoing Russo-Ukraine war, this research could shed light on Belarus and Kazakhstan who supports the EAEU with its own national interests. Therefore, conducting an analysis of the factors and contextual history behind Kazakhstan and Belarus's EAEU membership is important for a comprehensive understanding of the union and its member states regardless of unstable status of Russian Federation since the collapse of Soviet Union.

## **2.2 Motivation to join the regional organization**

Belarus and Kazakhstan do not seem to share many similarities, they rather have many differences. This paper aims to show why two states joined the EAEU with their own core reasons. It is not clear why and how states join the regional organization. One could widely guess that states join the regional organization because of the political and economic gains. Other could argue that states join the regional organization in order to increase their influence within the region. Some stress that states join the regional organization to overcome their weaknesses in terms of size of the population, territory, and national capacity. Scholars also have different

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<sup>49</sup> SECRIERU, S. (2019). WHAT IF...BELARUS AND KAZAKHSTAN QUIT THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION? In F. Gaub (Ed.), WHAT IF...?: Scanning the horizon: 12 scenarios for 2021 (pp. 44–47). European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21142.11>

reasons and positions for this question. This research aims to find motivations to join the EAEU for Belarus and Kazakhstan. In order to process this research, this part will go over similar works on motivations to join the organization.

Pryor (2005) attempts to show motivations of states to join the regional institutions, while he also claims that motivations varies with regions, states, motivations, and lastly, tools to define motivations.<sup>50</sup> To begin with, states and regions of these related works vary. Some of these works focus on European topics. As follows, Kim (2019) specifically points out Baltic states as an example of the minilateralism within the European Union.<sup>51</sup> Here he figures out that, for Baltic states, regional cooperation functions as the process of the European Integration, as a catalyst. This process is meaningful as three states were able to learn through the regional integration, which shows the possibility for the regional integration with shared and common values.

Another academic article focuses on the Central European region, and Kim (2015) introduces the Visegrád Group which is composed of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, and Hungary.<sup>52</sup> This regional harmony in the Central European region functions as a regional tool which enables these four states to have shared principles, objectives, and policies to achieve. He reveals that, cooperative principles among member states could pave an official road for member states to work together and to achieve goals. In a same manner, Ahn (2009) uses the Black Sea Economic Cooperation as an example of motivations of states to join.<sup>53</sup> He shows that

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<sup>50</sup> Pryor, Joshua, *State Preferences and Institution Evolution: From Security to Economic Interests* (Fall 2005). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2308830> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2308830>

<sup>51</sup> 김시홍.(2019). 발트삼국, 지역협력 그리고 유럽통합. 유럽연구, 37(3), 109-134.

<sup>52</sup> 김용덕. (2015). 비셰그라드 그룹의 형성과 발전 전망. 세계 역사와 문화 연구, 37, 117-143.

<sup>53</sup> 안상욱. (2009). 흑해 지역주의 시도와 유럽연합 경제질서로의 편입에 관한 고찰 루마니아, 불가리아, 터키를 중심으로. EU연구, 24(0), 131-164.

motivations vary among members, Bulgaria with economic, Romania, Turkey with political and economic goals to achieve.

In the same way, Ahn (2007) claims that Romania and Bulgaria were able to develop their economy through the installation of the new market, access to the European Union.<sup>54</sup> With these results, he shows that this regional integration has affected positively, since the accession has made them richer than the past. With these findings, he concludes that, the regional integration gives both positive and negative outputs to member states. Ahn (2009) discusses about the requirements to join the European Union, for Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>55</sup> He reveals that official requirements which two states did partially mean, affected two states to develop themselves in order to satisfy requirements. He points out that the accession to the EU left two states to achieve other remaining goals, even though they are still developing.

Furthermore, some articles focus on the Southeast Asian region. Lee (2018) points out why states join the regional organization, and the author especially focuses on the case of Myanmar.<sup>56</sup> The author stresses the current studies focus on motivations of joining states, and motivations of member states who agree to have new member states. He points out that accession to the ASEAN for Myanmar was faster than other member candidates due to the external factors. This result could be understood that the external factors could affect motivations to join the international organization.

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<sup>54</sup> 안성호. (2007). 루마니아와 불가리아의 EU가입 이후의 변화에 대한 정치경제학적인 비교 연구. *동유럽발칸연구*, 19, 273-308.

<sup>55</sup> 안상욱. (2009). 루마니아, 불가리아의 EU 가입 요건에 관한 연구: 경제적 요인을 중심으로. *유럽연구*, 27(3), 93-122.

<sup>56</sup> 이진영. (2018). 미얀마의 아세안(ASEAN) 가입과정 분석을 통한 지역협력체 회원국 확장에 관한 연구. *국제정치논총*, 58(1), 147-182.

Also, some academic works focus on African region and African states. Kim (2019) introduces the factors that a regional hegemonic state in the Africa, Nigeria decided to participate in regional economic integration despite of its certain conditions and obstacles. He points out three pillars to reveal the fundamental reasons of Nigeria, with political, economic, and lastly, normative aspects. Tomé-Alonso (2017) discusses about Morocco who withdrew from the Organization of African Unity(OAU) in 1984 then rejoined the African Union(AU) same organization in 2017.<sup>57</sup> Here, political motivation such as role of bridging Africa and Europe, with certain economic reconnection benefits.

Plus, there has been some research to reveal what factors affect states to join the international organization. Especially, these articles work on the factors such as political and economic factors that make states to fill in the membership. Kang (2011) states, that states joined the Schengen Agreement due to its economic interests beside of its political danger.<sup>58</sup> Gidathubli (2004) depicts Baltic states' motivations to both join the EU and the NATO due to their geopolitical interests, making barriers from Russia.<sup>59</sup> Filimnova et al (2023) conduct similar research where they talk about geopolitical and economic interests to join the Arctic Council.<sup>60</sup>

In organization-related research, there are several scholars who describe about the process to hold a membership, with their analyzed interests. Engert (2010) cross compares Cyprus and Turkey to show how each state's interest decides to

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<sup>57</sup> Miguel Hernando de Larramendi & Beatriz Tomé-Alonso. (2017). The Return of Morocco to the African Union. Geographical Overview | The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Other Actors. IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2017.

<sup>58</sup> 강지운. (2011). 국경 개방 영향 요인 비교 연구 : 쉥겐 협정을 중심으로. 세계정치. 제32집 1호. pp.217-256

<sup>59</sup> Gidathubli, R. G. (2004). Expansion of NATO: Russia's Dilemma. Economic and Political Weekly, 39(19), 1885-1887. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4414989>

<sup>60</sup> Filimonova, N., Obydenkova, A., & Rodrigues Vieira, V. (2023). Geopolitical and economic interests in environmental governance: Explaining observer state status in the Arctic Council. Climatic Change, 176(5), 50.

pursue the negotiations or to withdraw.<sup>61</sup> Davis et al (2021) show how security interests, particularly geopolitical interests affect membership in the economic-related international organizations.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile Singh (2020) focuses on the India's example to join the RCEP, pointing out domestic factors, such as domestic economic conditions.<sup>63</sup> These articles show that the matters of geopolitical and economic interests are affecting states to achieve certain membership of organizations.

To sum, previously reviewed literature works on both Korean and English academic findings imply several meaningful ideas. First of all, Korean scholars have shown several articles and reports about the EAEU, and its member states, and its relationship with South Korea in terms of FTA and economic cooperation. Secondly, English articles have sufficiently shown related works to this research. Although the current literature heavily focuses on Russia, other meaningful literature works on Belarus, Kazakhstan, and impact of the Ukraine war could be well discussed. Lastly, the framework to construct a research that wishes to reveal motivations to join the EAEU has been not founded, but it could be still analyzed through with utilizing collected academic works.

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<sup>61</sup> Engert, Stefan. (2010). EU enlargement and socialization: Turkey and Cyprus. *EU Enlargement and Socialization: Turkey and Cyprus*. 1-196. 10.4324/9780203858509.

<sup>62</sup> Davis, C., & Pratt, T. (2021). The forces of attraction: How security interests shape membership in economic institutions. *Review of International Organizations*, 16(4), 903-929.

<sup>63</sup> Singh, S., & Singh, R. (2020). Domestic sources of india's trade policy preferences in RCEP negotiations. *Journal of World Trade*, 54(4), 503-530.

## Chapter 3. Framework and Methodology

### 3.1 Framework

There are several frameworks to define interests of member-states before they made decisions to join the international organization. This varies from the existing perspectives and academic viewpoints towards states and the international communities. From traditional IR perspectives, realists would think that states pursue to maximize their national strengths and would disregard the importance of the international organizations. Liberalists would think otherwise, thinking states could cooperate, making efforts to cooperate by creating international organizations. Constructivists will understand states' interests as historically constructed which could be changed in the future.<sup>64</sup>

In order to answer the research question posed by this research paper, several ideological and fundamental theories have been applied. Theorists such as Guzman (2013), argues that states create IOs to have both individual and collective interests.<sup>65</sup> Przeworski (1991) goes over Eastern Europe and Latin America who was once in the communistic regime, who later transited to free market and democratization. He does not mention interests of those states to pursue the transition, but this could be understood as both geopolitical and economic interests of states in the long term.

To finalize the ideological framework, Moravscik draws a clear fundamental framework for this research: the national preference formation. Kassim et al (2020)

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<sup>64</sup> Mowle, T. S. (2003). Worldviews in Foreign Policy: Realism, Liberalism, and External Conflict. *Political Psychology*, 24(3), 561–592. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792326>

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Guzman. (2013). International Organizations and the Frankenstein Problem, *European Journal of International Law*, Volume 24, Issue 4, Pages 999–1025,



analyze this formation as complex, context-sensitive, and open to a wide range of influences in the multi-level system.<sup>66</sup>

Moravcsik (1998) explained reasons why European governments have chosen repeatedly to co-operate economic policies within an international institution.<sup>67</sup> At the core of his writings, there are narratives of decisions for regional economic integration focusing on German, French and British policies. Also he argued national leaders made a series of rational choices, finally resulting in European integration. A rational framework is more narrowly focused but more broadly generalizable mid-range theories from his view and this framework can draw bargaining and institutional choice on international cooperation.

This framework has three stages for dealing with international cooperation from the rationalist framework. In other words, international negotiations consist of a series of choices including forming nation's preferences, inter-state bargaining and choices of concessions for international institutions' movement. First, security externalities and endogenous economic policies contributed to the formation of national preferences. In the second stage, inter-state bargaining, political entrepreneurship and asymmetric interdependence analyze the efficiency and distribution results of inter-state bargaining. As a final step, we discuss how desire for national identity, informational economies of scale, and credible commitments contributes to the delegation and sharing of sovereignty to international organizations.

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<sup>66</sup> Kassim, H., Saurugger, S., & Puetter, U. (2020). The Study of National Preference Formation in Times of the Euro Crisis and Beyond. *Political Studies Review*, 18(4), 463–474. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929919873262>

<sup>67</sup> Moravcsik, A. (1998). *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. Cornell University Press.

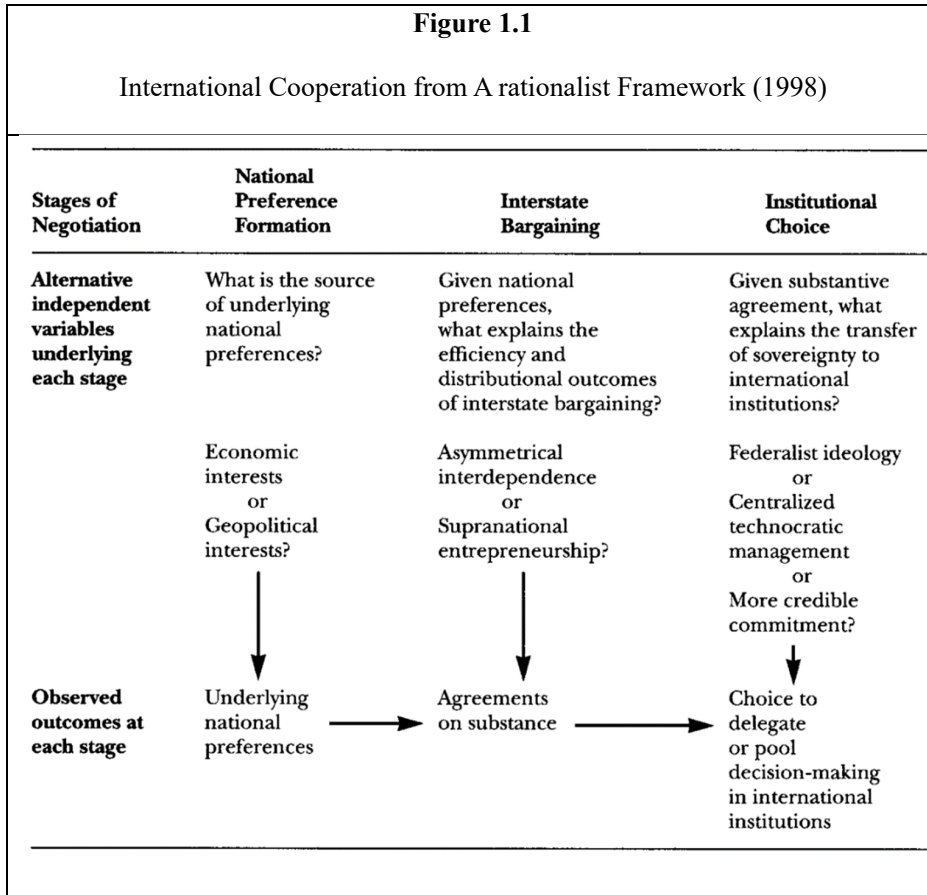


Figure 1.1 shows two stages that are needed before reaching further steps making decision-making into international organizations. Among them, the initial stage includes geopolitical and economic interests of each state. Geopolitical explanations for national preferences are more focused on indirect results and impacts of economic integration. On the other hand, economic integration serves as a tool to influence "high politics," not as an objective in itself. High politics may have objective objectives, like defending against a military threats toward territorial integrity and political sovereignty, or it may have subjective objectives, like when a threat to territory or sovereignty is viewed as a slight against a country's identity. Perspectives regarding geopolitical interests include four views: neo-realists'

explanations, explanations combining realist and ideational elements, institutionalism's perspective and ideational liberal or liberal constructivist theory. He explained European cases with these perspectives and scholars with these views and terms in international relations.

Firstly, Neo-realist perspective stresses the concept 'Balance of power.' States are more likely to consider geopolitical externalities in situations when there is a clear bilateral conflict such as Cold War between Soviet Union and US. Second view is focused on the explanation combining Realist and Ideational elements. So this view emphasizes a different superpower balancing strategy and aiming to improve autonomy of states in a status dominated by their own superpowers. Thus, British case seeking to preserve "great power" status by keeping Commonwealth links and cooperation with the United States could be analyzed by this view.

Third one, the institutionalism perspective treats integration as a regional arrangement for preventing conflict its members. In this situation, the integration was seen by the publics of Europe as a means of reining in a Germany that was becoming stronger inside Western Europe through linkages to legitimate institutions and commercial interests. The final one emphasizes the relative strength of ideologies among elites and populations and is based on liberal constructivism, often known as ideational liberalism.

For instance, the relative validity of nationalist and European federalist ideology, which differs independently throughout nations, determines whether national leaders and publics are willing to accept collaboration within federal European institutions. Leaders and citizens in particular from Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries have historically been more accepting. In short, the convergence of these empirical and subjective approaches is compatible with recent views about the role of ideas in

foreign policy, which see ideas as tools for rational adaptation under uncertainty. Moravcsik argues these four arguments as a single explanation that evidence favoring anyone counts as support for the role of geopolitics.

**Table 1.1**

**Approaches for Geopolitical Interests in a Rationalist Framework**

<b>Perspectives</b>	<b>Neo-Realism Approach</b>	<b>Explanation combining Realist and Ideational elements</b>
Concepts/details/contents	Integration as a regional arrangement intended to keep its participants out of conflict.	Highlighting the relative importance of ideologies among elites and general populations.
Application in European Integration	The idea of integration has been pitched to the publics of Europe as a way to "anchor" or "bind" a Germany that is becoming stronger into western Europe through linkages to economic interests and established institutions.	The relative validity of nationalist and European federalist ideology, which differs independently among nations, determines whether national leaders and publics are willing to accept collaboration within federal European institutions. Leaders and inhabitants of the Benelux, Germany, and Italy have historically been more supportive.

Whereas the geopolitical theory of national choices emphasizes the indirect repercussions of economic integration, the political economic account emphasizes its direct consequences. This political economic perspective holds that states can, to their mutual interest, reconstruct the pattern of economic policy externalities, which is the pattern of unintended effects of domestic economic activities on other nations through cooperation. Thus, when markets make desired policies incompatible or allow a unilateral policy to be easily implemented to accomplish a specific objective, a zero-sum scenario occurs with minimal incentive for collaboration.

**Table 1.2**

Approaches for Geopolitical Interests in a Rationalist Framework (2)

<b>Perspectives</b>	<b>Neo-Realism Approach</b>	<b>Explanation combining Realist and Ideational elements</b>
Concepts/details/contents	Stressing Balance of power	Stressing a different superpower balancing strategy
	Governments are more inclined to consider geopolitical externalities in situations when there is a clear bilateral conflict.	In a world dominated by superpowers, integration aspired to increase the strength and independence of states.
Application in European Integration	All postwar German administrations in Cold War Europe might become utterly reliant on allied assistance because of the Soviet Union's gift, regardless of their differing partisanships and beliefs.	Through the upkeep of Commonwealth ties and the unique relationship with the US, Britain aimed to maintain its "great power" position.

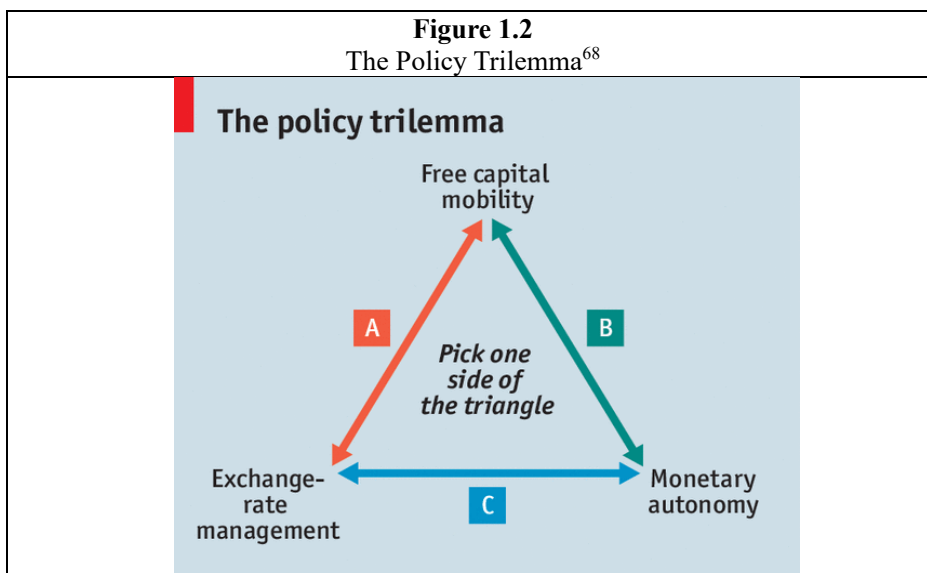
On the other hand, when mutual policy adjustments can more effectively remove the negative policy externalities and make positive things than unilateral actions, governments have incentives to make cooperation with other countries. It is vital to stress that this is not a solely "economic" answer. The political economic approach is distinct from a direct economic explanation highlighting the efficiency and distributional profits from cooperative actions. This view stays simple by emphasizing on producer's pressures, focusing only on intensity of gains and losses; in order to simply represent the most fundamental economic interests, it abstracts away from complex fractionalized divides or supply difficulties, such as changing amounts of collective activity, formal institutions, political competition, and issue linkage..

**Table. 1.3**

**The Sources of Preferences concerning Economic Interests**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Content</b>
Three variables	Three factors—capital mobility, trade interdependence patterns, and convergence or dispersion among anticipated domestic inflation rates—can be used to build a simplified political economy of preferences for (and against) exchange-rate stabilization (macro-economic view).
Mundell-fleming analysis	Three broad policy options: it can impose (relax) trade and capital controls, permit the currency to depreciate (appreciate), or tighten (loosen) domestic fiscal and monetary discipline.
Trade interdependence	Because of trade interdependence, there are some small incentives to reduce exchange-rate volatility but not necessarily to stabilize exchange rates, which can be expensive for weaker economic sectors, especially in countries with weak currencies.
Additional sources	Additional sources needed about underlying domestic inflation rates and the attitudes of governments toward those rates.

In this context, the process of cooperation among member-states can be explained and decomposed with factors to affect the continuous regional cooperation. In other words, the explanation of this economic cooperation process could be applied to the Eurasian Economic Union. It was judged that the fact that continuous regional cooperation processes could be overseen individually after the collapse of the Soviet Union functions as a framework for research and provides practicality. Considering the background of various countries and leaders, assuming that national preferences for international relations are single and fixed is less satisfactory as an assumption to explain various cases of state behavior.



Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the preferences of each state in the behavior of the member-states to continue to cooperate in the Eurasian economic integration process. Therefore, from his point of view, the process of countries' cooperation in the Eurasian Economic Union is not based on their single and fixed preferences. The participation of each country in the process of economic integration within the Eurasian region and its preferences in the process of continuing are not a single factor, but a combination of preferences will need to be broken down. The background is that despite changes in Russia's status after the collapse of the Soviet Union and in external environments such as the annexation of Crimea, member states ratified and signed the treaty for creating Eurasia Economic Union.

<sup>68</sup> The Economist Newspaper. (n.d.). Two out of three ain't bad. The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/schools-brief/2016/08/27/two-out-of-three-aint-bad>

## 3.2 Hypotheses

Based on the assessment of the framework, it could be applied to the Eurasian economic integration with the agenda ‘the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union.’ Belarus and Kazakhstan are states joining as initial members the Eurasian Economic Union. This framework could identify the geopolitical and economic interests of two states. Despite the regional hardship, Belarus and Kazakhstan officially signed the Eurasian Economic Union treaty in 2015. The development of the EAEU which entails the transfer of certain national sovereignty to the international economic organization, EAEU could be regarded as the result of the national preferences of two states.

Otherwise, it is possible to establish an assumption on the factors that constitute the national preferences of both countries. First of all, in terms of geopolitics, Belarus is inclined to consider geopolitical externalities and employed regional economic cooperation to guarantee ally’s assistance. On the other hand, it can be assumed that Belarus cannot leave because the interests of stakeholders, trade interdependence, capital mobility, and domestic price reflection given the domestic economic situation, which is highly dependent on Russia in terms of economic benefit consist of reason for the process of regional economic integration

Belarus has formed the national preference based on its relationship with Russia as member of union states and absolute economic dependence on him, while Kazakhstan has formed a geopolitical background of using the Eurasian Economic Union as an international organization that can voice its sovereignty to check Russia, a regional hegemony. Also, from political-economic perspective, capital flows are critical and domestic factors in light of multi-vectorism policy or economic growth



align with national economic policy. In order to prove these assumptions, various studies were conducted using various documents and data from member countries.

**Table . 1.4**

Hypotheses with framework suggested by Moravcsik

<b>States</b>	<b>Geo-political interests</b>	<b>Economic Interests</b>
<b>Belarus</b>	Belarus is inclined to consider geopolitical externalities and employed regional economic cooperation to assure the assistance of allies.	Domestic economic structure and trade dependence on Russia made Belarus to join the Eurasian Economic Union and favor regional economic liberalization considering interests in domestic sellers, producers, investors, and traders (exporters).
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Kazakhstan prefers regional integration to bolster his own autonomy in the world, not only in Eurasia.	For economic growth align with national economic policy, capital flows are critical and domestic factors in light of multi-vectorism policy.

### 3.3 Methodology

The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the underlying factors and case-study behind the accession of Kazakhstan and Belarus to the EAEU, which could contribute to a better understanding of the union and its member countries' future. Also, the research employs a qualitative approach to investigate the factors and context behind the continuous participation of Kazakhstan and Belarus in regional economic integration such as Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Given the geographical distance and time constraints, the study relies on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, including academic articles, government reports, and media sources.

First, the initial step involves collecting and reviewing literature on the Eurasian

economic integration stages and its impact on member countries, with a focus on Kazakhstan and Belarus. Furthermore, more context was focused on Russian history and incidents from collapse of Soviet Union to Russian-Ukrainian War with Western sanctions. Furthermore, data retrieval was conducted via official statistic data from Eurasia Economic Union, Eurasian Economic Commission, and Chatham House. Data ranges from 2015 when Eurasian Economic Union was officially established, considering the domestic and international discussion to create Eurasia Economic Union as the official international organization. This process helped to identify the key issues and challenges both countries encountered to join the Eurasian regional integration in economy.

The subsequent step is to analyze the political, economic, and social background that has stimulated Kazakhstan and Belarus to participate and keep the cooperation in Eurasian continent. Reviewing on literature was conducted by search via news articles, websites, and economic and political situations in the region will be reviewed as well through public announcement, president and governmental statements and news articles, from 2012 to 2024. Common themes and patterns in the participation for the regional cooperation of the two countries to stay at the cooperative status were identified.

The findings of this study may have practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders involved in the Eurasian economic integration, as well as for scholars and researchers interested in the dynamics of regional economic integration in Eurasia. By discovering the crucial sources for Kazakhstan and Belarus, this research could contribute to the more informed decision-making process and facilitate the deeper understanding of the union's functions and prospects. Moreover, this study may stimulate further research on multi-lateral cooperation among member-states

and similar regional organizations, exploring different aspects of their development and operation.

## Chapter 4. Regional Economic Bloc in Eurasia

### 4.1. Overview

In order to secure further their political, economic, and military security interests since the fall of the Soviet Union, former Soviet Union governments have joined different regional integration organizations. These movements are shown as the involvement to regional integration with multilateral organizations such as CIS, EURASEC, GUAM, CSTO, SCO, CU, and EAEU. In particular, the post-Soviet space was a competitive zone between the restoration of Russian hegemony and the direction of pro-Western perspectives. Among these states, process of Eurasian economic integration led by Russia began right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the discussion regarding regional cooperation is currently taking place focusing on Eurasian Economic Union.

The EAEU is one of the multilateral organizations that support regional economic integration. The formation of a common market for products, services, capital, and labor within the Union is one of the main objectives, along with ensuring complete modernization, cooperation, and competitiveness of national economies within the global economy.<sup>69</sup> By guaranteeing free trade in the sectors covered by the Treaty and international agreements, as well as a coordinated, harmonized, and united strategy within the Union, the EAEU aims to support steady development for the betterment of the living standards of member states.

The EAEU is made up of five member nations, namely Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Armenia, with observers including Uzbekistan, Cuba, and


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<sup>69</sup> Van der Togt, T., Montesano, F. S., & Kozak, I. (2015). Integration in post-Soviet space: from the CIS to the Eurasian Union. In *From Competition to Compatibility: Striking a Eurasian balance in EU-Russia relations* (pp. 12–18). Clingendael Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05445.6>

Moldova.<sup>70</sup> Currently, *Sadyr Zhaparov* of the Kyrgyzstan is currently serving as the chairperson of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, while *Mikhail Myasnikov* of Belarus will assume the leadership of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission from 2022.<sup>71</sup> The population of member countries consists of 184 million people, accounting for 2.4% of the world's population. The total nominal GDP of member countries is \$1.74 trillion.

**Table 2.1**

Overview of Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU)<sup>72</sup>

	
Population & GDP	
Population (2022)	184 million (2.4% of global population)
Density	9.12/km <sup>2</sup>
<b>GDP (PPP)</b>	2021 estimate
Total	5.1 trillion dollars
Per capita	27,700 dollars per capita
<b>GDP (nominal)</b>	(2022 estimated data)
Total	1.74 trillion dollars
Per capita	10,400 dollars

The table 2.1 shows the overall idea on the EAEU. The dependence on trade

<sup>70</sup> The Eurasian Development Bank (2016), EAEU COUNTRIES: GROWTH AFTER ADAPTATION?. EDB MACROREVIEW July 2016. CHIEF ECONOMIST'S GROUP

<sup>71</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2023). General Information of the Eurasian Economic Union. Eurasian Economic Union. <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about>

<sup>72</sup> Congressional Research Service. (February 22, 2018). Eurasian Economic Union. Proquest Congressional.

among member states within the EAEU is quite biased. Based on the data given by the EAEU<sup>73</sup>, the trade structure is symmetric with Russian-centered trade. In particular, the size of intra-regional trade between Russia and Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan accounts for a large proportion, and the size of trade among other member countries is quite insignificant. The weak connection between other member states such as Armenia and Kyrgyzstan have reflected intra-trade volume in EAEU among states.

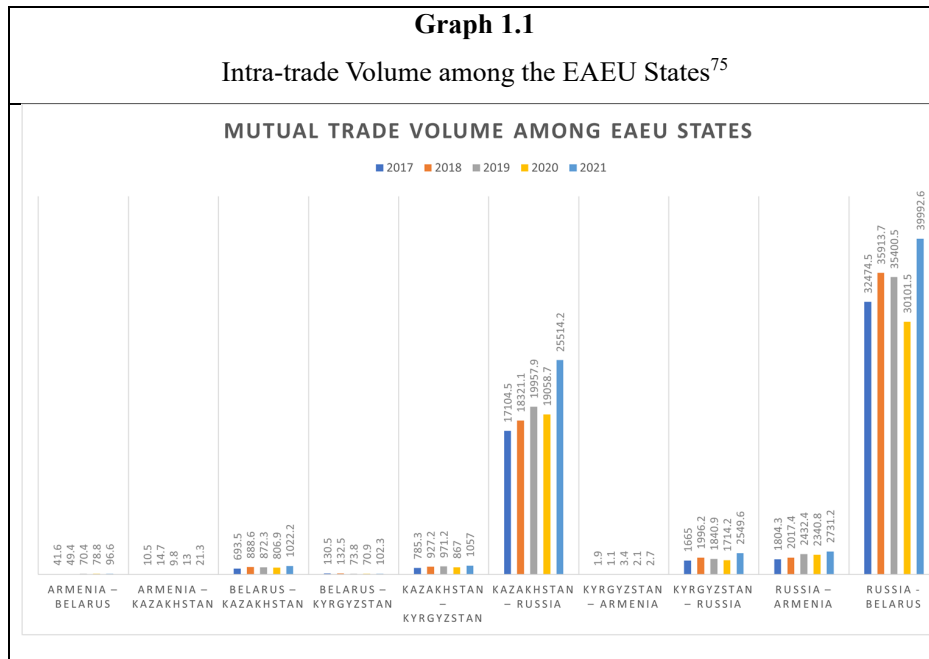
**Table 2.2**

Intra-Trade Volume in EAEU<sup>74</sup>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>EAEU</b>	<b>54711.6</b>	<b>60261.9</b>	<b>61632.6</b>	<b>55053.9</b>	<b>73089.7</b>
<b>Armenia – Belarus</b>	41.6	49.4	70.4	78.8	96.6
<b>Armenia – Kazakhstan</b>	10.5	14.7	9.8	13.0	21.3
<b>Belarus – Kazakhstan</b>	693.5	888.6	872.3	806.9	1022.2
<b>Belarus – Kyrgyzstan</b>	130.5	132.5	73.8	70.9	102.3
<b>Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan</b>	785.3	927.2	971.2	867.0	1057.0
<b>Kazakhstan – Russia</b>	17104.5	18321.1	19957.9	19058.7	25514.2
<b>Kyrgyzstan – Armenia</b>	1.9	1.1	3.4	2.1	2.7
<b>Kyrgyzstan – Russia</b>	1665.0	1996.2	1840.9	1714.2	2549.6
<b>Russia – Armenia</b>	1804.3	2017.4	2432.4	2340.8	2731.2
<b>Russia – Belarus</b>	32474.5	35913.7	35400.5	30101.5	39992.6

<sup>73</sup> Fleck, A., & Richter, F. (2022). *Infographic: Countries that depend on Russia for trade*. Statista Infographics. <https://www.statista.com/chart/27367/countries-most-dependent-on-russia-for-trade/>

<sup>74</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2022). *Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union*; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow



Furthermore, the mutual structure of foreign direct investment (FDI) among EAEU member states are biased according to graph 1.1 above. Here, it is obvious that, the mutual trade between three states: Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia is major. Except Kyrgystan and Armenia, others barely trade with each other than Russia. The figure briefly shows the trade volume between member states. The financial flow from investor country to recipient country has focused on the mutual trade from Russia to Kazakhstan and this shows the trend of investment is more targetting to Kazakhstan which has more potential to economic growth relatively than other countries. The gap between Belarus and Kazakhstan to other member states huge.

<sup>75</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2022). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

<p><b>Figure 1.3</b></p> <p><b>Mutual FDI Stock of the EAEU Member States</b></p> <p><b>in the Middle of 2022(USD millions)<sup>76</sup></b></p>						
Recipient Country	Investor Country					Total
	Armenia	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia	
Armenia	X	1	–	–	3,121	<b>3,122</b>
Belarus	62	X	14	–	5,385	<b>5,461</b>
Kazakhstan	–	35	X	–	10,667	<b>10,702</b>
Kyrgyzstan	–	2	618	X	946	<b>1,566</b>
Russia	3	601	3,035	2	X	<b>3,641</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>3,667</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20,119</b>	<b>24,492</b>

Although Russia, who is currently at the war with the Ukraine, being heavily pressured by the Western states with diverse economic sanctions, does not seem to be disturbed with its process with the EAEU. There seem to be some cracks in regional integration that are occurring in this region, but it does not appear to be influential at all.<sup>77</sup> With figure 1.3, it could be perceived that even though the international community condemns Russia with confrontation that covers actions of unilateral aggression, the members states of the EAEU still continue to be a part of the Russia-centered regional cooperation structure that has continued since the birth Soviet Union.

## 4.2. History of Eurasian Economic Integration

In the post-Soviet Union world, cooperation between various states in

<sup>76</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2022). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

<sup>77</sup> The Eurasian Development Bank (2016), EDB Monitoring of Mutual Investments 2022. Reports and Working Papers 22/5.



Eurasia was still sustained despite of the absence of the official organization. There have been many regional cooperation groups on the Eurasia region. Among these groups, EAEU has recognized as the most representative one. The actual establishment of the EAEU based on the "Troika" (tri-lateral cooperation)<sup>78</sup> of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia.<sup>79</sup> On March 29, 1994, at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Kazakh President Nazarbayev discussed the first post-Soviet regional integration project, using the word "Eurasia." The CIS came under fire from President Bayev for failing to adequately address needs and to ensure the integration of participant nations.

On June 8, 1994, President Nazarbayev released an article titled "Project for the Formation of the Union of Eurasian States" in Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. Later, he gave the heads of the CIS member states a physical representation of his integrated project.<sup>80</sup> From this blueprint, one of the fundamental institutional background, which is Customs Union(CU), was signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan on January 6, 1995.<sup>81</sup> This was initiated after taking the Agreement on Customs Union<sup>82</sup>, a bilateral deal between Belarus and Russia. On February 26, 1999, the "Treaty on Customs Union and Single Economic Space"<sup>83</sup> was signed in Moscow by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and

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<sup>78</sup> Kuznetsov, A., Vinokurov, E. (eds), Malakhov, A., Zaboev, A. (2022) EDB Monitoring of Mutual Investments — 2022. Report 22/5. Moscow: Eurasian Development Bank.

<sup>79</sup> WILSON, A., Kaczmariski, M., Kluge, J., Rácz, A., Stanovaya, T., & Wilson, A. (2020). RUSSIA AND ITS POST-SOVIET 'FRENEMIES': Breaking free from the post-Soviet time loop? In S. Saari & S. Secieru (Eds.), RUSSIAN FUTURES 2030: The shape of things to come (pp. 69–84). European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26053.9>

<sup>80</sup> Назарбаев Н.А. (2016) Проект формирования евразийского союза государств.

ЕВРАЗИЙСКАЯ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ: экономика, право, политика. (2) 91-95.

<sup>81</sup> Соглашение о Таможенном союзе между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Беларусь. June 01, 1995

<sup>82</sup> Соглашение стран СНГ 'О Таможенном союзе', Jan 20, 1995

<sup>83</sup> Евразийская экономическая комиссия, Договор о Таможенном союзе и Едином экономическом пространстве, February 26, 1999

Tajikistan. The five-nation accord established in the 1990s took time to come into being, and just as the European Union did not form overnight, the EAEU similarly took time to form.

**Table 2.3**

Timeline of Eurasian Integration (1995~2003)<sup>84</sup>

Year	Signed Documents for economic integration of Eurasia
1995	Treaty on the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia
	Treaty on the Customs Union between Kazakhstan and Russia
1996	Agreement on Increased Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Fields Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan
1999	Agreement to complete the formation of the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space
2000	Treaty on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan
2003	Treaty on forming the Single Economic Space Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine

For effective development in the stages of creating a customs union and a single economic space, the presidents from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan signed the "Treaty on the EAEU" on October 10, 2000, in Astana.<sup>85</sup> As the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community coincided with the start of create the legal framework for a single economic space, Ukraine, which had been a passive participant in Eurasian economic integration since early 2003, also decided to join.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, on September 19, 2003, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and

<sup>84</sup> Nikitina, Y. (2021). Russia's Regionalism Projects in Eurasia. In M. K. D. Cross & I. P. Karolewski (Eds.), *European-Russian Power Relations in Turbulent Times* (pp. 217–238). University of Michigan Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.10202357.11>

<sup>85</sup> Решение Межгосударственного Совета Республики Беларусь, Республики Казахстан, Кыргызской Республики, Российской Федерации и Республики Таджикистан. May 23, 2000

<sup>86</sup> Popescu, N. (2014). Ukraine and the unravelling of Eurasia. In *EURASIAN UNION: THE REAL, THE IMAGINARY AND THE LIKELY* (pp. 27–34). European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06979.7>

Ukraine signed the "Agreement on the Formation of a Single Economic Space in Yalta."<sup>87</sup> Next, in order to provide investment resources to form loans and grants to develop economically the Eurasian region, the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) was established in 2006.<sup>88</sup>

At the informal meeting of EAEC members in Sochi on August 16, 2006, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia made decision to create a customs union at the three-nation level, despite the difficulties posed by Ukraine's involvement in the Eastern Partnership with the European Union.<sup>89</sup> Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also made the decision to take part in the integration process according to readiness of their own economies.<sup>90</sup> This step shows that, in order to complete the formation of the EAEU, several fundamental systems and rules were installed thoroughly.

The foundation for the EAEU was laid by the common economic space and CU in order between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The EACU founded in 2010, and the Single Economic Space (SES) established in 2012, are two examples. Since Soviet Union spearheaded economic growth over the entirety of Eurasia and the Russian Federation continued to do so following the Soviet Union's demise, the Eurasian Economic Union was necessary steps for historical view.

Then, Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan decided to become members of the CU in October 2007. The action plans' objectives were declared to guarantee the free flow of goods in bilateral commerce, to foster advantageous trade environments, and

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<sup>87</sup> Президент России, Соглашение о формировании Единого экономического пространства. April 22, 2004

<sup>88</sup> Salikhov, M. R. & Agibalov, S. (2012) "The Rouble as the Settlement Currency of the CIS. Eurasian Development Bank," Eurasian Integration Yearbook, 1-10.

<sup>89</sup> Popescu. (2021). European Union vs. Eurasian Union – a brief comparative analysis and perspectives for cooperation. Bucharest University of Academic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.

<sup>90</sup> Stronski, P., & Sokolsky, R. (2020). The Eurasian Economic Union: More Than the Sum of its Parts. In *Multipolarity in Practice: Understanding Russia's Engagement With Regional Institutions* (pp. 5–10). Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20954.6>

to advance economic integration. On December 19, 2009, in Almaty, three presidents: Lukashenko, Medvedev and Nazarbayev signed the Joint Declaration on the establishment of the CU.<sup>91</sup> The CU is the first project launched to be a fully operational, dynamic, and transnational entity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. From the beginning, the CU actively adopted a decision-making procedure that affected trading among members.

**Table 2.4**

Timeline of Eurasian Integration (2007~2015)<sup>92</sup>

Year	Signed Documents for economic integration of Eurasia
2007	Treaty on the Commission of the Customs Union Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
	Treaty on the Establishment of the Integrated Customs Territory and Creation of the Customs Union Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
2010	Establishment of the Customs Union Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
2011	Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Commission Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
	The decision of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council on the entry of international agreements into force forming the legal base of the Customs Union and Single Economic Space Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
	Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
2012	Establishment of the Single Economic Space Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia
	Eurasian Economic Commission started functioning
2015	Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union
	The agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union

<sup>91</sup> Yarashevich, V. (2014). Post-communist Economic Integration: Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. *Journal of Economic Integration*, 29(4), 582–623. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43150571>

<sup>92</sup> Nikitina, Y. (2021). Russia's Regionalism Projects in Eurasia. In M. K. D. Cross & I. P. Karolewski (Eds.), *European-Russian Power Relations in Turbulent Times* (pp. 217–238). University of Michigan Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.10202357.11>

Before 2010, just a few areas which are railway cargo, aviation safety regulations, and power grids were cooperated between states. But after taking CU in effect, affected states expanded the economic collaboration to wider areas.<sup>93</sup> In 2010, the Custom Code Treaty came into force. Then, Single Economic Space Agreement (2012), the EAEU Treaty (2015), and the much-anticipated Customs Code were all sparked by the Custom Union of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. The trade policy of CU was significantly impacted as adjustments were made to several nations' customs levies. Up until the signing of the EAEU Treaty, they functioned as the SES's cornerstone and outlined the scope and development of the Eurasian project.

