
Problems of Economics

The Eurasian Economic Commission: From Its Origins to the Present

E. I. Pivovar[#]

Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia

e-mail: rgggu@rggu.ru

Received July 14, 2022; revised August 26, 2022; accepted September 7, 2022

Abstract—This article is devoted to the background and history of the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Commission in the post-Soviet space. It examines the activities of its predecessor, the Customs Union Commission, which operated until November 2011, when, on the basis of the treaty “On the Eurasian Economic Commission,” its powers were transferred to the supranational body of the Eurasian Economic Community—the Eurasian Economic Commission. The Commission of the Customs Union was designed to facilitate the completion of the formation of the legal framework of the Customs Union of members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including the Customs Code of the Customs Union. The main activities of the Eurasian Economic Commission from the moment of its creation to the present time are traced, and the main stages of the work of the Eurasian Economic Commission of all three convocations of its Boards are examined. The relationship of this supranational body of the Eurasian Economic Community and the Eurasian Economic Union with foreign partners is explored; and the conclusion of agreements on free trade zones with a number of states and regional associations, as well as achievements and challenges faced by integration processes in the Eurasian Economic Union space in the field of trade, customs procedures, technical regulations, industrial cooperation, digitalization of all spheres of activity, etc., is considered.

Keywords: Eurasian integration, Eurasian Economic Commission, Eurasian Union, international economic cooperation, industrial cooperation, digital economy

DOI: 10.1134/S1019331622150084

The activities of the modern Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the first supranational body of the former Soviet territory, which regulates the interaction of the five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union, were preceded by the work of the Customs Union Commission (CUC). It was a permanent body established by the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation in accordance with the agreement of October 6, 2007, on the conclusion of the Customs Union (CU) of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) of these three countries.¹

The CUC was supposed to develop normative legal acts, and its decisions were signed by all of its members. The CUC consisted of a chairman and two members of the Commission: First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation I.I. Shuvalov and the members of the commission Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus S.N. Rumas and First Deputy

Chairman of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan U.E. Shukejev.²

The working body of the CUC was the Secretariat with an executive secretary at the head. The Secretariat organized the activities of the supreme body of the CU, the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC at the level of members of the governments of the three states.

The structure of the CUC Secretariat included a number of departments: customs administration, customs and tariff regulation, trade policy, financial policy, statistics, measures in foreign trade, technical regulation, sanitary, veterinary, phytosanitary measures, legal, and administrative. The Scientific and Expert Council was also formed.³

In connection with the signing on November 18, 2011, of the agreement On the Eurasian Economic Commission, the powers of the abolished CUC were transferred to the supranational body of the EurAsEC, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).⁴

[#] RAS Academician Efim Iosifovich Pivovar, Dr. Sci. (Hist.), is President of the Russian State University for the Humanities.

¹ Agreement On the Commission of the Customs Union, *Electronic fund of legal and normative–technical documents*. <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/902200993>. Cited January 11, 2021.

² Commission of the Customs Union, *Dictionaries and Encyclopedias on Academics*. <https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/1526372>. Cited January 11, 2021.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

The CUC was intended primarily to contribute to the completion of the formation of the legal framework of the Customs Union. Already in the very agreement on the establishment of the Commission, signed in October 2007, was information about the creation of a single customs territory and the formation of the Customs Union. Over the years of CUC activity, several dozen international agreements have been signed in this area, including agreements on unified customs regulation, export customs duties in relation to third countries, common rules on the origin of goods, on maintaining customs statistics of foreign and mutual trade, on the conditions and mechanism for applying tariff quotas, on the provision of tariff privileges and a unified system of tariff preferences, on the procedure for paying customs duties in the member states of the Customs Union, on the rules for licensing in the field of foreign trade, on the CU agreement on veterinary and sanitary measures, etc.⁵

Of great importance was the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Customs Union of December 11, 2009, as well as the Agreement on the implementation of a coordinated policy in the field of technical regulation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures of the Eurasian Economic Community of January 25, 2008, and the Agreement on the establishment of an information system of the EurAsEC in the field of technical regulation and sanitary and phytosanitary measures of December 12, 2008.⁶

The Agreement on the Customs Code of the Customs Union was adopted by the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC at the level of heads of state on November 27, 2009. At the same time, as an annex to the agreement, the first version of the Customs Code itself was approved, which included the main provisions, the characteristics of customs payments and customs control, customs operations and procedures, etc.⁷ A new, amended version of this document was approved on April 16, 2010.⁸

