

Chapter 6

Forms and Mechanisms of Economic Cooperation Between Russia and Belarus Within the Union State: Tasks, Problems, Achievements

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ABSTRACT

On December 8, 2019, the Union State will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. During this time, a fairly long way has been covered - the main institutions were built, the tools for deepening and intensifying integration were defined, the people of Russia and Belarus acquired new opportunities. The Union State of Belarus and Russia is an actual research topic, since regional integration is now the trend of global development. And it is the Union State that is viewed by experts as the basis of the integration processes in the post-Soviet space. The Union State acts as a tool for enhancing integration processes in general in the post-Soviet space and explains to the citizens of the countries the advantages of these processes. The purpose of this study is to analyze the dynamics of the integration process within the framework of the Union State, to determine its factor in the intensification of regional integration in the post-Soviet space.

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INTRODUCTION

The post-Soviet space is a complex geopolitical, economic, social and cultural phenomenon. This is the “Large Space”, which records a long historical experience of interaction and coexistence of different peoples within the framework of Russia, the Moscow kingdom, the Russian Empire, the USSR. History shows that centripetal and centrifugal tendencies constantly interacted and dynamically replaced each other, always preserving the basic connections between peoples, regardless of changes in the state structure. And now, considering the development of the post-Soviet space, we are witnessing an interweaving of integration and disintegration tendencies within the framework of the “Large Space”, which unites not only Russia and Belarus, but also the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states.

Exploring the development of this macro-region (post-Soviet space) in historical dynamics, it is impossible not to note the tendency of mutual attraction of many peoples of the post-Soviet space to each other and, above all, to Russia. For these deep reasons, regional integration in the post-Soviet space has a special historical, cultural and geopolitical uniqueness. Especially if we are talking about the Union State of Russia and Belarus, which is formed, in fact, by one people, because the Russians and Belarusians come from the same root and have a common history, a common mentality, common ideas about the structure of the world, etc. It also explains why within the framework of the USSR one of the most successful examples of economic cooperation was the cooperation between the Belarusians and the Russians. That is why the economic integration of Russia and Belarus is based on the cultural interaction of peoples and the political dialogue, which must be mentioned in our study.

The peculiarities of the post-Soviet space for the first time fully manifested themselves in the framework of the Union State, for this reason, the movement to further integration formats in the post-Soviet space, for example, within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), is justified. And already the development of the EAEU raises the question of promoting the integration movement towards China (conjugation of the Eurasian integration with the Silk Road) and in the direction of the European Union within the framework of the idea of “Greater Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok”. In the Union State for the first time, the question of the harmonization of norms and standards was raised, which, in particular, is carried out by Russia and Belarus together and in accordance with international standards. In this regard, the Union State is also perceived as a test model for testing different versions of economic regional integration, based on political dialogue.

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