The presidents of the CU and the SES signed the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty on May 29, 2014, at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (SEEC). They officially acknowledged the advancement of the Eurasian economic project to a new and deeper level of integration. The Eurasian Economic Union Treaty went into effect on January 1st, 2015. On January 2nd, Armenia joined the union for integration, and in May, Kyrgyzstan also decided to join the EAEU.<sup>94</sup>

Other states who are interested in expanding trade relationship with the EAEU member states could sign FTAs.<sup>95</sup> The CIS are in the loose arrangement in which members negotiate bilateral trade agreements between them. The progress outside of the Eurasia was started from this capability of EAEU for conclusion of FTAs with other states. The initial FTA with Vietnam proved successful result of the

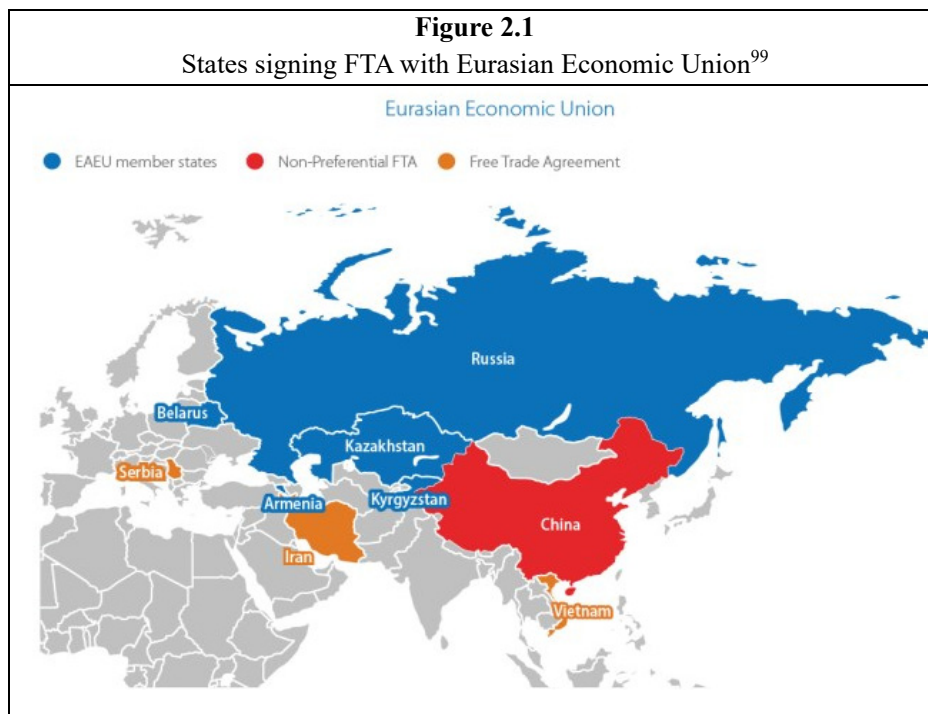
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<sup>93</sup> Shumylo-Tapiola, O. (2012). THE EURASIAN CUSTOMS UNION: Friend or Foe of the EU? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12828>

<sup>94</sup> Kaveshnikov, N. (2011). Development of the Institutional Structure of the Eurasian Economic Community. *Eurasian Economic Integration*, 2 (11), pp. 19–35. Available at: [https://eabr.org/upload/iblock/366/n2\\_2011\\_3.pdf](https://eabr.org/upload/iblock/366/n2_2011_3.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> Van der Togt, T., Montesano, F. S., & Kozak, I. (2015). Integration in post-Soviet space: from the CIS to the Eurasian Union. In *From Competition to Compatibility: Striking a Eurasian balance in EU-Russia relations* (pp. 12–18). Clingendael Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05445.6>

EAEU to other regions, and Iran and Serbia also signed an FTA with the EAEU, building more achievements.<sup>96</sup> Based on this relationship, the Republic of Korea also began a private joint research seminar in 2016<sup>97</sup>, and later agreed to establish a joint working group, which is currently suspended.<sup>98</sup>



### 4.3. Structure of EAEU

#### 4.3.1 Institutional Structure of EAEU

The EAEU has two separated sub-organizations. The first one is decision-making body, and the second one is the EAEU Court, the Eurasian Supreme Council,

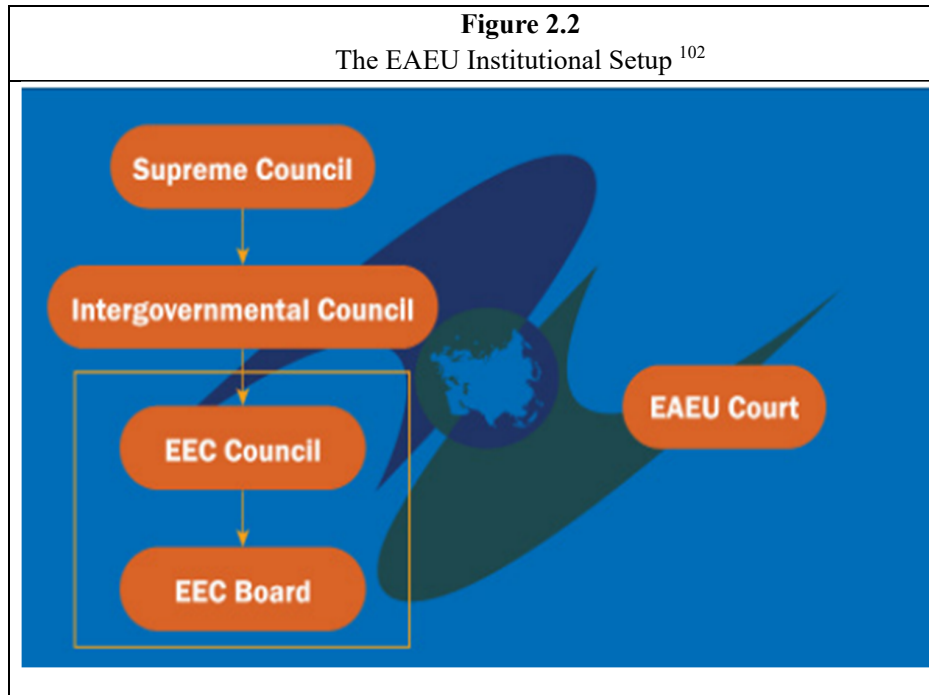
<sup>96</sup> The Asian Development Bank (2021), Eurasian Economic Union-Iran Free Trade Agreement. Trade and Investment. <https://aric.adb.org/fta/eurasian-economic-union-iran-free-trade-agreement>

<sup>97</sup> 윤성학. (2018). 한-유라시아경제연합(EAEU) FTA의 주요 쟁점과 추진 전략. Acta Russiana, 10, 3-30.

<sup>98</sup> 산업통상자원부 (2017). 한-EAEU FTA 체결 추진경과와 그 전망. 우리나라의 FTA. FTA의 강국, KOREA. <https://www.fta.go.kr/main/situation/kfta/lov7/eaue/6/>.

<sup>99</sup> Duhamel, C. (2022, November 24). 2022-23 Eurasian Economic Union Trade & Investment Profile. Russia Briefing News. <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/2022-23-eurasian-economic-union-trade-investment-profile.html/>

the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, and the Eurasian Economic Commission are the four EAEU statutory entities. (EEC).<sup>100</sup> The Interstate Council, the Integration Committee, the Inter-parliamentary Assembly, and the Court of the Eurasian Economic Community are all integrated management organizations within the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC Court).<sup>101</sup>



The Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, being made up of the heads of the EAEU member states, is the highest authority in the Union.<sup>103</sup> Although summits are typically conducted twice a year, it must convene once a year. The Supreme

<sup>100</sup> Kaveshnikov, N. (2011). Development of the Institutional Structure of the Eurasian Economic Community. *Eurasian Economic Integration*, 2 (11), pp. 19–35.

<sup>101</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission (2020). 2020 FACTS AND FIGURES. ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

<sup>102</sup> YELISEYEU, A. (2019). THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION: EXPECTATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS. German Marshall Fund of the United States. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21473>

<sup>103</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission (2020). 2020 FACTS AND FIGURES. ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Council oversees making decisions regarding the union budget, board assignments, the overall EAEU development strategy, and other matters. Decisions made by the EEC, or the Intergovernmental Council are also subordinate to those made by the Supreme Council. Between 2015 and 2018, the Supreme Council rendered more than a hundred judgments.<sup>104</sup>

Next, the leaders of several country governments make up the Intergovernmental Council, which convenes at least twice year. The EEC's judgment takes precedence over its decisions. A member state may submit a petition to the Intergovernmental Council or the Supreme Council requesting for the decision to be withdrawn or changed within 30 days after the decision's official publication. Countries have not hesitated to use this right. Members of the EEC are chosen by its Council and Board, which functions as the Union's permanent supranational regulatory body.<sup>105</sup> The Commission manages the establishment of the framework for the Union's development as well as formulating ideas for economic integration within the Union.

Another organization to look up is EEC Council. Deputy prime ministers from each EAEU member state makes up the EEC Council which is the de facto supplementary intergovernmental organization. Consensus is used to make decisions among members. The EEC Board is a transnational regulatory body with ten members of the Union. The Board votes by qualified majority with 2/3 of members excluding a few cases specified by the Supreme Council when requiring consensus. The Board is now presided over by former Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail

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<sup>104</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2021). Annual Report. Department of Protocol and Organizational Support.

<sup>105</sup> Chatham house. (2023). 4. the EAEU: Intentions and limitations. Chatham house.  
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2017/05/eurasian-economic-union/4-aeu-intentions-and-limitations>.



Myasnikovich.<sup>106</sup> The Court of the Eurasian Economic Union serves as the EAEU's court of justice.

The Eurasian Stabilization and Development Fund (ESDF) and Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) serve as the cornerstone for the financial realization of Eurasian integration. The EDB is a financial organization with six member states, and has \$1.5 billion in paid-in capital, and an estimated \$2.2 billion in recent investments.<sup>107</sup> The EAEU institutional structure consists of a rigorous four-tier hierarchy in which decisions made by a higher-tier organization may be overruled. The supranational EEC Board is positioned above three intergovernmental bodies in the framework. The EAEU's supranational component looks quite weak, and the intra-governmental modalities of making decisions dominates the Union in contrast to the structure and decision-making of the European Union.<sup>108</sup>

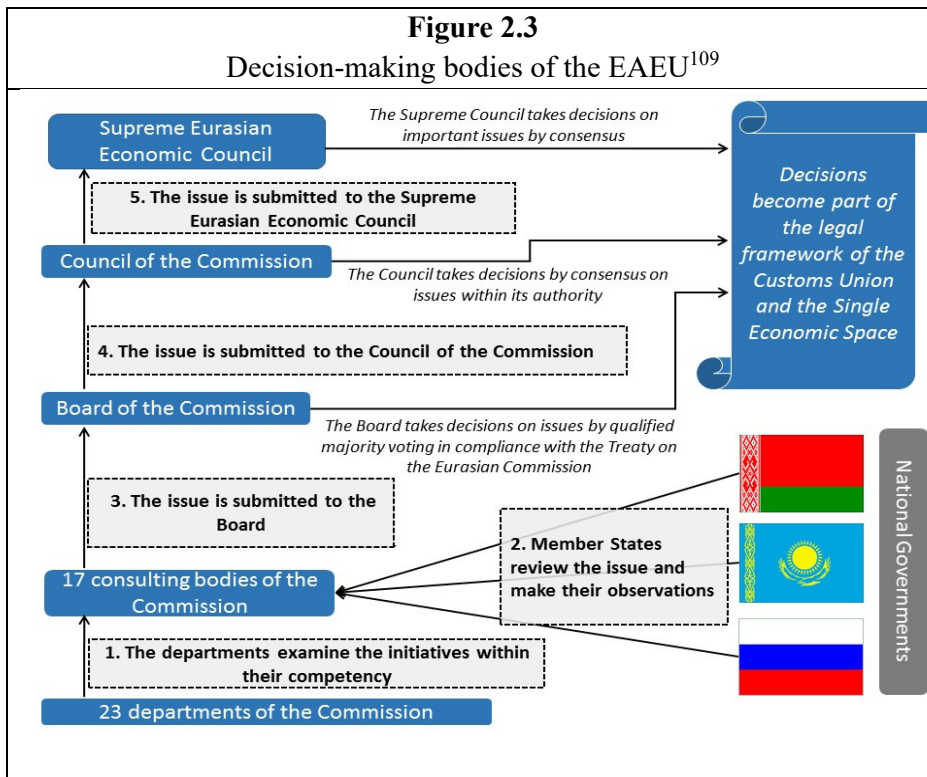
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<sup>106</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2023). The Chairman of the Board, The Eurasian Economic Commission. Eurasian Economic Commission.

<sup>107</sup> The Eurasian Development Bank. (2021, November 18). Mutual investments in Eurasia, calculated using a new methodology, reach US \$46 billion. FDI has been growing steadily since 2016. Eurasian Development Bank.

<sup>108</sup> A Comparison of EAEU, DCFTA and Selected EU-CEE Countries. Research Report 428. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies. Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche



The EAEU's organizational structure is inspired by the EU's design. This is because the Eurasian Economic Union's structure and decision-making process are comparable to the current European Union system.<sup>110</sup> But they are controlled by a sort of hybrid rule of international and domestic law, the organizational structure and decision-making processes of the European Union are obligations under international law that must be upheld. In light of this, it is determined that it is run in a democratic and open manner, and that each member nation's freedom to take part in the decentralized structure is likewise protected.

<sup>109</sup> Chatham House (2017). The Eurasian Economic Union Deals, Rules and the Exercise of Power. Chatham House. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-05-02-eurasian-economic-union-dragneva-wolczuk.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> Popescu. (2021). European Union vs. Eurasian Union – a brief comparative analysis and perspectives for cooperation. Bucharest University of Academic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.

The Eurasian integration process has only been defined in terms of intergovernmental and supranational levels. It is crucial to underline that different actors participate in the decision-making process at different levels.<sup>111</sup> Through the SEEC and early policy formulation consultations with the Commission's advisory body, EAEU members take part in the decision-making process. The EEC is the principal executive body in charge of enacting laws, conducting policies, and overseeing EAEU common policies. Consequently, the EAEU can be seen as a specific system that prevails over member states in some interactions, which are conducted by supranational institutions like the EEC and the Court of the EAEU.<sup>112</sup>

The hierarchical concept is the cornerstone of the EAEU's decision-making process, as shown in the diagram of the EEC's decision-making process.<sup>113</sup> It must be noted that the decisions of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council have precedence over those of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council and the Eurasian Economic Commission. Since the Eurasian Economic Union is not yet fully functional, there is no political or legal obligation that extends beyond the realm of commerce, but there are ongoing efforts to foster intra-economic cooperation. are some of the organizations that the EAEU has in place to strengthen regional economic integration.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Yana Glittova, Andrey V. Toropygin (2020) Eurasian Economic Union: Multi-level Governance in the Context of Supranationalism and Nation States

<sup>112</sup> Yana Glittova, Andrey V. Toropygin (2020) Eurasian Economic Union: Multi-level Governance in the Context of Supranationalism and Nation States

<sup>113</sup>EEC. (2014, March 27). Decision making process in the Eurasian Economic Commission. page. <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/nae/news/Pages/16-05-2014-5.aspx>

<sup>114</sup> UNTAD. (2014, November 11). Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.

**Table 2.4****Institutional Structure of EAEU**

<b>Body</b>	<b>Member state representation</b>	<b>Decision-making mode</b>	<b>Frequency of meeting per treaty</b>
Supreme Council	Heads of state	Consensus	Once a year
Intergovernmental Council	Heads of government	Consensus	Twice a year
Eurasian Economic Commission Council	Deputy heads of government	Consensus	Once a quarter
Eurasian Economic Commission Collegium	Professionals (4-year term)	Qualified majority or consensus	Permanent body

**4.3.2 Legal Structure of the EAEU**

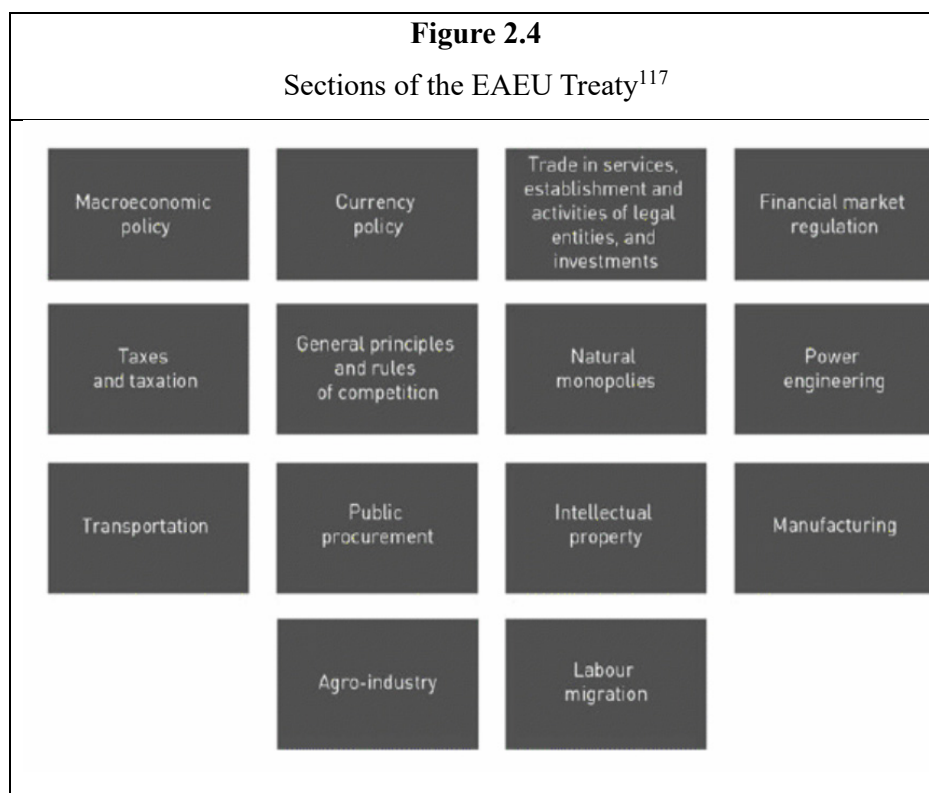
The EAEU Treaty outlines potential possibility for its growth and fully expresses the complexities of the integration procedure.<sup>115</sup> It covers all key facets of regular and ongoing economic interactions between members. The main legal instrument regulating the EAEU is the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, known as the "EAEU Treaty." Total page count is 680, of which one hundred are the treaty and 33 are appendices.<sup>116</sup> This treaty is divided into four sections. Four sections from the EAEU treaty make up the first part.

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<sup>115</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2023). Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. Eurasian Economic Union.

<sup>116</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2023). Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. Eurasian Economic Union.

These sections cover general provisions related to the establishment of the EAEU and its legal status, the Union's main operational goals, objectives, and jurisdiction, the procedure, and powers of the EAEU bodies, and the process for establishing the Union's budget, funding the activities of the EAEU bodies, conducting an independent audit, and monitoring the Union's financial and commercial activities. The operation of the CU within the EAEU is covered in part 2 of the EAEU treaty. The third article of the EAEU Treaty covers the most policies agreed upon by member states and regulates how the Single Economic Space of the Union is operated. Concluding and transitional clauses are included in the fourth and last chapter of the EAEU Treaty.



<sup>117</sup> The Eurasian Development Bank. (2017). Eurasian Economic Integration: Analytics & Projects of the EDB Centre for Integration Studies

The EAEU's development directions are outlined in the treaty, which also covers all significant aspects of past, present, and future economic cooperation between Union Member States. The Treaty also demonstrates the complexity of the integration process' guiding principles with respect to international agreements concluded within the Union, including those with third parties, as well as with regard to decisions and directives made by Union bodies.<sup>118</sup> The Member States do, however, have the flexibility to deviate from several of the Treaty's provisions as necessary, despite the fact that many of the restrictions are fixed in it, including those relating to the competence of Union bodies, lengthy integration transition periods for national industry markets, and ambiguous and occasionally contradictory language in the provisions.

**Table 2.5**

Structures of EAEU Treaty

<b>EAEU Treaty</b>	<b>Details</b>
Part One	[ <b>Section I ~ Section IV</b> ] General Provisions
Part Two	[ <b>Section V ~ Section XII</b> ] The operation of Custom Unions
Part Three	[ <b>Section XIII ~ Section XXVI</b> ] The operation of the Union's Single Economic Space
Part Four	[ <b>Section XXVII ~</b> ] Concluding Provisions

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<sup>118</sup> EEC. (2020). Structure of the Commission. Евразийская экономическая комиссия.  
<https://eec.eaeunion.org/en/commission/about/>

### 4.3. Purpose of the EAEU

The foundation of the Eurasian Economic Union is crucially linked to the idea of the geopolitical goal and a distinct long-term economic strategy for member states. The EAEU functions as a multilateral platform for member states to modernize their domestic economies, strengthen economic linkages within the region, and create environment that would increase their level of global competitiveness.<sup>119</sup> With these aims, it is noticeably clear that these objectives are related to both geopolitical goals and long-term economic achievements.