Preparations for the establishment of the Customs Union were intensified in 2009. Before that, the atten-

tion of the political leaders who signed the 1995 Agreement seemed to be held back by the desire to conclude agreements with the World Trade Organization. However, in the summer of 2009, at a meeting of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community, V.V. Putin, who then held the post of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, was forced to state that “in recent years, the process of joining the WTO has become a deterrent to integration processes” [Smirnova, 2012, p. 45]. Putin declared the following:

In emphasizing the high potential of the economies of our countries and the advantages of their deep integration, it is decided to approve the draft single customs tariff and submit it for approval by the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC at the level of heads of states, bearing in mind the entry into force of the single customs tariff from January 1, 2010. We approve the proposal on the stages and terms of the single customs territory, based on the start of the Customs Union from January 1, 2010, and the completion of all necessary procedures by July 1, 2011.⁹

Already at the meeting of the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC, held in November 2009 in Minsk, the issue of the main mechanisms for the functioning of the CU became key. As a result of the discussion, N.A. Nazarbaev, A.G. Lukashenko, and D.A. Medvedev agreed to introduce from January 1, 2010, a single customs tariff, and from July 1, 2010, a single customs territory of the Customs Union. The leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan also signed a package of decisions defining the work of the Customs Union [Smirnova, 2012, p. 46]. The decisions taken in Minsk were followed by the adoption by national governments of documents on the ratification of international treaties that form the legal framework of the CU within the framework of the EurAsEC [Smirnova, 2012, p. 46].

By January 1, 2010, agreements concerning non-tariff regulation and licensing of certain types of products came into force, a single customs-tariff and non-tariff regulation began to operate, the functions of determining the parameters of customs-tariff and nontariff regulation were transferred to the Commission of the Customs Union, the Customs Code of the Union was adopted, an agreement was reached on the statute of the EurAsEC court, and more than 40 international treaties were adopted [Smirnova, 2012, p. 49].

Thus, by 2010 the legal base of the Customs Union was basically formed, and in the summer of 2010, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan were able to start forming a single customs territory. On July 5, 2010, the

⁵ List of international treaties constituting the legal framework of the Customs Union, Eurasian Economic Commission. http://www.tsouz.ru/DOCS/INTAGRMENTS/Pages/Perechen_MDTs.aspx. Cited May 7, 2021.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Annex to the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Customs Union, adopted by the Decision of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community (the supreme body of the customs union) at the level of heads of state dated November 27, 2009, no. 17, Eurasian Economic Commission. <http://www.tsouz.ru/Docs/Kodeks1/Pages/default.aspx>. Cited May 7, 2021.

⁸ Appendix to the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Customs Union, adopted by the Decision of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community (the Supreme Body of the Customs Union) at the level of heads of state of November 27, 2009 (as amended Protocol of April 16, 2010) no. 17, Eurasian Economic Commission. www.tsouz.ru/Docs/Kodeks3/Pages/default.aspx. Cited May 7, 2021.

⁹ Cited in Smirnova, M.N. (2012) Integration Processes in Eurasia on the Example of the Activities of the Eurasian Economic Community and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences*, St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University, p. 45.

Joint Statement of the Presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia was signed in Astana on the entry into force of the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Customs Union for the three countries from July 6, 2010.

In the process of forming a single customs territory, the following stages can be distinguished:

(1) October 1, 2009, to January 1, 2010: development of the Customs Code and preparation for its ratification, drafting of international treaties relating to sanitary, veterinary-sanitary, and phytosanitary measures, as well as issues on the collection of value added tax on the territory of the Customs Union.

(2) January 1–April 1, 2010: entry into force of the general customs-tariff and nontariff regulation.

(3) April 1–July 1, 2010: testing the mechanism for crediting and distributing import customs duties.

(4) July 1, 2010, to July 1, 2011: the launch of the unified Customs Code, as well as the system for crediting and distributing import customs duties, the abolition of customs clearance of goods from Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, the transfer of customs control from the Russian–Belarusian border to the external border of Belarus and, accordingly, from the Russian–Kazakh border to the external borders of Russia and Kazakhstan [Yurgens, 2015, pp. 44, 45].

One of the main and most difficult tasks of the Customs Union was the unification of the customs legislation of the participating countries. The unification procedure was regulated by the Action Plan for the formation of the Customs Union within the framework of the EurAsEC, approved by the Interstate Council on October 6, 2007, by the decision of the members of the Integration Committee of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation of April 23, 2008, no. 13 and the decision of the Commission of the Customs Union of February 4, 2009, no. 4. The main document regulating the functioning of the single customs territory was to become the Customs Code of the Customs Union, the development of which was entrusted to the CUC.

