

Kazakhstan's contribution to modern Eurasian integration

Idea of creativity and tolerance has become a fundamental in the state policy implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Eurasianism is one of philosophical concepts which futuristic approach contributes to its active revitalization. Preserving the connection with its classical form of the early 20th century modern Eurasianism has changed. Today it combines three main directions, including academic, applied and political. Such term as "neoeurasianism" is becoming more popular in humanitarian sphere. It updates Eurasian tradition but takes into account the new historical situation and modern trends of development.

Since independence Kazakhstan conducts an active work on integrational processes within Eurasia and Central-Asian Union considering priorities of the Turkic World. So far Kazakhstan's initiatives in this area has not been realised and supported by other participants of integrational processes. However, nowadays the trend has changed. Today our partners are strongly interested in integration.

In spring 1994 during the visit to the Great Britain the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev made a presentation at the Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in which he pointed out the need to deepen CIS integration.

Soon after the trip Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Moscow. During the official visit he had a meeting with the teaching staff of the Lomonosov Moscow State University. At the meeting, on March 29, 1994 Nursultan Nazarbayev presented his view on the prospects for development of post-Soviet countries. He put forward the idea of establishing new association of the CIS countries and proposed the name of Eurasian Union.

Literally right after that the idea of the Eurasian Union has started to be implemented. The first step in this direction was the Order of the President "On Eurasian University", which was signed on May 23, 1996. The Order stated that the Eurasian University is established under the conditions of "growing international ties of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its active participation in global integrational processes and implementation of the idea of the Eurasian Union". Thus, the activity of the university is based on the Eurasian idea. The fact that by the initiative of our President the university was named after L.N. Gumilyov is deeply symbolic as well. Leo Gumilyov conceptually substantiated the cohesion of geographical, cultural and historical relations of peoples of the vast territory, including Northern and Central Eurasia.

Kazakhstan is an initiator of numerous projects within the Eurasian Union. In December 1991 the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established in the city of Almaty. In 1995-2000 Kazakhstan put forward almost all significant integrational initiatives within the CIS.

In late November 2001 St. Petersburg hosted the first meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community which was established on October 10, 2000. Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community received the right to prepare and make binding decisions. It was the formation of unified legal basis of the Community. The first year of operation of the Eurasian Economic Community resulted in a significant success: regional trade grew by 38 per cent.

Today the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is moving into a new phase of its history. The member states created Collective Rapid Deployment Forces, unified air defence system and CIS Antiterrorist Centre.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was established on the basis of the Agreement on confidence-building measures in the military sphere signed in 1999 by Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan and China. Thus far, it has acquired the reputation of the affective platform for interaction in the sphere of security, trans-boundary ties, educational, social and cultural projects.

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) launched a dedicated process aimed at establishing security system in Asia.

The idea of eurasionism is expanding permanently. Today it covers CIS countries and interaction between Europe and Asia as a whole. President of Kazakhstan outlines the need to build good relations between Eurasian countries. As a result, Kazakhstan will be a part of world changes. Being the centre of Eurasia our country will play the role of economic and cultural bridge between the three growing regions, including China, Russia and the Muslim World.

In general, Eurasian integrational model provides an opportunity to move into the new level of cooperation.

Modern Eurasian concept states that the real integration implies unconditional respect for sovereignty and independence of the states and their equality.

Under the modern conditions of the dialog between the East and West Eurasian initiative of Kazakhstan is an actual doctrine of interstate political, economic and cultural interaction based on the principles of tolerance, maintaining peace and stability in the region and partner mutual beneficial relations.

Modern eurasionism includes integrational and economic aspects and civilizational approach to solving numerous global problems.

Agreements on the Common Economic Space between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan entered into force on 1 January 2012. Completion of the process of shaping the Eurasian Union is expected to be completed by 2016.

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev says about the need to support the wish of some CIS countries to become a part of Eurasian integration.

Foreign policy initiatives of Kazakhstan were supported by the world community. They reflect the idea of our political strategy. We will continue conducting our balanced external policy and interaction with both Western and Asian countries.

At the ceremonial meeting to the 20th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan our President noted that Kazakhstan will not have a real independence in the 21st century without participation in regional and global integrational processes.

Kazakhstan uses rationalistic approach to evaluation of prospects for Eurasian cooperation and its significance. And integration is beneficial for Kazakhstan.

Eurasian concept proposed by Nursultan Nazarbayev is recognised as an important ideological precondition of Eurasian developments. Eurasian Union is the most promising regional initiative and well-constructed plan for the 21st century. It is a megaproject commensurate with the magnitude of the challenges of the present and future.

Firstly, Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed integration based on economic pragmatism while not denying the importance of cultural and civilizational factors. He was sure that economic interests are a critical element of integration process rather than abstract geopolitical ideas and slogans. Thus, he focused on establishment of the common economic area as a large-scale territory for mutual beneficial development of our nations.

Secondly, Kazakhstan remains strong proponent of the principle of the voluntary integration. Each state and society should independently come to a conclusion that both glorying in the identity and staying locked up exclusively within the state borders have dire adverse impacts on them in the globalised world.

Thirdly, the Eurasian Union is an association of states based on principles of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, respect for national sovereignty and inviolability of state borders.

Fourthly, it is necessary to establish supranational bodies of the Eurasian Union to provide effectiveness of the integration entity. These bodies would have clear and real authority and act on the basis of consensus taking into account interest of each member states and full political sovereignty. Thus, the core element of the Eurasian Union should be equality of the partners.

This all shows the situation of transition of eurasionism from theoretic and culturological character, in which it existed in the 1990s, to practical projects and real prospective for regional development within international context.

The Eurasian Union should be established as a strong link between the Euro-Atlantic and Asian spheres of development.

In addition, the Eurasian Union should become a self-reliant regional financial association which would be a part of a new global monetary and financial system. The president of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev suggested working on this issue three years ago. He told about Eurasian supranational unit of account as a basis for strong regional reserve currency.

Certainly, no one political initiative can be implemented without broad public support. And it is becoming a condition for establishment of the Eurasian Union.

Objective analysis of the history of Eurasian states demonstrates that integrative potential is considerable as well as perspectives of eurasionism in the region and the whole world. Astana has already become the centre of various integration initiatives.

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