Therefore, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), under Vladimir Putin's third presidential term's imminent initiative that aims to establish a common market for 180 million people, came after a number of prior initiatives for post-Soviet economic integration. Most notably, the Customs Union was established between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in 2010. Since its launch in 2015,<sup>120</sup> In order to develop a new set of economic ties between the Eurasian countries, as Kazakh President Nazarbayev had envisioned, it was a crucial first step.<sup>121</sup>

However, Russia's major objective in uniting Eurasia was to strengthen its own position in the region. The main goals of Russia in Asia, as stated in its 2013 foreign policy concept, are to "establish itself as a key transit country between Europe and Asia," "participate in and shape regional integration processes," and "improve the regional security environment."<sup>122</sup> For a variety of reasons, other

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<sup>119</sup> Chatham House. (2023). 4. the EAEU: Intentions and limitations. Chatham house.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2017/05/eurasian-economic-union/4-eaeu-intentions-and-limitations>

<sup>120</sup> The Foreign Policy Research Institute (2018). THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION: PUTIN'S GEOPOLITICAL PROJECT. Russia Political Economy Project. <https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/rpe-6-dragneva-final2.pdf>RIA Novosti (2014), 'Putin: Peredacha polnomochii v EAES ne oznachet utratu suvereniteta' [Putin: the transfer of powers in the EAEU does not mean loss of sovereignty], 29 May 2014, <http://ria.ru/economy/20140529/1009842639.html>

<sup>121</sup> Bassin, M. a. (2017) The Politics of Eurasianism: Identity, Popular Culture and Russia's Foreign Policy. London: Rowman & Littlefield International

<sup>122</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Russian Federation. The Concept of the Foreign

nations are active in Eurasian integration, although they are not particularly interested in reaching the regional deep economic union.<sup>123</sup> As a result of the member nations' competing objectives, the project is unable to create a real economic union.

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Policy of the Russian Federation. Fundamental documents. Foreign Policy.  
[https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/fundamental\\_documents/1860586/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/)

<sup>123</sup> Chatham House (2017) The Eurasian Economic Union Deals, Rules and the Exercise of Power  
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-05-02-eurasian-economic-union-dragneva-wolczuk.pdf>



## **Chapter 5. Case-Study: Belarus and Kazakhstan**

### **5.1 Historical Overview:**

Prior to the EAEU, the existence of the USSR could have functioned as a format of the regional economic platform. The giant formation of the unified Soviet market that existed for almost seven decades, could be understood as a former EAEU, but with more ideological aspects and values. The birth of the EAEU, with capitalism and free trade-based principle, has been now slowly building a loose, but fundamental backbone of the Commonwealth Independent states. In the framework of Eurasianism by Putin, this ambitious plan has integrated both pivotal and trivial states around Russia, such as Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Russia still plays a crucial role in the post-Soviet era, and the EAEU is not an exception. President of Russian Federation, Putin and his governmental strategy of "building Russia, a great power in the 21st century" was to build a regional power that plays a role in the new multipolar system.<sup>124</sup> Launched in 2015, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a major national project intricately linked to Russia's global strategic initiative. This is because the Eurasian Economic Union is an economic community centered on former Soviet states such as Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, and aims for a regionally integrated organization comparable to the European Union.

The birth of the EAEU could bring further developments in socio-economic, regional, and global dimensions. For example, if the EAEU continues to attract more member states in both Central Asia and Eastern Europe where former Soviet Union

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<sup>124</sup> The Grand Kremlin Palace. (1993~2022). National Security Strategy.

member states are located, this could foster multilateral relations among them. Then, the EAEU could function as the European Union in Eurasia, where the multilateral coalition between states is weak. Also, the globe is expected to include more diversified voices from the EAEU regions. The global economy will be more integrated if the EAEU is successfully implemented within member states while connecting with others via global cooperation processes.

Currently, the EAEU contains five different member states. They are Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. It is notable that Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the treaty on the CU with Russia in 1995. Factually, except for Russia and Kazakhstan, the other three member states are not huge figures in terms of their Gross domestic product (GDP). Due to different economic sizes and strengths, it is often regarded that the EAEU is heavily affected, operated, and ruled by Russia. Thus, discovering motivations to join the EAEU between two dissimilar states that are, Belarus, a union state with Russia, and Kazakhstan, the largest state in Central Asia will provide meaningful insights.

### **5.1.1 The fall of Soviet Union**

Before going to case study on Belarus and Kazakhstan, the fall of Soviet Union needs to be explained. Soviet Union, which originated in the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the first transcontinental state that integrated states located in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and other states outside Eurasia. Created during the first world war, the idea of communism strongly influenced the former Russian Empire and its subordinate states to form a gigantic regional bloc under the name of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Here, the important objectives of this regional bloc were the installation of socialism and, communism in the globe, rather than economic and non-ideological benefits.

Russia, along with other communist states under the name of the USSR, had competed with the United States, causing the Cold War. The competition between the two superpowers soon led to bipolar tension, causing various conflicts and crashes in the world. Examples are the division of Germany, the Korean war, the Cuban missile crisis, the Prague Spring and many other incidents. The endless competition was also shown by the regional bloc between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO). However, the Cold War has ended, coming from the USSR.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the final leader of the Soviet Union, began its reform policy in 1985. He advocated Glasnost and Perestroika to reform the political system and implement economic restructuring. For catching up with the West, he decided to push this agenda in order to increase openness and transparency in government-related organizations, institutions. Despite the Soviet ambition to build a communist world, the Soviet Union's influence has been weakened by the economic gap between the existing Communist Party elites and ordinary citizens, forming a communist inequality.

On the other side, President Ronald Reagan's influence to isolate the Soviet economy from the United States and the international market left the Soviet bloc from free trade and the free market. The omnidirectional pressure by the US caused the USSR to utilize its natural and monetary resources in areas such as aeronautics, space engineering, and defense industries which required heavy burden. Moreover, weak economic fundamentals have made the USSR underdeveloped, allowing other Western states to recover from its war damages. The competitiveness and efficiency of the USSR were slowly losing ground, ending up as a failed regime.

As a result, Gorbachev attempted to change the pessimistic situation of the

USSR, but he failed without definite success. He later faced a failed coup by other Russian communist hardliners in August 1991 and this determined the fate of the Soviet Union by weakening Gorbachev's power and pushing the democratic forces led by Boris Yeltsin to the forefront of Russian politics. On December 25, Gorbachev resigned as leader of the Soviet Union. This abortive coup caused its member states to leave the USSR, including Belarus and Kazakhstan. Thus, the Soviet Union officially disappeared on December 31, 1991, and the Soviet-command economy was vanished.

This sudden and immediate ending of the regional bloc was soon replaced by several multilateral organizations such as CIS, EACU, and EurAsEC. These organizations show, even though the Soviet Union was collapsed, former states still seek regional cooperation in mutually beneficial areas such as trade, market, and currency. The establishment of the EAEU is a good example where a systematic, organized, and regionally integrated bloc was formed. Besides the failure of the Soviet Union, practical cooperation between former states is still important. The EAEU is currently developing, as it negotiates with its potential trade partners, while connects with free trade agreements with other states.

### **5.1.2 Annexation of Crimea Peninsula in 2014**

Russia is the largest country in the world covering both Asia and Europe, bordering a total of fourteen states. This geopolitical condition made Russia to be continuously in tensions with bordering states based on their minority ethnic groups, territories, and diplomatic relations. Examples are territorial conflicts with Afghanistan, Chechnya, Estonia, Georgia, Japan, and lastly Ukraine. Russia has faced numerous challenges and conflicts after the collapse of the USSR, and this phenomenon has triggered former members such as Chechnya, Tatarstan, and Sakha

to seek independence from Russia. Among these federal republics, Russia has experienced seventeen years of continued war with Chechnya.

Although Russia suffered some casualties from these conflicts, it did not let any states to dissolve from the Russian federation. While the Chechnya warfare occurred inside of Russia, there were also some obvious wars outside of Russia, specifically in nearby regions to Russia due to Russia's diplomatic goals. Afghan–Soviet War, Transnistria War, and Russo-Georgian War are good examples of conflicts that Russia is directly involved in. Other wars such as the first and second Nagorno-Karabakh War are good evidence that Russia still plays an important role in the Eurasian region. Mostly recently, Donbas war, 2014 Crimean Crisis and most importantly, Russo-Ukrainian War started since the year of 2022.

As Russia illegally annexed Crimea and began meddling in eastern Ukraine, the West responded with economic sanctions. In July 2014, sanctions were imposed jointly by the EU, the US, Canada, and their partners.<sup>125</sup> These sanctions were further strengthened in September 2014. These sanctions are three types of different economic sanctions, where the first one restricts access to Western financial markets and services to designated Russian state-owned enterprises in the banking, energy, and defense sectors.<sup>126</sup> The second one bans the export of designated high-tech oil exploration and production equipment to Russia. The third one is a ban on the export of designated munitions and dual-use goods to Russia.

Looking at the state of sanctions by country, the US announced sanctions

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<sup>125</sup> Christie, E. H. (2015, July 13). Sanctions after Crimea: Have they worked?. NATO Review. <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2015/07/13/sanctions-after-crimea-have-they-worked/index.html>

<sup>126</sup> DuBard, A. (2022, March 3). War in Europe: 2014 and now: Will sanctions change Putin's calculations? Friedrich Naumann Foundation. <https://www.freiheit.org/2014-and-now-will-sanctions-change-putins-calculations>

against the two largest Russian banks, and the US also froze Russian assets at state-owned banks in the US and banned Americans from purchasing Russian government bonds. Elsewhere, the EU has enacted sanctions that "block 70% of Russia's banking system from international financial markets," while the UK has sanctioned more than one hundred companies among other measures. As a result, exports to Russia fell by about a third on average when compared to the first quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2014. But Russia's importance as a target market is quite limited in most European countries, and more importantly, European companies have still been able to find new markets for their products both inside and outside Europe.<sup>127</sup>

**Table 3.1**  
Shifts in goods exports to Russia and to other countries (EU)<sup>128</sup>

REPORTER	Total exports in 2014Q1 (EUR mn)	Change in exports to Russia (EUR mn)	Change in exports to other markets (EUR mn)	Net change (EUR mn)	Net change (% of 2014Q1)
Cyprus	325	-5	182	177	54.3%
Ireland	21,107	-78	3,717	3,639	17.2%
Bulgaria	4,859	-41	646	606	12.5%
Croatia	2,364	-21	254	233	9.9%
Poland	40,223	-521	3,811	3,291	8.2%
Czech Republic	32,205	-365	2,836	2,471	7.7%
Hungary	20,433	-165	1,633	1,467	7.2%
Malta	536	0	37	37	6.9%
Denmark	20,548	-114	1,490	1,376	6.7%
Slovenia	6,597	-85	499	414	6.3%
Germany	278,427	-2,566	17,952	15,386	5.5%
Romania	12,758	-91	734	643	5.0%
Luxembourg	3,618	-14	177	163	4.5%
Portugal	11,707	-18	460	442	3.8%
<b>EU Total</b>	<b>1,143,317</b>	<b>-8,652</b>	<b>49,019</b>	<b>40,367</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

<sup>127</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2023). Ukraine and Russia Sanctions. U.S. Department of State. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/ukrainerussia/index.htm>

<sup>128</sup> Eurostat (2014-2025) Trade statistics. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/international-trade-in-goods>.

Furthermore, the US has designated several Russian and Ukrainian organizations, including fourteen defense companies and Putin's aides for sanctions, and has imposed targeted sanctions that limit certain finance to six of Russia's largest banks and four energy companies. The US has also suspended financing for credit financing and Russia's economic development projects that encourage exports to Russia and currently prohibit the provision, export and re-export of goods, services and technology that supports exploration or production. America's sanctions lists are well explained in figure 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 they show that Western authorities have seriously impacted Russia.<sup>129</sup>

**Figure 3.1**  
America's Sanction on Russia by illegal annexation of Crimea  
Peninsula (2014.06~09)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Announcement</b>
9/12/14	Announcement of Expanded Treasury Sanctions within the Russian Financial Services, Energy and Defense or Related Materiel Sectors
9/12/14	Statement of Secretary Lew on Additional Sanctions within Russia's Financial Services, Defense or Related Materiel, and Energy Services Sectors
9/11/14	Statement by the President on New Sanctions Related to Russia
7/30/14	G7 Leaders Statement on Ukraine sanctions
7/29/14	Announcement of Additional Treasury Sanctions on Russian Financial Institutions and on a Defense Technology Entity
7/16/14	Announcement of Treasury Sanctions on Entities Within the Financial Services and Energy Sectors of Russia, Against Arms or Related Materiel Entities, and those Undermining Ukraine's Sovereignty
06/20/14	Treasury Sanctions Additional Individuals for Threatening the Territorial Integrity of Ukraine

**Figure 3.2**

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<sup>129</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2023). Ukraine and Russia Sanctions. U.S. Department of State. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/ukrainerrussia/index.htm>

America's Sanction on Russia by illegal annexation of Crimea Peninsula (2014.04)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Announcement</b>
04/28/14	Statement by the White House Press Secretary on Ukraine
04/28/14	United States Expands Export Restrictions on Russia
04/28/14	Announcement of Additional Treasury Sanctions on Russian Government Officials and Entities
04/28/14	Statement of Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew
04/28/14	Commerce Department Announces Expansion of Export Restrictions on Russia
04/11/14	Treasury Designates Seven Individuals and One Entity Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine
04/03/14	Statement by the White House Press Secretary on H.R. 4152, S. 2183

**Figure 3.3**

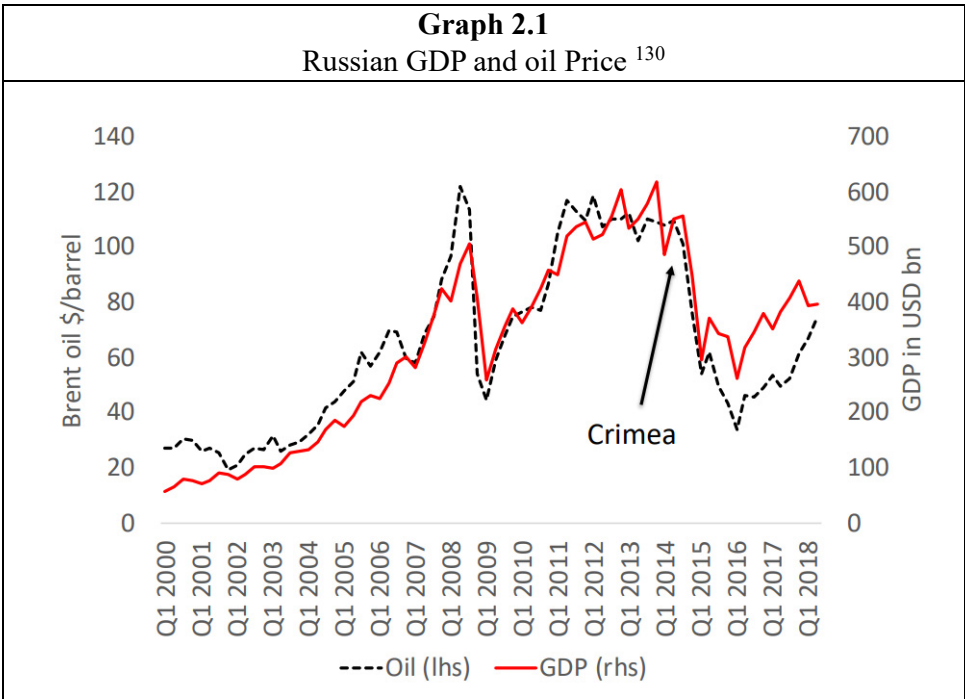
America's Sanction on Russia by illegal annexation of Crimea Peninsula (2014.03)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Announcement</b>
03/20/14	Statement by the President on Ukraine
03/20/14	Treasury Sanctions Russian Officials, Members Of The Russian Leadership's Inner Circle, And An Entity For Involvement In The Situation In Ukraine
03/20/14	Background Briefing on Ukraine by Senior Administration Officials
03/20/14	Letter: Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine
03/17/14	Ukraine-Related Sanctions
03/17/14	Background Briefing by Senior Administration Officials on Ukraine
03/17/14	Letter: Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine

However, the effectiveness of international sanctions on Russia looks less than oil price changes during the time when Russia was given with multiple sanctions. The GDP of Russia was massively affected by the change in oil price in the trade volume of energy according to the graph 2.1. This shows numerous sanctions given



by international society, especially Western countries were not effectively targeting the loss of the Russian macro-economy, making Russia stop to move forward. In this point, it is believed that the international sanctions were more aimed to narrow scope and some leaders in Russia.



### 5.1.3 Russia-Ukrainian War

The war between Russia and Ukraine made Russia an outcast in the international community.<sup>131</sup> According to President Zelenskyy, 100,000 Russian troops gathered on the Ukrainian border on November 13, 2021. On February 10, 2022, Russia conducted joint drills with Belarus near to the Belarusian-Ukrainian border before launching the greatest military exercise since the end of the Cold War.

<sup>130</sup> Becker, T. (2019), "Russia's macroeconomy—a closer look at growth, investment, and uncertainty", forthcoming SITE Working paper.

<sup>131</sup> Funakoshi, M., & Lawson, H. (2022, March 10). Tracking sanctions against Russia. Reuters.<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/UKRAINE/CRISIS/SANCTIONS/byvrvjenzmve/>

After 11 days, both Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic declared the independence and President Putin acknowledged this declaration. Then he issued an order for Russian forces to enter the areas to perform peacekeeping duties.<sup>132</sup> And Putin announced the special military operation in the early hours of February 24 by ordering his troops into Ukraine. Until now, the war between Russia and Ukraine has still occurred with victims in two countries.

In this regard, several economic sanctions have been imposed on key Russian organizations and individuals by the EU, the US, and other states. The three main categories are sanctions against people, business transactions, and financial institutions. Russia has responded by penalizing the organizations and citizens of the US, the EU, the UK, and other punishing countries.<sup>133</sup> Countering to Russia, EU has also placed sanctions on seven hundred individuals, 50 companies, vital Belarusian businesses, and a variety of Belarusian goods due to Belarus's cooperation to Russia. The Belarusian economy, the EU, and global food supplies have all been impacted by the new regulations, which include trade limitations on potassium chloride.<sup>134</sup>

#### **5.1.4 Tri-lateral Cooperation for Eurasian Integration**

Compared to other states in the region, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia have been methodically and consistently leading the economic integration process in Eurasia. The creation of the Customs Union, the Single Economic Space, and then the Eurasian Economic Union served as the catalysts for the integration process. Despite Russia's significant political sway within the union, Belarus, and Kazakhstan,

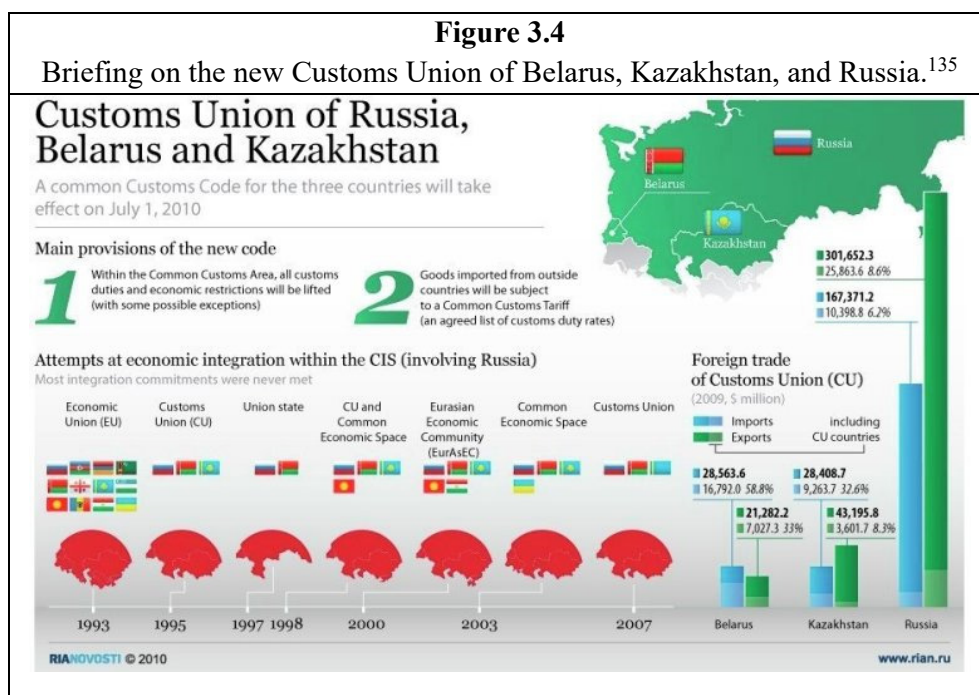
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<sup>132</sup> Commons Library Research Briefing, 24 February 2023

<sup>133</sup> Guenette, J., Kenworthy, P. & Wheeler, C., (2022). Implications of the War in Ukraine for the Global Economy, Washington, DC: World Bank. United States of America. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/2392687/implications-of-the-war-in-ukraine-for-the-global-economy/3414122/> on 19 Jun 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/ktgwxx.

<sup>134</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service (2022) "Russia's war on Ukraine: Background" [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD\\_Russia\\_war\\_Ukraine.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD_Russia_war_Ukraine.pdf)

both of which possessed significant domestic political influence, held divergent perspectives on economic cooperation. This article conducted research to examine these distinct opinions.



As figure 3.4 shows, joining regional economic blocs such as Regional Trade Agreement, Free Trade Agreement, Customs Union, and Economic Union is an important agenda in domestic politics and economy. The decision to join regional blocs is based on the analysis and simulation of not only international relations but also domestic situations by the government and president. The newly independent states have been overcoming the consequences of the political collapse of the Soviet Union and the dynamic impacts from the economic complex.