On November 19, 2011, the Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration and the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) were signed, which marked the transition of the EurAsEC member countries to the next stage of integration construction—the Common Economic Space. At the same time, the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan called the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) their ultimate goal.

Of particular importance was the creation on November 18, 2011, of the Eurasian Economic Commission, a supranational body the decisions of which were binding on the parties that acceded to the Treaty of November 18, 2011. General leadership was entrusted to the Council of the Commission, which included one representative from each member of the treaty (the deputy prime minister could become a representative). The Board of the Commission became

the supreme executive body. At the same time, the financial infrastructure of the EurAsEC was formalized: the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund was created, which provides loans to member countries of the community, as well as the Eurasian Development Bank, which acted in tandem with the Interstate Bank of the CIS in order to optimize the conditions for making cross-border payments in national currencies and financing investment projects related to development of infrastructure (transport, energy, telecommunications, municipal) and industries with high added value [Yurgens, 2015, p. 130].

The Eurasian Economic Community has gained recognition in the international arena. On December 9, 2003, the EurAsEC was granted observer status in the UN General Assembly. On December 6, 2007, at the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the resolution “Cooperation between the UN and the Eurasian Economic Community” was unanimously adopted, which noted “the importance of strengthening dialogue, cooperation, and coordination between the UN system and the EurAsEC.”¹⁰ UN organizations and funds, as well as international financial institutions, were invited to “cooperate and develop direct contacts with the EurAsEC for the joint implementation of programs aimed at achieving their goals.”¹¹

One of the main issues related to the foreign economic activity of the EurAsEC was the accession of the member countries of the Community and especially the Customs Union to the WTO. Although there was a project of joining the WTO as a single customs territory, nevertheless, in the end, it was decided that each state of the Customs Union would have its own schedule for joining the WTO, but at the same time they would coordinate their negotiating positions on those issues that have a direct attitude to the functioning of the Customs Union [Shumsky, 2010, p. 190].

Although the Customs Union at a certain stage of its existence was perceived as an alternative to the WTO,¹² and opinions were expressed about their incompatibility,¹³ by the mid-2010s it had become clear that cooperation between the Customs Union and the World Trade Organization is an inevitable and very important stage in the economic development of the countries of the Eurasian region. The full functioning of the Customs Union in a situation where one or more of its members join the WTO should have

¹⁰Cited in Yurgens, A.A. (2015) Financial and economic integration of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, *Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Economic Sciences*, Moscow: Moscow State University, p. 130.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Expert: WTO destroys the ideology of the Customs Union, *Regiony Rossii*, Aug. 22 (2012). <http://gosrf.ru/news/5777/>. Cited May 8, 2021.

¹³Starikov, N., WTO and Customs Union, Site of Nikolai Starikov. <http://nstarikov.ru/blog/13308>. Cited May 8, 2021.

been ensured by the Treaty on the Functioning of the Customs Union within the Multilateral Trading System, which was signed on May 19, 2011, in Minsk.

According to this agreement,

...From the date of accession of any member of the CU to the WTO, the provisions of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO become part of the legal system of the CU. The first member of the CU to join the WTO informs the others and coordinates with them the adoption of obligations as a condition for joining the WTO, if such obligations require a change in the legal system of the CU. If another participant later joins the WTO, its obligations (accepted as a condition for joining the WTO) will also become part of the legal system of the CU.¹⁴

In total, by 2014, the EurAsEC had managed to conclude about 30 memorandums of cooperation with organizations of the UN system and other international and regional institutions - primarily with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Industrial Development Program (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) UNESCO, as well as with the WTO, OSCE, and the European Union, which testified not only to the recognition of this organization at the world level, but also to the high interest in interacting with it and the growth of geopolitical and economic weight of the Community.

Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, as a result of regional integration processes, the Eurasian Economic Community was created as an alternative to previous attempts to reintegrate the post-Soviet space. Compactness and especially dynamism became distinctive features of the EurAsEC: the integration carried out within the framework of the EurAsEC can be considered “multi-speed,” i.e., the community was characterized by “deepening of the integration of the three key countries among themselves while simultaneously strengthening the negotiating positions with nonaligned countries with a view to their further accession” [Ratushnyak, 2014, pp. 38, 39].