The rupture of established production, technological and economic ties of

<sup>135</sup> Maselnik, P. by S. (2011, September 6). Towards a eurasian federation?. The European Strategist. <https://europeanstrategist.wordpress.com/2011/07/02/towards-a-eurasian-federation/>

enterprises, the destruction of the unified financial and monetary system are other evidence of the fall of the USSR. The formation of state institutions, the reform of economic and social relations has continued since 1991 in the post-soviet period.<sup>136</sup> Leaders from states in Eurasia, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan needed to make a direction whether they stayed in Eurasian regional integration or collaborate with Western powers and organizations.

In the process to join the regional economic union in Eurasia, each member state needed to consider and predict the effect of the regional integration above seemingly advantageous aspects. These are, such as free trade or tariff reduction to overcome the negative situation and make national strategy for foreign policy. For instance, Ukraine's initiative toward the European Union was clear and this strategy has made diplomatic conflicts with Russia, securing own sovereignty, and positioning himself as independent from influence of the post-soviet era.<sup>137</sup>

Therefore, this part aims to analyze motivations of Belarus and Kazakhstan to maintain regional economic integration in Eurasia, taking into consideration both domestic and international factors and context. With this approach, both economic and geopolitical interests could be revealed, along with their national preferences. Thus, the status and situation of Belarus and Kazakhstan around the time when Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan were trying to keep being positive to Eurasian economic integration will be discussed below with overview of their surrounded context from economic, political, social perspectives.

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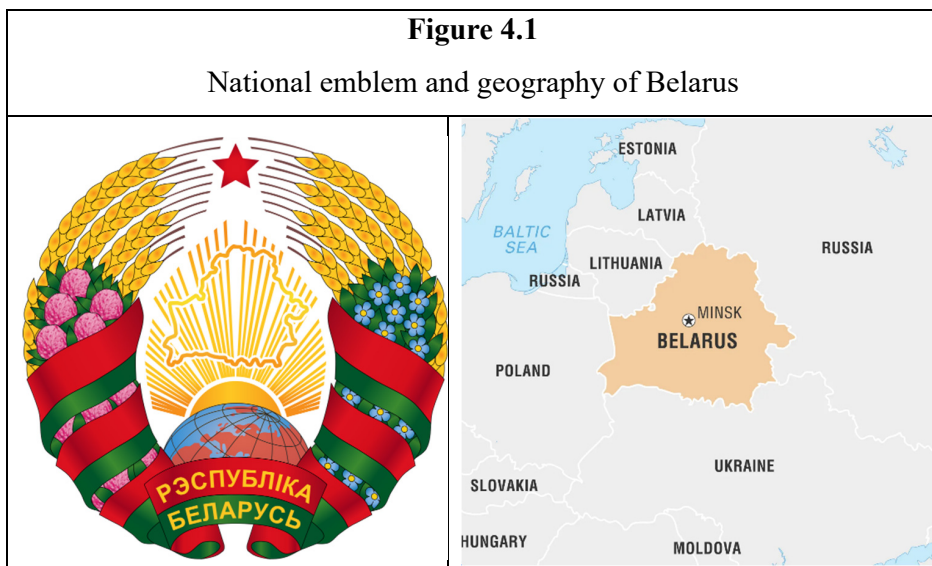
<sup>136</sup> Николай Шумский (2000) ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ ПОСТСОВЕТСКИХ ГОСУДАРСТВ: ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РАЗВИТИЯ. Белорусский журнал международного права и международных отношений 2000 — № 3. <https://evolutio.info/ru/journal-menu/2000-3/2000-3-shumski>

<sup>137</sup> Сафаева, С. (2007). Постсоветская интеграция в контексте политической трансформации новых независимых государств. Центральная Азия и Кавказ, 5-53, 146-157.

## 5.2 Case Analysis on Belarus

### 5.2.1 Overview

Belarus was formerly known as Belorussia or White Russia until gaining independence in 1991. Apart from a brief period in 1918, Belarusian people have never enjoyed political unification or sovereignty despite having a distinctive ethnic identity and language. Accordingly, Belarusian history is less a study of a distinct national narrative but more an examination of regional variables, the way how they interact, and the effects on the Belarusian people. The large portion of Belarus' history is entwined with that of its neighbors because of the region that is now Belarus being divided and changing hands multiple times.



After 20 years from the independence from Soviet Union, Belarus had faced two economic crises in four years and its economic growth has been slowed. Due to the economic crises in 2008 and 2011 and their aftermath, Belarus was forced to face only 1.7 percent growth in 2012 and slower growth of 0.9 percent in 2013. Specifically, wage increases were put on hold while allowing the value of the

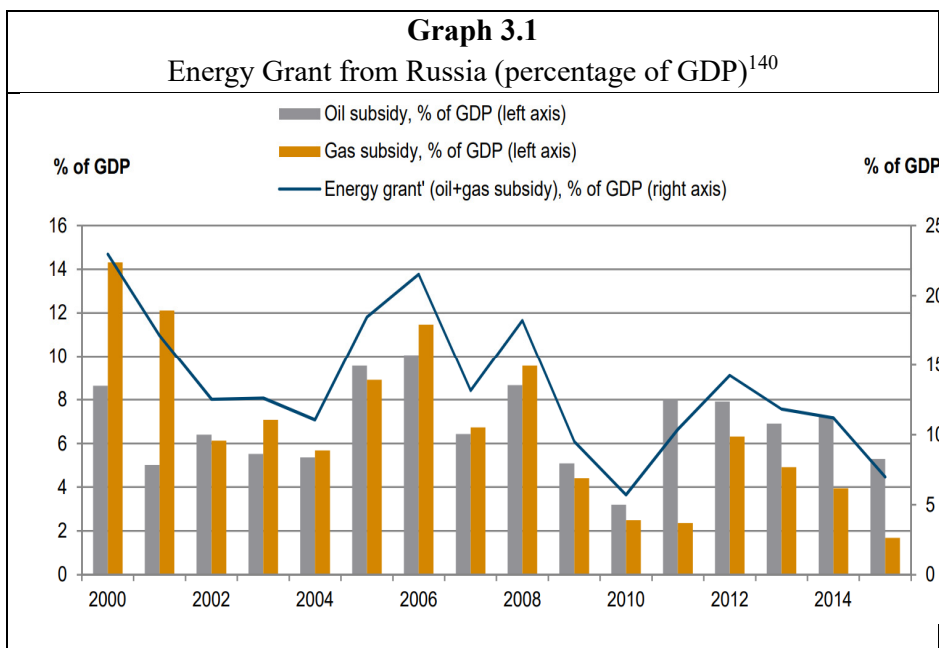
currency to decline a bit more quickly. Additionally, the National Bank temporarily tightened monetary policy between July and November 2014 before switching to direct regulation of loan quantities in the year's final quarter.<sup>138</sup> A large portion of the improvement in the trade balance's tiny surplus was due to a significant decrease in imports.

To make matters worse, the annexation of Crimea peninsula to Russia let Western countries and international organization put sanction against Russia and depreciate Rubles in the international financial market as Russia Ruble has impacted Belarus market much a lot with linkage of trade with Russian market. Belarusian ruble was depreciated by over 30% at the same time because of the interventions the Belarusian government made to prevent the financial market from collapsing.<sup>139</sup> This difficulty made Belarus to find solutions in international side rather than domestic solution which was already no effect to solve.

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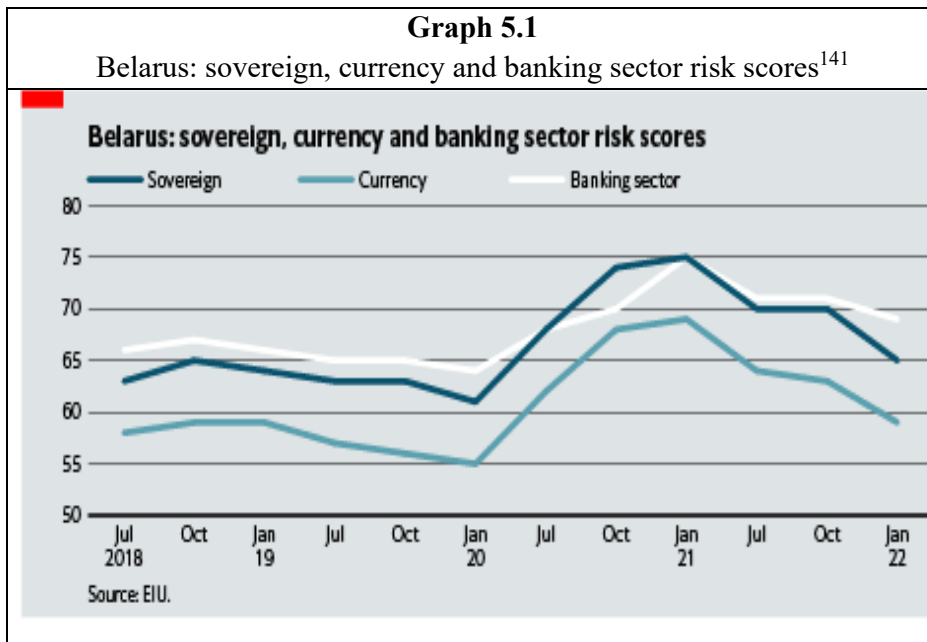
<sup>138</sup> The Eurasian Development Bank (2020). Republic of Belarus: trends and forecasts. Research Department

<sup>139</sup> Ioffe, G. (2003). Understanding Belarus: Belarusian Identity. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55(8), 1241–1272. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594506>



On the other side, international financial institutions agree with the prevailing assessment of Belarus' hazy transition path, which holds that Belarus has been stalling to put off changes by extorting rent from Russia in exchange for political concessions. The Belarusian government achieved this by negotiating Russian energy subsidies in exchange for political allegiance and an alliance with its powerful neighbor. Belarus was able to obtain Russian gas and oil with reduced prices. This provided direct subsidies to Belarusian firms and consumers, and it also allowed Belarus to export refined fuels and other products made from oil and gas at market rates. All of this amounted to a hidden cash donation to Belarus, boosting its domestic economic situations.

<sup>140</sup> Румен Добрински (2016). Белорусская экономика: вызовы застопорившихся реформ. <https://wiiw.ac.at/the-belarus-economy-the-challenges-of-stalled-reforms-p-4032.html>



In this context, Belarus could not have been independent being far from Russia's support or aid, even Belarus had trouble with Russia about international trade. For instance, in 2009, Russia implemented an embargo on dairy products from Belarus, and in 2010, it imposed export duties on crude oil exported to Belarus. These actions ignited controversy surrounding the Belarus-Russia-Kazakhstan customs union. Subsequently, a period of intense confrontation between Belarus and Russia ensued, characterized by various issues, including unresolved gas customs debts, disputes over potash fertilizer exports, and disagreements regarding Belarusian livestock product exports.

However, amidst these tensions, when the annexation of Crimea occurred in 2014, President Lukashenko made an official statement. In this statement, he was

<sup>141</sup> Marin, Anais. (2011). How to Deal with an Unfriendly Neighbour? Belarus in the Eastern Partnership: Five Steps for a Paradigm Shift. EaP Community Analysis.



asserting that Crimea peninsula legally belonged to Russia.<sup>142</sup> This stance exhibited a continuous demonstration of support for Russia, positioning Belarus as diplomatically aligned with Russia for solidifying the Union States. Two similar approaches including the diplomatic alignment and national coalescing process such as the Union State prove that Belarus is a strong supporter for Russia, adjusting its movements and policies to that of Russia. This partially implies the fact that Belarus would be friendly to the EAEU and its related works on both economic and political cooperation.

In terms of the governmental regime, Belarus is ruled by de-facto dictatorship. President Lukashenko, who was elected in 1994, got the ability to extend his term and rule by decree after the constitution was revised. Authorities intimidate the few remaining independent journalists and media outlets because most medias have been state-controlled. In 2013, authorities detained twenty-five journalists who were covering large-scale demonstrations. In addition, authorities have conducted sporadic NGO inspections as well as strict enforcement of the law and onerous reporting requirements for NGOs.<sup>143</sup> In this context, Belarus has strictly made pressure to get free rights to citizens to make public opinion against government and authorities continuously.

As such, Belarus can judge that its relationship with Russia and this significantly impacts on its foreign policy direction in terms of history, language, ethnicity, and geopolitical context. It is a country with severe collusion between politics and business, and the freedom of the press and citizens are also heavily

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<sup>142</sup> Devitt, P. (2021, November 30). Belarus leader, in U-turn, says annexed Crimea is legally Russian. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belarus-leader-u-turn-says-annexed-crimea-is-legally-russian-ria-2021-11-30/>

<sup>143</sup> Roth, K. (2013). World Report 2014: Rights trends in World Report 2014: Belarus. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/belarus>

suppressed by the national government. Belarus has a relationship with Russia even if it is to guarantee President Lukashenko's domestic political position. In this context, it would be Belarus that has no choice but to vote in favor of the direction of "Eurasianism" for Russia's political identity and the Eurasian Economic Union advocated by Russia.<sup>144</sup>

### **5.2.2 Belarus' geo-political interests in national preference**

For Belarus, in terms of regional economic integration, it may be seen as indirect approach. But it may be the most crucial geopolitical factor that has influenced Belarus' formation of national preferences for regional economic integration from national security-level. Belarus, located in the middle of Europe and Russia, has a geopolitical background that is exposed to security threats while functioning as the buffer zone for Russia during the former Cold War. It is self-evident that national security, which functions as a kind of constant, should be considered as the top priority among national preference components for Belarus.

Firstly, the political dynamics between Russia and Belarus known as the "Union State" are the first feature to be discussed in terms of politics. Their relationship as Union State has started from 1995 following the agreements for Russian military in Belarus. Belarus tried to strike a balance in its relations with Russia and the West, following the Ukrainian crisis that resulted in the annexation of Crimea by Russian force in 2014, out of concern that what happened to Ukraine would also happen to Belarus. However, David Marples considered Belarus to be a

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<sup>144</sup> Tchantouridze, L., & Schlacks, C. (2001). Eurasianism: In Search of Russia's Political Identity: A Review Essay [Review of Exodus to the East: Forebodings and Events: An Affirmation of the Eurasians, by P. Savitskii, I. Vinkovetsky, C. Boyle, K. Brostrom, & N. V. Riasanovsky]. Perspectives, 16, 69–80. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615879>

“success story of the Eastern Partnership (hereinafter ‘EaP’)” and Lukashenko has opened a dialogue with the West that has allowed Belarus to Europe without its ties with Russia<sup>145</sup>. Even if Belarus has taken actions for several pro-European policies, Belarus’ dependence on Russia in terms of politics and security has the huge influence on the direction of national policy to Belarus.

On December 17, 2014, Alexander Surikov, Ambassador of Russia to Belarus, revealed when the press conference was held in Minsk, that Russia aimed to increase the number of aircraft and helicopters on duty in Belarus. “Plans have been made to increase the amount of hardware on duty up to 12 combat aircrafts and two trainer aircrafts. The first wing of four military helicopters Mi-8 would be deployed to make the on-duty forces in the Belarusian airspace. The Belarusian army would also take four S-300s which are air defense missile systems,” said Surikov.<sup>146</sup> This military cooperation explained why Belarus has been dependent on Russia since this deployment is not the first time with the first four Su-27SM3 fighter jets sent to Belarus in 2013.<sup>147</sup>

Besides, the security umbrella provided by Russia to Belarus as a Union State is very necessary for Belarus to protect its sovereignty in the international community. Back in 2014, Belarus expressed support for the peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine from the outset, as stated by Chairman of the House Vladimir Andreichenko at the conclusion of the fifth session of the House of Representatives<sup>148</sup> However, only four days after this session, the Federal

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<sup>145</sup> World Bank. (2023). Belarus: economic update. Public document. Web.

<sup>146</sup> BelTA. (2015). Russia to put more aircraft on duty in Belarus. Belarusian Telegraph Agency. <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/russia-to-put-more-aircraft-on-duty-in-belarus-9024-2014>

<sup>147</sup> Benitez, J. (2019, April 9). Russia deploys first fighter jets to Belarus. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/russia-deploys-first-fighter-jets-to-belarus/>

<sup>148</sup> BelTA. (2015). Andreichenko: Belarus has always been in favor of peaceful resolution of Ukraine crisis. Belarusian Telegraph Agency. <https://eng.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-belarus-has->

Environmental, Industrial and Nuclear Supervision Service of Russia and the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry sought to increase collaboration in 2015.

From the external point of view, Belarusian actions may seem paradoxical, as they appeared to cling to their position as the ally of Russia. However, from Moravscik's framework, this is not paradoxical enough at all. The alliance with Russia is the top consideration for protecting national security more than anything else, and European countries surrounding borders have chosen a series of 'balance of power' strategies to respond to threats posed threats from Europe. Therefore, it is judged that these backgrounds acted naturally from Belarus' national preference to geopolitical interests.

Moreover, Belarus has created an external environment in which its dependence on Russia for Western sanctions against its presidential election is bound to grow.<sup>149</sup> The US Treasury department has imposed economic sanctions on corporations and individuals against high-ranking officials for fraudulent elections and suppression of the exercise of democracy and freedom based on presidential elections in Belarus. Furthermore, the EU imposed sanctions on Belarus, including restrictions on SWIFT, the ban on transactions with Belarus' central bank, restrictions on Belarus' fiscal inflow into the EU, and on the provision of euro currency to Belarus.

In addition to human rights abuses, including presidential elections and internal repression, the EU condemned Belarus' intervention in Russia's unjust and unjustified military invasion to Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. In response to Belarus's actions, the EU announced individual and economic sanctions packages

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always-been-in-favor-of-peaceful-resolution-of-ukraine-crisis-9103-2014/

<sup>149</sup> European Council. (2022). Timeline - EU restrictive measures against Belarus. HOW AND WHEN THE EU ADOPTS SANCTIONS. Web.

targeting 22 people and additional restrictions on trade.<sup>150</sup> This isolation of the international community from Belarus has deepened Belarus's dependence on Russia, and it faces a situation in which coupling between Russia and Belarus has been bound to intensify. Unless Belarus's president changes or drastic changes in domestic politics, Belarus will have no choice but to be in favor of Russia-led regional integration movements based on its existing Union states relations and economic dependence with Russia.

On the domestic political part, it is important to investigate the reasons while considering President Lukashenko's statements. From Moravcsik's view, Belarus's leader and his officials has favored Russian movement in the international world. Belarus' president's voice has great authority among elites and nations since Belarus is close to dictatorship governance and state-capitalism and he has the potential to hold that position in perpetuity. He frequently lays the groundwork for a national identity based on Soviet nostalgia by referring to the direction of national policy as a Soviet Union, not a Belarusian.

Besides, President Lukashenko gives speeches in Russian not Belarusian, even though Belarus is a sovereign independent state, not a puppet state of Russia. His pro-Russian attitude naturally led to his succession to the Union, and even now, the international community is imposing sanctions on Russia due to the Ukrainian war, but only Belarus supports him based on national union relations with Russia. In this context, he always supports status of Russia in the international world. This ideological factor has formed the national preference in Belarus and affected actions for his interests.

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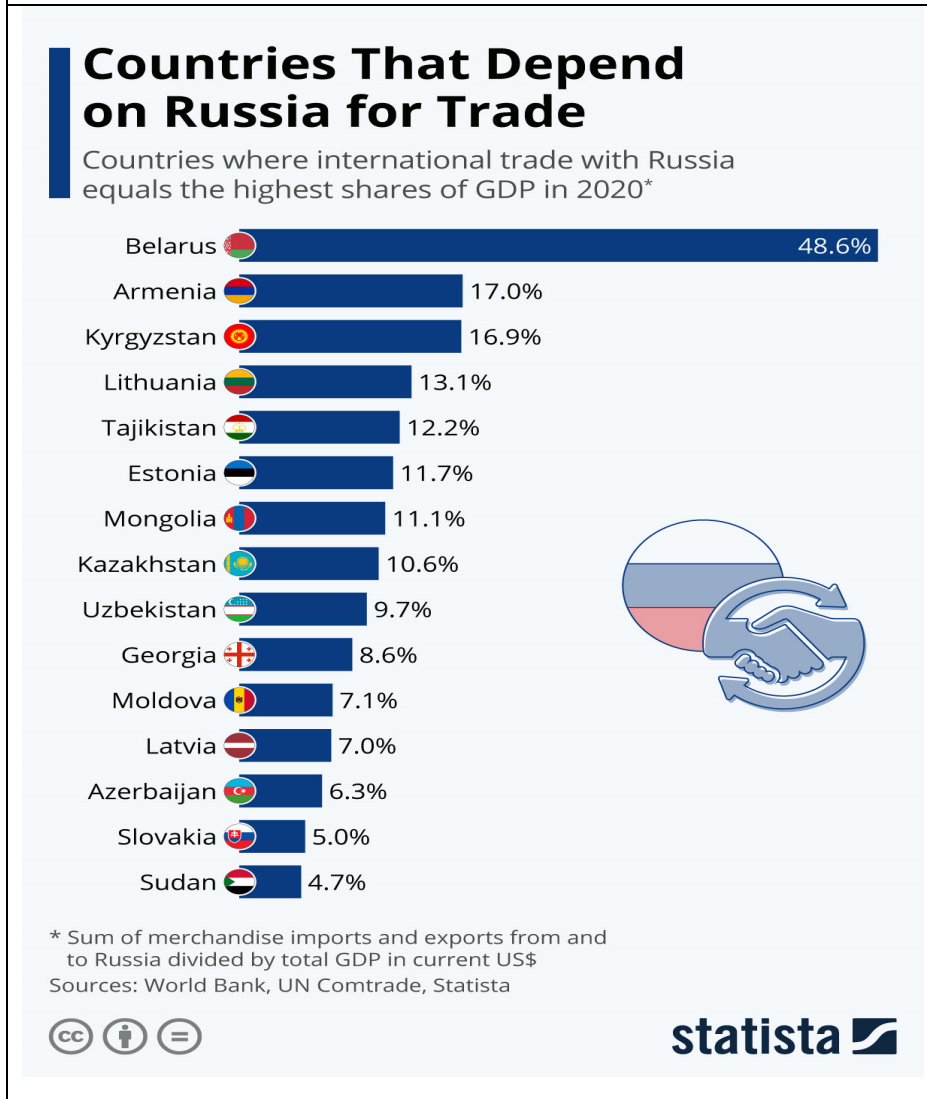
<sup>150</sup> Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP. (2022). Expanded Sanctions Imposed on Belarus by the U.S., EU, and UK. Client Alert. Web.

### **5.2.3 Belarus' economic interests in national preference**

Belarus has a deep economic relationship with Russia and there are economic advantages from this relationship which can be seen as the biggest Belarus' sources for the national preference. Since Russia has generously supported for Belarus, and this has allowed Belarus to maintain inefficient economic system without such fundamental market reforms. Despite active collaboration and discussion with other EAEU member states, it is evident that Belarus' motive for Eurasian regional cooperation is more focused on ties with the certain state, Russia.

While reviewing Belarus' economic structure, it seems like Belarus must use its favorable relationship with Russia in order to improve its economy's efficiency. To note that Belarus is not economically open, it is rather repressed economy. Due to its low GDP growth and weak trade ties with other states beside Russia, Belarus is quite dependent to Russia in matters of economy, trade, and market. Belarus's economy cannot continue to grow without Russian economic cooperation or foreign aid. Whenever Russia tries to cut back on aid, Belarus's economy suffers. There is a lot of room for it to be seen as an intention that arose from some kind of subordinate relationship.

**Figure 4.2**  
Countries that depend on Russia for Trade<sup>151</sup>



With figure 4.2, patterns of Belarus' trade interdependence have created the most modest incentives to maximize economic growth and minimize exchange rate volatility in the flow of economic liberalization. In this context, Belarus has put

<sup>151</sup> Fleck, A., & Richter, F. (2022, May 4). Infographic: Countries that depend on Russia for trade. Statista Infographics. <https://www.statista.com/chart/27367/countries-most-dependent-on-russia-for-trade/>

emphasis on trade relationship with Russia and external bilateral economic support for domestic economy. Specifically, preceding to the enactment of the Eurasian Economic Treaty, Lukashenko expressed his belief in the enormous dormancy of the Union members, but his cooperation seemed to focus more on bilateral cooperation with Russia.

This is because Belarus needs to continue receiving economic favors and subsidies from Russia. Lukashenko was able to maintain economic stability despite the lack of reforms in Belarus thanks to low prices for Russian gas, free market for Belarusian goods, continuous plans for Russian oil and Russian financial support. As the president of Belarus for a long time, he has been skeptical about free trade but has shown the cheerful outlook towards regional economic integration due to his high dependence on Russia.

Contrarily, Belarus still does not hold a membership to the World Trade Organization.<sup>152</sup> In addition, Russia continues to provide 15 % to 17 % of Belarus' GDP, and Belarus negotiated essential financial infusions from it, particularly through lower oil and gas prices in trade volume. Additionally, Russia has given loans to help Belarus' macroeconomic stability, either directly or via the Eurasian Development Bank's Anti-Crisis Fund, which is under the Kremlin's authority. The recovery of Belarus from its financial crisis in 2011 depended heavily on this aid.<sup>153</sup>

Plus, the diplomatic relations or international political agendas have great influence on one country's domestic policy such as international development

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<sup>152</sup> Dobrinsky (2016). The Belarus Economy: The Challenges of Stalled Reforms. Research Report 413. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies. Wiener Institut für Internationale

<sup>153</sup> Preiherman, Y. (2014). Belarus: The Pragmatism of an Allegedly Close Ally of Russia. In A. Inayeh, D. Schwarzer, & J. Forbrig (Eds.), *Regional Repercussions of the Ukraine Crisis: Challenges for the Six Eastern Partnership Countries* (pp. 16–21). German Marshall Fund of the United States. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep18988.7>



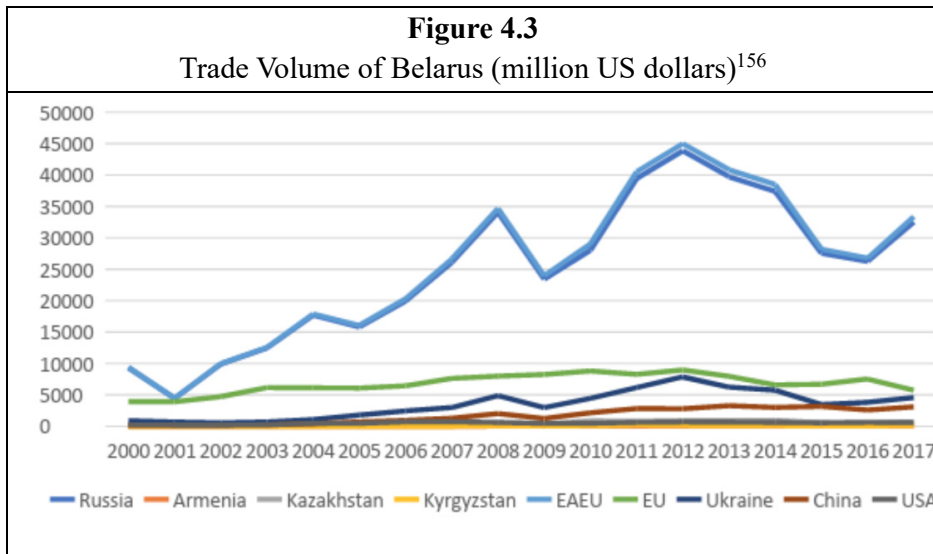
cooperation or foreign aid. In 2014, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided international technical assistance for the project "Support of the national demographic security program of the Republic of Belarus"<sup>154</sup> supported by Russian Federation. Among the \$1.140 million in total funding, the Russian Federation contributed \$900,000, the UN Population Fund gave \$180,000, and UNICEF contributed \$60,000<sup>155</sup> in 2014. From my view, the dependence on Russian trade and fundraising in the process of establishing and developing a country's population and economy policy has made relations between the two countries more favorable and deeper, strengthening Belarus' friendly stance toward Russia in regional cooperation.

The figure 4.3 below depicts the volume of Belarus' international commerce from 2000 to 2017 with countries including Russia, China, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the EAEU, Ukraine, and the EU-28. It shows that Belarus' relationships with Russia account for most of its international commerce; trading with the EAEU exhibits the same pattern. Also, it also reveals that except Armenia and Ukraine, Belarus does not seem to be in either growing nor developing trade ties with other states in Western Europe, Asia, and other regions. These sources, although show repetitive results on Belarus show that Belarus is heavily dependent on Russia and the EAEU.

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<sup>154</sup> UNFPA. (2017, October 10). Supporting smart, sustainable population policies in Belarus. UNFPA EECA. <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/supporting-smart-sustainable-population-policies-belarus>

<sup>155</sup> BelTA. (2014, December 3). Russia allocates \$900,000 to Belarus for demographic security project. Belarusian Telegraph Agency. <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/russia-allocates-900000-to-belarus-for-demographic-security-project-8669-2014/>



Despite a steep fall in Russia's international commerce since 2014, when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, as well as the heavy economic impact from international sanctions in 2008, Belarus' share of the bilateral trade volume with Russia has remained stable. Excluding catastrophes such as the 2008 global economic crisis or Russia's annexation of Crimea, it may be showed that Belarus' vulnerability of foreign affairs to Russia rose as Russia and Belarus' economic dependency grew. Particularly given Russia's weight in the Union, it was able to confirm Belarus' domestic economic structure, which has no alternative but to align with Russia and a strong desire for regional integration.

<sup>156</sup> Erokhin, D. (2019, May 17). 25 Years of Eurasian Integration: Success or failure? (Part I). The European Student Think Tank. <https://esthinktank.com/2019/05/17/25-years-of-eurasian-integration-success-or-failure-part-i/>



In addition to that, Belarus' supportive stance toward the promotion of regional economic area in Eurasia with the focus on strengthening ties with Russia is shown in the meeting in 2015. During the meeting, Myasnikovich expressed his view that the EAEU should increase the use of the Russian ruble, given that Russia has the largest economy in the region. This statement highlights Belarus' supportive stance towards the promotion of a regional economic collaboration in Eurasia, with a focus on strengthening ties with Russia.

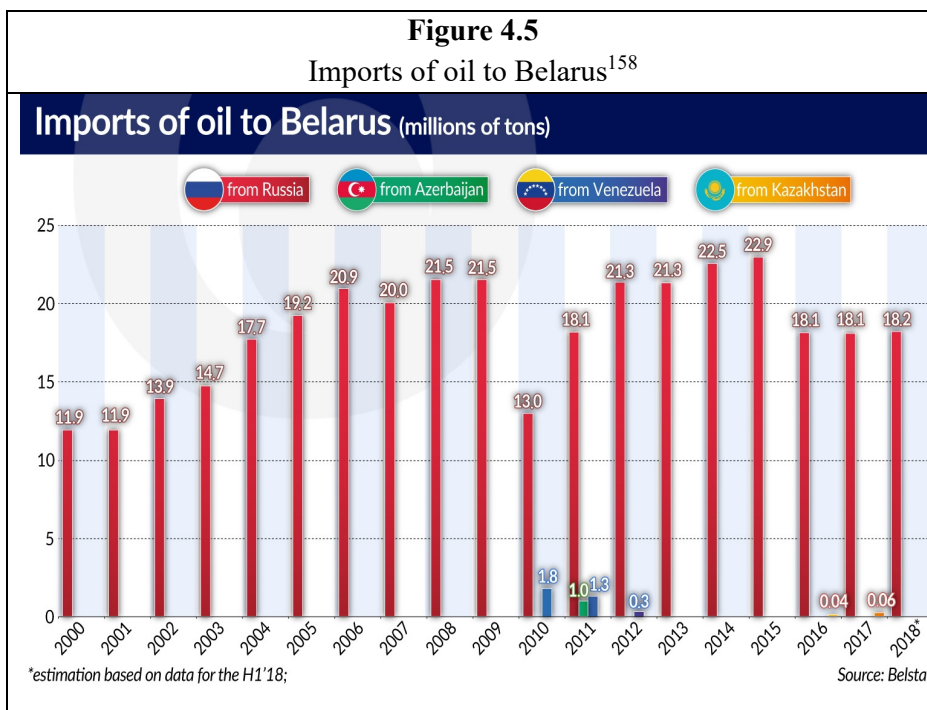
This process shows that Belarus is favorable to the single ruble policy in terms of monetary policy, and based on its Russian-dependent economic structure, it could predict a direction in which it can lower the risk of exchange rates between the ruble and Belarusian ruble and lower exposure to the risk of depreciation of Belarus's

<sup>157</sup> Bninska, M. (2020, August 6). Belarus: Economic dependence has its upsides: Obserwator Finansowy: Ekonomia: Gospodarka: Polska: świat. Obserwator Finansowy: ekonomia, debata, Polska, świat. <https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/in-english/macroeconomics/belarus-economic-dependence-has-its-upsides/>

currency. Belarus's attitude toward monetary policy provides the basis that the action of joining the Eurasian Economic Union is a reasonable choice in terms of economy policy.

On the multilateral side, Belarus has positioned itself as the crucial stakeholder in the trade between Russia and the West, acting as a "middleman" by re-exporting goods labeled as "Belarusian" to Russia while importing commodities from the European Union. Additionally, the Belarusian pipeline remains one of the few dependable carriers of energy supplies from Russia to Europe, making Belarus an important ally for Moscow in the energy trade. Specifically, Belarus that serves as a conduit for Russian oil and gas to Europe, has made around \$2 billion a year from the refining and re-exports of Russian oil.

Russia's presence is indispensable to Belarus, and it is impossible for Belarus not to join the Union. The reason is that despite the international community's disregard for Russia, Russia's absence can be attributed to the profound negative impact on the Belarusian domestic economy and interest groups. This is in line with Moravcsik's claim that the reason French leader De Gaulle refused to join the European Economic Community was not because of France's international prestige, but because of its negative impact on wheat prices in the French market. In other words, in economic terms, national preferences are also important factors arising from international structures but are shaped by various economic benefits generated domestically.



For instance, during the press conference on 29 January 2015, President of Belarus, Lukashenko expressed his commitment to promoting greater integration and a union of equals in the Eurasian region, without any exceptions or limitations, in contrast to previous statements made by Kazakh President Nazarbayev. Despite not emphasizing the sovereignty and independence of Belarus, President Lukashenko emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in Eurasia. He further stated that there is no alternative to economic integration in the region, and that Belarus will be the first country to preside over the EAEU.

In this context, Belarus recognized the enormous advantage that the Eurasian market offers and acknowledges that the economic structures of Russia and

<sup>158</sup> Bninska, M. (2020, August 6). Belarus: Economic dependence has its upsides: Obserwator Finansowy: Ekonomia: Gospodarka: Polska: świat. Obserwator Finansowy: ekonomia, debata, Polska, świat. <https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/in-english/macroeconomics/belarus-economic-dependence-has-its-upsides/>

Kazakhstan are unique and that they have their own interests in the EAEU, leading to mutual benefits.<sup>159</sup> This statement made by Lukashenko is one of good examples to show Belarus' favorable attitude toward Eurasian integration and it can be found that Belarus joined EAEU to enjoy economic benefits. According to data from Eurasian Economic Commission, the bilateral volume between Russia and Belarus recorded the most volume compared to volumes with others. Data shows more than half of trading volume in EAEU has been made in mutual trade between Russia and Belarus.

**Table 4.1**

Sources of Belarus for National Preference

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Belarus's sources for national preference</b>
<b>Geo-political interests</b>	Even Russia's status has been unstable in the international relations; Belarus has put weight on relationship with his ally, Russia.
	Favorable attitudes and speeches by president toward Russia could solidify the national preference.
	Western sanctions against Russia and Belarus has pushed Belarus to join the Eurasian Economic Union for national priorities.
<b>Economic interests</b>	Bilateral trade inter-dependence with Russia has solidified main economic preference for regional economic integration in Eurasia.
	Keynote of Monetary Policy favorable toward Russia can be based on national preference in light of economy.
	Domestic economic structure and stakeholders in Belarus has crucial for national preference

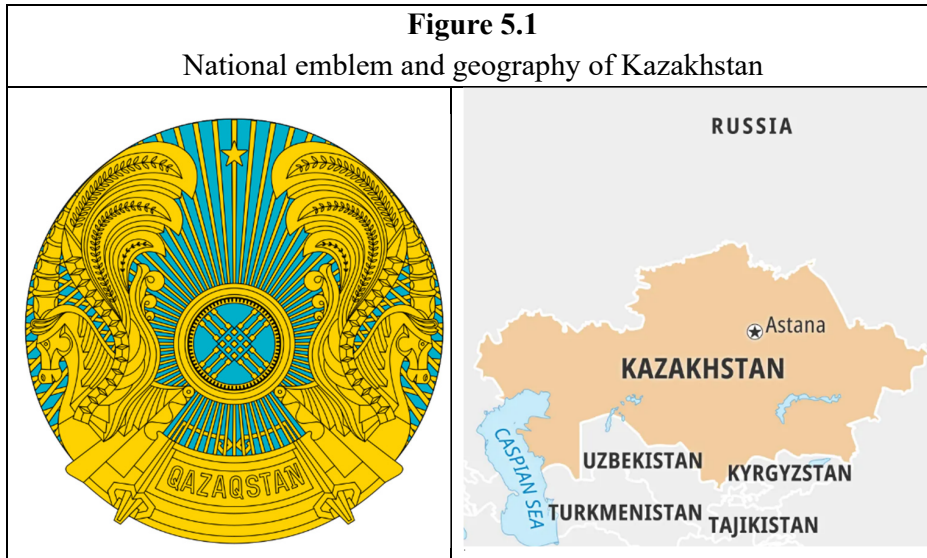
In short, Belarus' primary reason to keep choices on Eurasian cooperation among member-states has been the increased access to the Russian market. Due to

<sup>159</sup> BelTA. (2015). Lukashenko: No alternative to economic integration. Belarusian Telegraph Agency. <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-no-alternative-to-economic-integration-9894-2015/>

Belarus' high dependence on Russian imports, the country sought to secure favorable conditions for bilateral trade and middlemen with European market by forging closer economic ties with Russia. As the table 4.1 describes, regardless of Russia's declined status in international society, Belarus relies heavily on Russian oil and gas, making it crucial for the country to have better access to the Russian market.

## 5.3 Case Analysis on Kazakhstan

### 5.3.1. Overview



Kazakhstan is recognized as the second-largest power with moderate regional impact and worldwide recognition. It is noteworthy how Kazakhstan has managed relations with neighbors who are superpowers like China and Russia. Despite having a shared border and friendly diplomatic and commercial relations with China, it is not subject to China's intense political or economic influence.<sup>160</sup> It is also close to Russia, has a sizable ethnic Russian population, but is not under Russian rule. Russia's invasion of Crimea peninsula in 2014 caused alarm to Kazakhstan as well, asserting its sovereignty. The positioning where Kazakhstan was located can explain why its policy pursues multi-vectorism.

Since Kazakhstan has followed multi-vectoral foreign policy, it has been expanding its role in the global affairs and international agenda. This could be found

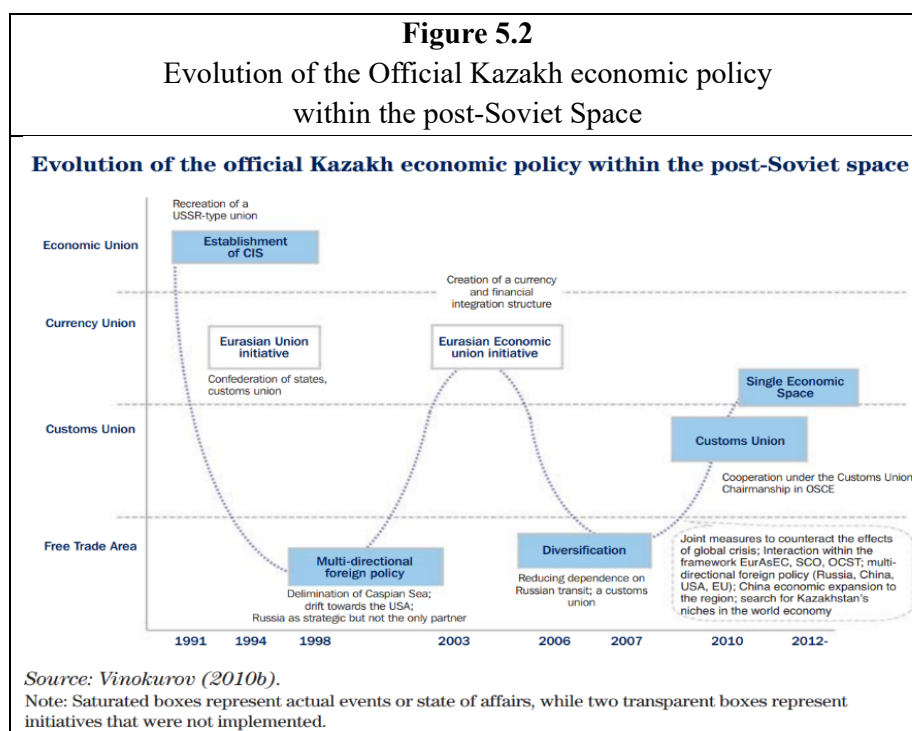
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<sup>160</sup> CIA (2021). Kazakhstan. The World Factbook 2021. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>



that Kazakhstan's stance on diplomatic strategy has considered both bilateral and multi-lateral relationships with neighboring states. However, Kazakhstan has a stake in preventing Russia from re-establishing a "sphere of privileged interests," particularly after the Crimean crisis in 2014.

In terms of identity and ethnics, Kazakhstan has also built own story with the 550 years old history and promoted this fact to its citizens to make distinction from the Soviet history.<sup>161</sup> This movement could be interpreted as the measurement to secure his own identity and sovereignty from the influence of one certain country such as Russia and China. Thus, Kazakhstan has made continuous attempts to build connections with as many actors as possible and not to get trapped in any certain bloc.



<sup>161</sup> OECD (2018). "The OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools", in OECD Reviews of School Resources: Portugal 2018, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264308411-9-en>.

Moreover, on the economic side, Kazakhstan pursues the open economic relations while it also heavily depends on oil rents to pay for public expenses.<sup>162</sup> This economic structure has both advantages and disadvantages for Kazakh people. Kazakhstan had one of the top ten fastest-growing economies until 2015, mostly because of its ample oil, gas, and coal resources with its genuine export-oriented policies. With the 12th-highest proven crude oil reserves in the world, the nation is the largest oil producer in Central Asia.

Plus, Since the year of 2002, Kazakh gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has increased six-fold.<sup>163</sup> This growth has been supported by its previous leadership, President Nazarbayev, concentrating primarily on economic policy during his term. The leadership openly adopted a plan that put the economy first while recognizing the need for political reforms at that time. On multiple occasions, he emphasized "We say that the economy first, then politics."<sup>164</sup>

Even though regional economic organizations have been made considering each member's economic interests and Kazakhstan has participated regional cooperation since the Soviet Union's collapse, Kazakhstan administration became more hesitant about the EAEU proposal and favored a more constrained idea of the alliance, rejecting Russia's plan to construct a monetary union, particularly following Russia's invasion of Crimea. Because Kazakhstan got a negative impact from this crisis after the annexation of Crimea and international sanction occurred. In this

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<sup>162</sup> Morena Skalamera Groce & Seçkin Köstem. (2023). The dual transformation in development finance: western multilateral development banks and China in post-Soviet energy. *Review of International Political Economy* 30:1, pages 176-200.

<sup>163</sup> IEA (2020). *Kazakhstan energy profile*, IEA, Paris <https://www.iea.org/reports/kazakhstan-energy-profile>, License: CC BY 4.0

<sup>164</sup> Cornell, S. E. (2022, May 3). Political and economic reforms in Kazakhstan under president Tokayev. Institute for Security and Development Policy. <https://isd.eu/publication/political-and-economic-reforms-in-kazakhstan-under-president-tokayev/>

context, Vieira et al (2015) claim that the EAEU treaty, which reflected Kazakhstan's perspective, was less comprehensive and persuasive for Kazakhstan than that which was initially intended and more of an economic than a political union<sup>165</sup>.

**Table 5.1**

EAEU trade turnover statistics

<b>USD millions</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Armenia</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>
Russia	–	2,600	39,000	25,000	3,000
Armenia	2,600	–	90	17	3
Belarus	39,000	90	–	840	81
Kazakhstan	25,000	17	840	–	1,085
Kyrgyzstan	3,000	3	81	1,085	–

To make matters worse, Kazakh economy has dropped from 6% in 2013 to 4% in the first nine months of 2014, and the Kazakh capital, Astana feared an even further reduction. The primary, albeit not sole, cause is the 25% decline in oil prices since the summer.<sup>166</sup> The economic structure of Kazakhstan could remind us of the Netherlands Disease with the resource curse theory. Other industries could not be prioritized to develop the economy in these kinds of nations.

On the contrary, regardless of its abundant resources and open economy market, Kazakhstan had an unevenly wealth-distributed social structure, and the

<sup>165</sup> Alena Vysotskaya & Guedes Vieira, (2016) Eurasian integration: elite perspectives before and after the Ukraine crisis. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 32: 6,

<sup>166</sup> United Nations Statistics Division, UN COMTRADE.(2023). International Merchandise Trade Statistics. Available online at <http://comtrade.un.org/>

benefits of Kazakhstan's energy resource development do not go to all of its citizens, which seems to have caused some dissatisfaction with the Nazarbayev regime and demand for protests.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, his administration is aware of the widening gap between the rich and the poor and has expressed its willingness to narrow it. Socio-economic development and improvement of living standards had been identified as major strategic priorities in the Kazakhstan-2050 development strategy.

Moreover, Kazakhstan has been watched with attention by the Western states and international organizations, due to its human rights concerns. In 2013, Kazakhstan's subpar human rights record got even worse as the government used too broad laws to repress dissent and free speech. The government imposed harsh restrictions on the freedom of assembly and religion. Even, in December 2011 Courts affirmed the prison terms of those found guilty following violent altercations between police and civilians in Zhanaozen despite the trials' flaws.<sup>168</sup> Even though authorities established a law on a National Preventive Mechanism against torture in July, torture was nevertheless often used in detention facilities. It shows Kazakhstan's degree of democratization is too low even its nation has abundant natural resources.

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<sup>167</sup> Eurasianet. (2013, February 19). Kazakhstan: Widening Social Divide Fuels Protest mood. Eurasianet. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-widening-social-divide-fuels-protest-mood>

<sup>168</sup> Department of State, (2022). KAZAKHSTAN 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2022.

### **5.3.2 Kazakhstan's geo-political interests in national preference**

The relation between the EAEU and Kazakhstan seems less clear compared to that of Belarus. According to Moravcsik's framework, the choice to authorize own decision-making power to international institutions has been started from the national preferences based on both geo-political and economic interests. Kazakhstan's choice to join the Union can also be decomposed of national preference based on geo-political and economic interests from his view. Factors regarding Kazakhstan's geo-political interests for regional integration are divided in terms of international relations and domestic political terms as well.

Unlike Belarus, Kazakhstan is expected to have more benefits geopolitical interests rather than economic interests. In terms of international relations, Kazakhstan's geo-political interest includes aiming to bolster the autonomy of Kazakhstan in Eurasian community. EAEU was found to solidify Russia's maintenance of regional hegemony, and Kazakhstan has strived to contain Russian ambition to expand its power into Eurasia using the leverage made in the EAEU. Kazakhstan has also voice up on the purpose of the EAEU as a purely regional and economic platform for Eurasian states rather than a political forum for Russia and its friendly states.

The geopolitical interests for Kazakhstan concerning Eurasian economic cooperation have lied in the connection between national economic policies and underlying politico-military goal. In this context, Kazakhstan, and its leader focus on using regional cooperation for the sake of their own security and sovereignty. In 2014, President Nazarbayev stated that it is important to eliminate all external

misgivings to Eurasian integration and the fact that Russia shapes everything for its own sake. He implied that the algorithm for regulating the entire economic sector needed to be balanced with this remark.<sup>169</sup>

Although his speech firstly proposed the idea of creating a new integration organization, he mentioned that the Eurasian project always prioritizes political and economic freedom for all participating governments in the integration process. It could be interpreted that these priorities that cannot be denied by the regional economic organization. From his words, it can be assumed that Kazakhstan wants to balance the regional power in Eurasian area with other countries. International economic organization in the world could not be international organization excluding political objectives and eliminating the dynamics of high politics.

Furthermore, Kazakhstan joined the Union having legal binding force as a forum for his political voice. The legal force among member states allows the treaty to be standardized and its own voice can be made, using subsidiary organizations such as the Supreme Council and the European Economic Commission. In other words, Kazakhstan's intention to check Russia's hegemony ambitions seeks its sovereignty through checks and balances in the Eurasian region. This shows that Kazakhstan will not be a follower of Russia, slowly and gradually breaking the current order of Russian hegemony.

This intention could be also found in some interviews and statements made by authorities' leaders of Kazakhstan, similar with data of Belarus' leaders. Especially, Kazakhstan emphasized to deny the politicization of regional institution for freedom of each member state. For Alexander Pankin, Russia's deputy foreign

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<sup>169</sup> Akorda President Palace. (2020, March 9). Foreign Policy Concept for 2014. Akorda.

minister, asserted in 2011, for instance, during the interview that the Eurasian Economic Union was preparing a "consolidated response" to Western sanctions placed on certain of its members.<sup>170</sup> In response, the Kazakhstan government made clear that it has no interest in "politicizing" the EAEU. Kazakhstan makes it clear in the statement that it does not consider the Western sanctions to be the Union's issue because it sees them as political, targeted at certain countries, and not at the EAEU.

This may explain why Kazakhstan responded so fiercely to any idea that the EAEU would be used as a forum for issues other than economic. Also in 2013, former President Nazarbayev reaffirmed his nation's stance on the EAEU efforts to shift from economic to political integration, saying that the union's current level of politicization is intolerable.<sup>171</sup> Prior to signing the agreement establishing the EAEU in 2014, Kazakhstan made a statement that it would reserve the right to withdraw from the Union if it threatened to limit the sovereignty of the country.<sup>172</sup> This strong and continuous voice from Kazakhstan shows that Kazakhstan's status on the EAEU to contain Russia power and secure sovereignty, keeping balance in the Eurasian continent.

Crucially, national leaders and political elites' statements can be used to identify each nation's geopolitical objectives to participate in the international cooperation. president and other leaders of Kazakhstan have stated in interviews and declarations that Kazakhstan intends to join the Eurasian economic integration. For

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<sup>170</sup> Putz, C. (2021, June 9). Kazakhstan: Please don't "Politicize" the Eurasian Economic Union. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/kazakhstan-please-dont-politicize-the-Eurasian-economic-union/>.

<sup>171</sup> Lüdtké, L. (2022, May 16). A closer look at the Eurasian Economic Union. GIS Reports. <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/Eurasian-economic-union/>

<sup>172</sup> Dragneva, R., & Wolczuk, K. (2017). The Eurasian economic union deals, rules, and the exercise of power. Chatham House. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-05-02-Eurasian-economic-union-dragneva-wolczuk.pdf>

example, during the summit held in Minsk, Belarus in October 2013, Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev, expressed concerns about his country's trade deficit with Belarus and Russia and emphasized the need for Kazakhstan to increase its exports to Russia. His attitude implies the dependence on Russian economy could be threat against national economic security and Kazakhstan is always in state of alert to this asymmetrical dependency.

Furthermore, President Nazarbayev criticized the activities of the Eurasian Economic Committee (EEC) for being too politicized and accused its officials of misusing funds and failing to capitalize on opportunities to promote integration. He also raised concerns about the EAEU's administrative body, expressing apprehension about Russia's dominance over the EEC and the possibility of admitting new members such as Armenia or Ukraine, which could shift the bloc's focus from economic to political objectives. As a result, Nazarbayev emphasized that the EAEU should not prohibit its members from pursuing closer ties with the EU or obtaining access to the World Trade Organization.<sup>173</sup>

Similarly, when President Nazarbayev voiced concerns about the overly politicized activities of the EEC and the potential admission of new membership such as Ukraine in 2013, he also asserted that the EAEU could not prevent members from pursuing closer connections with the EU or accessing the World Trade Organization. Likewise, according to Dosym Satpayev, Director of the Risk Assessment Group, Kazakhstan's potential role as a mediator in the Russian-Belarusian trade disputes highlights the perspective of a country prioritizing its sovereignty in joining the Eurasian Economic Union. With the help of historical

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<sup>173</sup> Neafie, J. (2023). Producing the Eurasian Land Bridge: a case study of the geoeconomic contestation in Kazakhstan. *Int Polit* 60, 269–289



lessons still fresh in their leaders' memories, they may be able to convince Kazakhstan's general populace.

The evident fact that Kazakhstan saw itself as a mediator between Russia and Belarus during their trade disputes and linked the formation of the regional organization to its foreign policy, suggests that the country prioritizes its own sovereignty within the context of joining the regional economic cooperation. So Integration has been presented to publics as way to check Russia into Eurasian economic union through ties of economic interest and legitimate institutions with legal binding force. It can be interpreted as similar case with Germany when growing power of Germany could be controlled by regional economic ties through European Union.

In opposite, in the domestic political context, shared ideological norms and initiatives could be grounds and basis for understanding geopolitical interests. In this context, Kazakhstan's adherence to a multi-vector policy was officially designated as a concept in 2007 in a presidential address to the nation for the first time. According to President Nazarbayev, "multi-vectorism" is the strategy to forge positive and dependable ties with all nations that are important players in international affairs and have direct interests to their national interests.<sup>174</sup> Thus, Kazakhstan as a second regional power has not just jumped on the band-wagon to Russia. This further implies that Kazakhstan may not be fully committed to the EAEU's goal of complete economic integration and may instead be more interested in maintaining its own political voice in the region.

Under this foreign policy stance, Kazakhstan also has the political purpose

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<sup>174</sup> OMELICHEVA, M. Y., & DU, R. (2018). Kazakhstan's Multi-Vectorism and Sino-Russian Relations. *Insight Turkey*, 20(4), 95–110. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26542175>

of using the accession of the Eurasian Economic Union as part of a kind of multi-vectorism. The state's core philosophy of multi-vector foreign policy has been strengthened by Kazakhstan's unique intercontinental position, which has also served to shape Kazakhstan's perception as a "transcontinental economic bridge" between the West and the East and a mediator for the Sino-Russian relationship. Nazarbayev is recognized not just only as the project's founding father as it was, he who first suggested a union between the two countries back in 1994, but also as policymaker who suggested 'multi-vectorism' in 1992.

When president Nazarbayev wanted to make a proposal of loose alliance with Russia in the early 1990s, Russia dismissed the proposal. After, Putin turned "Eurasianism" into a practical ideological weapon for regional integration and a top geopolitical objective to expand Russia's influence. However, Kazakhstan differently embraced the concept of Eurasianism in different style.<sup>175</sup> This Kazakh point of view encompasses the freedom for each member state to engage in partnerships with others. While pushing its multi-vectorism policy, Kazakhstan's participation in the EAEU has made it easier to promote multi-vectoral regional economic cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia.

In short, Kazakhstan has been wary of "Putin's dream" of political unity.<sup>176</sup> It has been stated that Kazakhstan takes advantage of the competition between the major powers to gain from "increased benefits, assistance, and better contractual terms."<sup>177</sup> In addition, considering Kazakhstan's president and high-ranking officials'

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<sup>175</sup> SHLAPENTOKH, D. (2016). Kazakh and Russian History and Its Geopolitical Implications. *Insight Turkey*, 18(4), 143–164. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26300457>

<sup>176</sup> Henley, J. (2014, February 18). A brief primer on Vladimir Putin's Eurasian dream. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2014/feb/18/brief-primer-vladimir-putin-eurasian-union-trade> .

<sup>177</sup> Cooley, A. (2012). Great games, local rules: The new great power contest in central Asia. Oxford University Press.

policy direction of checking Russia and advocating multi-vectorism, Kazakhstan can be judged to have a strong political instrumental element to use the Eurasian Economic Union as the official international forum to check Russia in the regional economic integration process. Plus, the skepticism of Kazakhstan's citizens in the Eurasian economic integration process has also been made by leaders' voice regarding negative influence from Russia.

### **5.3.3 Kazakhstan's economic interests in national preference**

Previously discussed above, economic interest could impact state's direction toward international cooperation in a roundabout way than geopolitical interests, which has direct influence. Even Kazakhstan claimed multi-vectorism in terms of politics, Kazakhstan's economy is still dependent on Russia mainly than other states. Kazakhstan has asymmetrical economic structure, and its economic interdependence is one of sources and determinants of state actions. However, it could be confirmed that the trade relationship with regional partners and estimated advantages by joining EAEU has not been direct determinants for Kazakhstan.

**Table 5.2**

Import duties: Average applicable tariff, CU countries<sup>178</sup>

<b>State</b>	<b>Before CU (2007)</b>	<b>Before CU (2009)</b>	<b>Within CU (2012)</b>	<b>After Russia joined the WTO</b>
Russia	11.0	10.5	11.4	9.2
Belarus	11.3	10.6	11.4	9.2
Kazakhstan	7.8	5.9	11.4	9.2

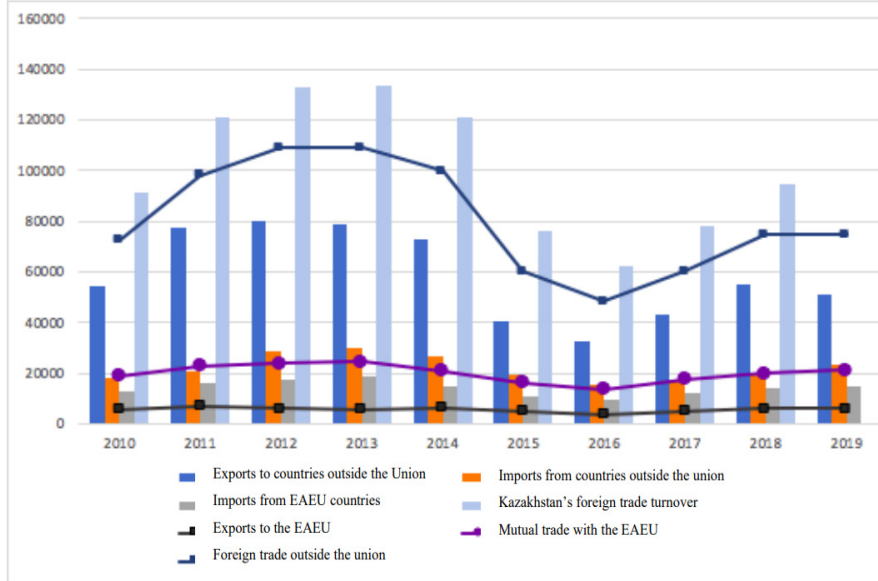
First of all, the changed import duties by joining the EAEU had let Kazakhstan to return to the customs barriers in 2007. The CU nations gave the WTO precedence, as stated in the Agreement on the Operations of the Customs Union within the Multilateral Trade System, which was signed on May 19, 2011. This happened in Minsk, because of the disparity between transfer to specific commodities (SCT) and the tariff concessions necessary to enter the WTO. In reality, this brought Kazakhstan's customs barriers from 2007 back into effect by reducing the SCT to a level no higher than the binding level agreed upon by Russia and the WTO. There was no benefits to join regional integration quantitatively.

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<sup>178</sup> WTO. (2009~2011). Tariff profiles <http://ria.ru/spravka/20111114/488396697.html>

**Graph 4.1**

Kazakhstan's Foreign Trade Indicators, 2010-2019, USD million



In this context, it could be found that Kazakhstan's foreign trade indicators looked negative from 2015 to 2017 after growing trade volume from 2010 to 2015 peaked in 2013 when growth value was at 30.2%. Even before the formation of EEU, Kazakhstan has already suffered from a continuous current account deficit in trade with Eurasian states according to the graph 4.1. Such a situation can be expected to create a trade deficit, which will lead to Kazakhstan's currency appreciation and negative consequences such as the accumulation of current account deficit. The decreased trade volume also demonstrates that Russia's acquisition of the Crimean Peninsula provided negative results to further deteriorate the trading environment to Kazakhstan.

**Table 5.3**Mutual Trade between EAEU and Kazakhstan (\$ million)<sup>179</sup>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
EAEU, total					
Exports	63100.9	68582.2	64520.0	57448.3	45379.8
Kazakhstan					
Turnover	23029.3	24626.3	24603.7	19665.2	15780.2
Balance	<b>-8822.7</b>	<b>-10950.7</b>	<b>-12736.5</b>	<b>-9250.6</b>	<b>-6006.6</b>

According to the table 5.3, before the accession to EAEU, Kazakhstan already conducted more than 80% of intra-regional trade, and the 'trade creation effect' or 'trade diversion effect' referred to in trade theory seemed to be insignificant by joining the EAEU. Even the purported "trade wars" over Russian imports between Astana and Moscow were a plain sign that Kazakhstan's elites were unhappy with the way the Eurasian integration project was progressing. The competitiveness of indigenous industry that is mostly agricultural industry has been harmed by growing quantities of Russian commodities entering the domestic market. When low-cost Russian goods began flooding Kazakhstan in 2015 as a result of the Russian ruble's depreciation, this issue became particularly serious.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Eurasian Economic Commission (2011~2015). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

<sup>180</sup> Kheifets, B., (2015). Evraziiskii ekonomicheskii soiuz: novye vyzovy dlya biznesa [Eurasian Economic Union: New Challenges for Business]. Obshchestvo i ekonomika, No.6, pp.5-22.

**Table 5.4**

Distribution of the total volumes of foreign trade of the CU and the SES and the member states of the CU and the SES by trade directions in 2013 and in 2015<sup>181</sup>

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Counterparty for trade</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>
EAEU	Trade with member-states	87.9%	86.4%
	Trade with 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	12.1%	13.6%
Belarus	Trade with member-states	49.3%	50.5%
	Trade with 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	50.7%	49.5%
Kazakhstan	Trade with member-states	81.6%	76.7%
	Trade with 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	18.4%	21.3%

President Nazarbayev noted in an interview for the 2014 New Year's celebration that a key component of entering the top 30 developed nations is for the economy to become more deeply integrated with regional and global economic systems. This has to do with taking part in the WTO and the EEU. However, when Kazakhstan was a member of the CU and the Single Economic Space before the establishment of the EAEU, Kazakhstan accounted for the smallest amount of intra-trade. Even though Kazakhstan has a higher GDP than Belarus and is an export-oriented nation having natural resources, Kazakhstan had the smallest share of intra-regional trade according to Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 below.

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<sup>181</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2022). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

**Table 5.5**

Volumes of mutual trade between the member states  
of the CU and the SES (2010~2011)<sup>182</sup>

State	2010		2011	
	Million \$	percentage	Million \$	percentage
Belarus	10418.4	22.1	15182.9	24.1
Kazakhstan	5999.2	12.7	7103.3	11.3
Russia	30717.0	65.2	40814.7	64.6
Total	47134.6	100	63100.9	100

**Table 5.6**

Volumes of mutual trade between the member states  
of the CU and the SES (2012~2013)<sup>183</sup>

State	2012		2013	
	Million \$	percentage	Million \$	percentage
Belarus	17090.0	24.9	17090.0	24.9
Kazakhstan	6837.8	10.0	6837.8	10.0
Russia	44654.4	65.1	44654.4	65.1
Total	68582.2	100	68582.2	100

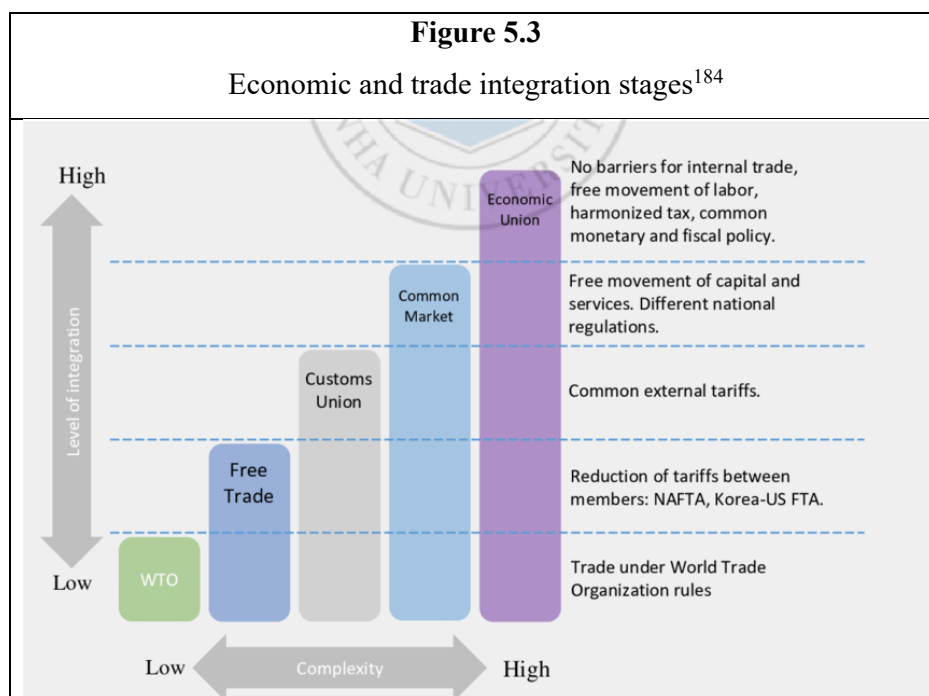
According to the development process of economic integration, the Eurasian Economic Union can be said to be a much deeper and more structured international organization than the existing customs union or single economic space. It can be said that it is a discussion body and an enforcement body where organized activities among member countries are conducted based on principles and policies. In this context, unlike the CU, the EAEU could guarantee the free movement of production factors such as human resources and capital. Accordingly, Kazakhstan

<sup>182</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2005~2012). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

<sup>183</sup> The Eurasian Economic Commission. (2005~2012). Statistical Yearbook of the Eurasian Economic Union; Eurasian Economic Commission. Moscow.

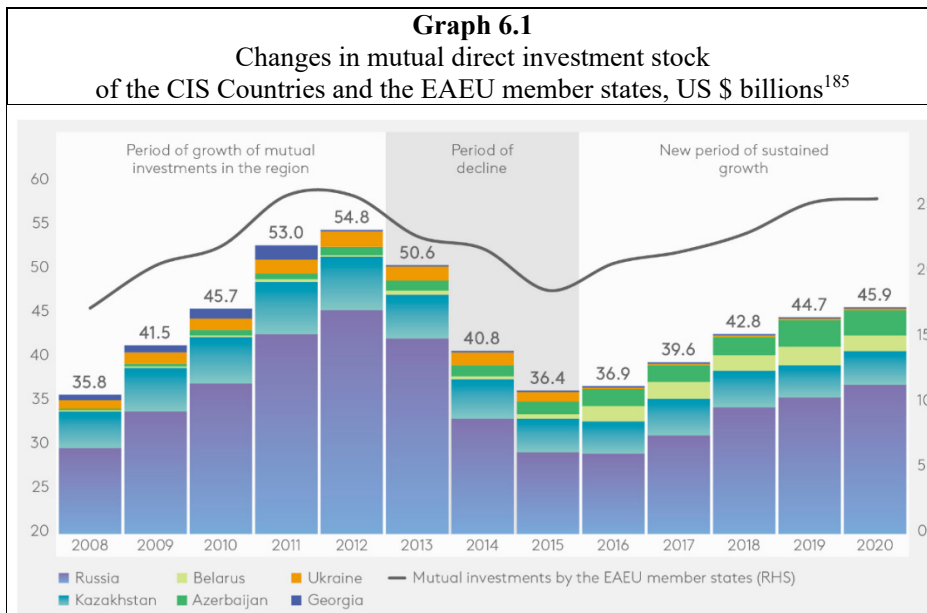


has also become a more friendly space to receive FDI from member countries in the region by joining the EAEU align with domestic policy.



According to the figure 5.3 above, it can be interpreted that Kazakhstan's investment demands have contributed to the sustained increase in the amount of mutual FDI in EAEU, which had decreased from 2013 to 2015. As international cooperation is used as the measurement for government to redesign the pattern of economic policy externalities to their mutual benefits, the Eurasian economic union has made the stone for grounds to make flexible flow of capitals from other countries. This implicates that, Kazakhstan was able to achieve their desired economic outcomes, based on the membership of the economic union, which has a greater effect than the free trade.

<sup>184</sup> Turakulov & Valijon. (2021). High Trade Costs Issues in Central Asia: Policy Targeted Scenarios by CGE Modeling.



From Moravcsik's view, increase in flow of trade and capital causes macro-economic impacts. The graph 6.1 demonstrates changes of the CIS and the EAEU member states in terms of mutual investments. This graph shows both increase and decrease among member states, where the growth is gradually enhanced. For instance, the degree of dependency affects how much is gained or lost, as well as how intensely demands are made of governments. In this paradigm, the specific preference of certain stakeholders could intensify than others. Rather than simply relying on energy or natural resource exports any longer, Kazakh authorities have driven economic development through a familiar environment for FDI.

In particular, if the export price of raw materials falls, imports also decrease. President Nazarbayev announced the *Nurly Zhol* as a new national economic

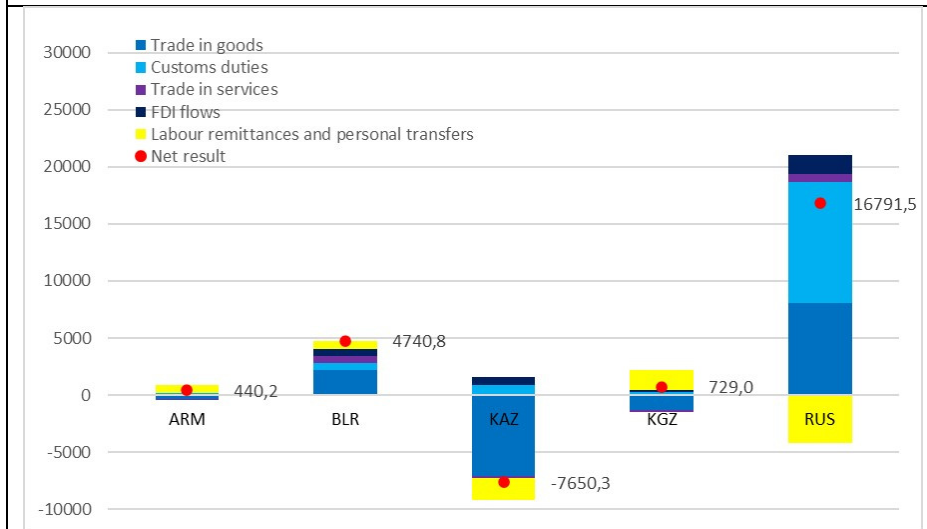
<sup>185</sup> Khon, Y. (2016, April 14). Kazakhstan's strategy of economic development during a time of crisis. Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting. <https://cabar.asia/en/yevgeniy-khon-kazakhstan-s-strategy-of-economic-development-during-a-time-of-crisis-2>

program in this concern. Specifically, the Kazakh government allotted an additional \$538 million to the program in 2014 to hasten the construction of infrastructure projects. Coinciding with this program announcement, the demand for foreign investment and foreign capital for Kazakhstan was especially high around the time of the establishment of the EAEU. This shows Kazakhstan's economic policy that focuses on economic aspects. This increased demand for foreign investment is more likely for Kazakhstan to pursue benefits from multi-lateral monetary flow rather than bilateral trade ties.

In sum, it could be perceived that Kazakhstan's bilateral ties are less dependent than Russia's or Belarus' ones in terms of trade. Even study concluded the net welfare of Kazakhstan with EAEU membership was calculated as negative for their state and economic growth according to figure 5.5. Trade in goods and labor remittance has been negatively impact on Kazakhstan economy and capital flow has played crucial determinants for joining Eurasian economic union. Foreign direct investment can be crucial foundation stone for domestic economic growth for one state so this positive incentive to coordinate Kazakhstan activities could keep joining the Eurasian economic union and integration process.

**Figure 5.4**

Net welfare effects of EAEU membership (2015-2018 yearly average, in relation to GDP, in percent, excluding fuel trade)<sup>186</sup>



Also, it could be observed how Kazakhstan makes profits by exporting its natural resources, specifically in terms of the fuel trade. Figure 5.4 supports this finding, as its net welfare drops steeply if there is no fuel trade. In process to avoid the negative impacts from the natural resource curse<sup>187</sup>, the attraction of investment to non-commodity industry is priorities for Kazakhstan economy so Kazakhstan made some steps with national policy *Nurly Zhol* and national fund with the international cooperation.<sup>188</sup> To keep sustainable economic growth, Kazakhstan's interests toward foreign direct investment formed the national preference to join the

<sup>186</sup> Yuri Kofner (2020). Who wins and who loses from the Eurasian Economic Union?. Institute for Market Integration and Economic Policy. Munich.

<sup>187</sup> Enders, K., & Herberg, H. (1983). The Dutch Disease: Causes, Consequences, Cures and Calmatives. *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, 119(3), 473–497. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40439151>

<sup>188</sup> The Press Service of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2021). How Nurly Zhol program is changing Kazakhstan: Modern highways and new directions

Eurasian economic union for more open environment for capital from intraregional states.

**Table 5.7**

Underlying Background of Kazakhstan for Eurasian economic integration

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Kazakhstan's sources for national preference</b>
<b>Geo-political interests</b>	President and political elites has pursued Kazakhstan's political autonomy and secure sovereignty with political theory 'multi-vectorism' for foreign affairs has played a crucial role to continue to join the EAEU containing Russia in regional space
	Kazakhstan has utilized the regional legitimate institution, EAEU with legally binding force as means to make a political voice in regional society of Eurasia
<b>Economic interests</b>	Even though the continuous intra-trade deficit and Russia's unstable status, direct economic benefits has made Kazakhstan to form national preference.
	Especially, capital flow (FDI) was crucial factors for Kazakhstan for economic growth, overcoming the theory 'natural resource curse(paradox of plenty)'

To conclude, Kazakhstan' primary and core reason to keep its existence in the EAEU is, related to its geopolitical interests. Kazakhstan has attempted to build its own diplomatic and geopolitical atmosphere by applying the idea of multi-vectorism from the early 2000s. Unlike Belarus, Kazakhstan could sustain itself with its rich natural resources, and sufficient FDIs from the overseas. With the Table 5.7 depicts, this does not mean Kazakhstan will disregard the EAEU, as there are economic benefits as well. Along with Russia's declined status in international society, Kazakhstan is slowly realizing the blueprints of multi-vectorism, and the approach to the EAEU could be basic diplomatic stance for its greater objectives.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

As this research has delved into the subject matter, an in-depth analysis of the factors forming Belarus and Kazakhstan's national preference to keep participation in the Eurasian economic integration was undertaken. Through a meticulous examination of a wide range of literature sources, including academic articles, government reports, and media publications, a comprehensive understanding of the economic considerations and political interests that drove their decision-making to sustain intraregional integration could be attained.

The prestige and stature that the US and the Soviet Union enjoyed throughout the Cold War were strong prior to the fall of the Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union at their backs, nations in the communist camp were able to garner significant support and raise their voices from the international community. Belarus and Kazakhstan were only republics of belonging to the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet Union collapsed, and Eurasian countries became independent.

In this process, each country established internal and external policy directions to protect its sovereignty and security, and each country took different steps. Despite its dependence on Russia, Kazakhstan has maintained its stance to maintain its independence by conducting a multifaceted 'multi-vectorism' foreign policy. It does not bend its pro-Russian policy and shows the same stance in the process of Eurasian economic integration and has received sanctions from the international community just like Russia.

Belarus joined Eurasian economic integration, with the aim of securing economic benefits and strengthening its ties with Russia. Belarus has heavily relied on Russian imports, particularly in the energy sector, and sought to establish closer

economic ties with Russia to secure favorable conditions for energy imports. The EAEU has provided Belarus with access to the Russian market, enabling it to export more of its goods to Russia and to function as a "middleman" in the trade between Russia and the West. In fact, Belarus has positioned itself as a key player in this trade, re-exporting goods labeled as "Belarusian" to Russia, while also importing commodities from the European Union.

Belarus has maintained economic stability despite the lack of economic reforms in the country, due to Russian financial support, low prices for Russian gas, favorable plans for Russian oil processing, and a free market for Belarusian goods although Belarus remains skeptical about free trade but positive towards regional economic integration. This is because the country is highly dependent on Russia, both economically and politically. Belarus recognizes that closer economic ties with Russia could enhance its economic growth and development, but it also recognizes that such ties could potentially undermine its sovereignty and independence.

On the other hand, Kazakhstan's status for the continuous collaboration with Eurasian economic integration is due to not only economic relations with Eurasia but also measures to make political voice in this area. Although the EEU was established to promote regional economic cooperation in the Eurasian continent, Kazakhstan's actual economic advantages was lower than that of Russia or Belarus. Nevertheless, it is notable that the promotion in status as an economic union from the customs union could create a favorable environment for Kazakhstan to attract FDI as it guarantees the free movement of production factors.

In terms of politics, Eurasian economic organization can be used as a forum for Kazakhstan to appeal its political voice as the second power in Eurasia. Kazakhstan's authorities stressed that the Union is not likely to be "politicized" as a

means of maintaining Russia's regional hegemony and should function as an economic organization that must guarantee the freedom of each member country.

In addition, Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism was firmly based on his accession into the EAEU. Since the policy "multi-vectorism," advocated by President Nazarbayev could be seen as a strategy to secure own sovereignty and interests by inducing competition among big powers through cooperation with various middle or weak member-states. In this context, the participation in regional economic integration allows Kazakhstan to establish diplomatic diversification through cooperation with regional member states.

In conclusion, Belarus and Kazakhstan would continue to participate in the Russian-led Eurasian economic integration process despite Russia's fluctuated international status and economic instability. The economic and political factors surrounding the two countries are confirmed to be prerequisites for the countries to consider when making foreign policy directions, due to their dependence on Russia as a structural environment and domestic political characteristics. The national policy, data, research, and leaders' speech were likely to prove hypotheses of this research. And the evaluation of hypotheses implies meanings to suggest sources to form national preference.

Thus, it is no longer meaningless to speculate on what will happen to Russia's international status. It could be expected what can happen in the future with the 'solid narrative' among three member-states. In other words, Russia's status change is a simple exogenous 'variable' and the dependence on Russia and the internal geo-political and economic determinants are going to form national preference and to affect their national direction and initiatives as a 'constant' considered in the formula to make intraregional economic cooperation for



Kazakhstan and Belarus. Under this formula, however diverse the Eurasian economic integration process is, Kazakhstan and Belarus are expected to continue to participate in the regional economic integration process considering the structural features in the domestic and regional sides.

States	Dimensions	Hypotheses	Sources for national preference
Belarus	Geopolitical interests	Belarus is inclined to consider geopolitical externalities and employed regional economic cooperation to assure the assistance of allies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Even Russia's status has been unstable in the international relations; Belarus has put weight on relationship with his ally; Russia</li> <li>- Favorable attitudes and speeches by president toward Russia could built the national preference.</li> <li>- Western sanctions against Russia and Belarus has pushed Belarus to join the Eurasian Economic Union for national priorities.</li> </ul>
	Economic interests	Domestic economic structure and trade dependence on Russia made Belarus to join the Eurasian Economic Union and favor regional economic liberalization considering interests in domestic sellers, producers, investors and traders (exporters),	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bilateral trade inter-dependence with Russia has solidified main economic preference for regional economic integration in Eurasia.</li> <li>- Keynote of Monetary Policy favorable toward Russia can be based on national preference in light of economy.</li> <li>- Domestic economic structure and stakeholders in Belarus has crucial for national preference</li> </ul>
Kazakhstan	Geopolitical interests	Kazakhstan prefers regional integration to bolster his own autonomy in the world, not only in Eurasia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- President and political elites has pursued Kazakhstan's political autonomy and secure sovereignty with political theory 'multi-vectorism' for foreign affairs has played a crucial role to continue to join the EAEU containing Russia in regional space</li> <li>- Kazakhstan has utilized the regional legitimate institution, EAEU with legally binding force as means to make a political voice in regional society of Eurasia.</li> </ul>
	Economic interests	For economic growth align with national economic policy; capital flows are critical and domestic factors in light of multi-vectorism policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Even though the continuous intra-trade deficit and Russia's unstable status, direct economic benefits has made Kazakhstan to form national preference.</li> <li>- Especially, capital flow (FDI) was crucial factors for Kazakhstan for economic growth, overcoming the theory 'natural resource curse(paradox of plenty)',</li> </ul>

## Appendix

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## Abstract in Korean

본 연구는 유라시아 경제연합 회원국들인 카자흐스탄과 벨라루스의 국가적 선호를 합리주의 틀에 기반하여 연구한다. 이러한 방식은 두 국가가 선택하는 국가적 선호인 지정학적 이익과 경제적 이익을 확인하는데 사용될 것이다. 특히 모라브칙의 이론적 틀은 선택의 과정에서 비롯된, 국제협력을 이뤄내는 국가들의 행동양식을 설명할 것이다. 본 연구는 앞에서 언급된 두 국가의 지정학적 이익과 경제적 이익을 파악함으로써 구 소비에트 연방 국가들이었던 이들의 국가적 선호를 명확하게 드러내고자 한다.

첫째로, 본 논문은 벨라루스와 카자흐스탄의 지정학적 이익과 경제학적 이익을 설명하는데 있어서 배경을 설명한다. 이를 통해서 두 나라가 왜 유라시아 경제연합에 가입하였는지 그 의도를 밝히려고 한다. 두 번째로, 이러한 국가적 선호, 특히 두 국가가 유라시아 경제연합 가입 이전 및 이후 두 국가들이 겪었던 대내외적 상황들에 대한 논의할 것이다. 셋째로, 본 연구는 벨라루스와 카자흐스탄이 유라시아 경제연합을 가입하는데 있어서 영향을 끼친 다양한 요인들을 보여줄 것이다. 본 연구는, 이러한 세가지의 중점적인 부분들을 파악하여 벨라루스와 카자흐스탄, 그리고 유라시아 경제연합에 대한 포괄적인 시각을 구축한다.

또한, 본 연구는 두 국가들의 경제적 이익과 지정학적 이익에 대한 유의미한 결과를 발견한다. 벨라루스부터 시작하자면, 지정학적 이익 이익 측면에서는 러시아에 대한 지지, 친 러시아적 국가적 선호를 보여준다. 또한 경제적 이익 측면에서는, 러시아와 양자무역의 중요성, 친 러시아 통화정책,

그리고 국내 경제적 요인이 지대한 영향을 끼치고 있는 점이 보여진다. 이러한 두 가지 요인의 비교를 통해 벨라루스는 경제적 요인이 지정학적 요인보다 더 중요하게 고려하고 있다고 볼 수 있다.

그리고, 경제적 이익과 지정학적 이익에서 벨라루스와는 달리, 카자흐스탄은 다른 국가적 선호를 나타내고 있다. 카자흐스탄이 중요시하는 공식 외교정책인 전방위외교와 유라시아 지역 내 정치적 목소리를 높이려는 노력은 유라시아 경제연합을 지정학적 이익에 기반하여 전략적으로 이용하는 것을 발견할 수 있다. 경제적 이익 측면에서는 유라시아경제연합 소속으로 얻는 경제적 이득과, 국내 성장에 필요한 외국인직접투자 등이 발견된다. 카자흐스탄에 있어서 지정학적 이익이 경제적 이익보다 더 큰 중요성을 갖는다.

마지막으로, 이 연구는 향후 유라시아 경제연합과 회원국들에 대한 관련 연구의 초석과 같은 역할을 할 것이다. 이는 큰 중요성을 갖는데, 바로 유라시아 경제연합이 유라시아의 유럽연합처럼 점진적으로 발전하고 있기 때문이다. 또한 동부 유럽과 중앙아시아를 연결하는 지역경제통합 또한 새로운 분야로 자리잡을 수 있을 것으로 여겨진다. 그리하여, 본 논문을 통해서 어떻게 국가들이 서로 다른 국가적 선호에 기반하여 지역경제통합에 가입하는지에 대해서 연구하려고 한다. 이러한 접근방식을 통해서, 언급된 국가적 선호가 소속된 지역을 향한 국가의 정책, 정체성 그리고 관점에 의해서 상이성을 띄고, 이 국가적 선호가 어떻게 다르게 나타나는지에 대한 해답을 구할 것이다.



주요어 : 유라시아 경제연합, 유라시아, 벨라루스, 카자흐스탄, 러시아,

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