The implementation of the EurAsEC project, with all its shortcomings and positions that are difficult to implement, began already in the early 2000s and showed how beneficial for all its participants such a “composition of natural resources, capital, and human potential” is [Ratushnyak, 2014, pp. 38, 39; Gushchin et al., 2019]. At the time of dissolution, at the end of 2014, the EurAsEC covered an area of 20.374 million km², which in 2011 was home to approximately 182.6 million people (or 3% of the

world population) and produced 4% of the world GDP. One of the results of the activities of the EurAsEC was the improvement of the socio-economic indicators of the participating countries [Stolbovskaya, 2015, p. 807; Gushchin et al., 2019].

Increasing the overall competitiveness of the EurAsEC countries, economic stability and resistance to external threats in a globalized world, the formation of a “branched system of mechanisms that ensure the process of vertical and horizontal integration” of the Community member countries—all this logically necessitated the transition to a new level of integration. The creation of the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan clearly demonstrated to the CU member countries that in order to effectively and quickly solve a new task—the formation of the Common Economic Space—a different goal and other organizational forms are needed [Gushchin et al., 2019]. This is how the project of a new regional post-Soviet integration entity, the Eurasian Economic Union, was born.

On October 10, 2014, in Minsk, at a meeting of the Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community, the heads of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan signed documents on the draft decision of the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC On the Termination of the Activities of the Eurasian Economic Community and on the draft agreement on the termination of the activities of the Eurasian Economic communities. After 14 years of work, the Eurasian Economic Community gave way to a new integration association, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which was supposed to start operating on January 1, 2015.

The transition from the EurAsEC to the EAEU meant a transition to a new level of integration,

...aimed, along with the deepening of mutually complementary and mutually beneficial cooperation between states within the CU and the CES and with other countries, at the full realization of the potential of these integration projects, ensuring freedom of movement and employment of citizens on the territory of the three countries, freedom of movement of services and capital, implementation of a coordinated policy in the energy sector, agriculture, transport, and industry [Ratushnyak, 2014, p. 3].

In addition, it meant, on the one hand, the deepening of economic interaction between the participating countries “in all major areas of production and investment activities, in the labor and capital markets” [Chufrin, 2013, p. 5], expanding the exchange of goods and services and, for this purpose, conducting “a coordinated macroeconomic policy with the transfer of an increasing number of functions to the supranational level” [Chufrin, 2013, p. 5]. On the other hand, it was planned to expand cooperation with the countries of the Asia–Pacific region and the EAEU was supposed to act as a link connecting the CIS coun-

¹⁴Cited in Bakhtina, R.G. (2013) Customs Union or WTO: Prospects for development, in *WTO and Customs Union: Prospects for Integration Cooperation: Materials of the IV International Scientific and Practical Conference of Students, Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Teachers, and Practitioners. May 27, 2013*, Saratov: Saratovskii istochnik, p. 24 [in Russian].

tries with countries located along the perimeter of the Pacific Ocean.

“A new economic organization is emerging on the world stage, which has full international legal personality and operates on the basis of the principles of the WTO,” said V.V. Putin, May 29, 2014, on the day of the signing of the Treaty on the Establishment of the EAEU, “whose geographical position allows creating transport and logistics routes of not only regional, but also global significance, and combining large-scale trade flows in Europe and Asia.”¹⁵

On November 18, 2011, the Presidents of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan signed in Moscow the Declaration on Eurasian Economic Integration and the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Commission, which recorded a joint decision on the transition to a new stage of integration construction, the Common Economic Space, the ultimate goal of which was the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) by 2015.

It was declared that the Eurasian Economic Union was being created on the basis of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia, but the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan were also to be included as “integration partners.”¹⁶

The stages of formation of the EAEU were determined. There were three in total.

(1) January 1–December 31, 2012: at this stage, it was planned to “ensure the initial stage of the functioning of the CES, providing for the implementation of measures included in the Decision of the Interstate Council of the EurAsEC (the Supreme Body of the Customs Union) at the level of heads of government of March 15, 2011, no. 77, Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Agreements Forming the CES and Ensuring the Functioning of the CES Starting from January 1, 2012.”¹⁷ In particular, during this period it was necessary to bring national legislation in line with the legal framework of the CU and the CES, to study the work of the main institutions operating within the framework of the Customs Union Commission, and to form auxiliary regulatory bodies.

In addition, at this stage it was necessary to develop and adopt a plan of action for the creation of the EAEU. It was also proposed to form the infrastructure of the EAEU and create a regulatory framework that would regulate the work of all bodies of the new organization, develop and adopt the Unified Strategy for

the Trade and Economic Policy of the EAEU and the Plan for its implementation, complete the creation of unified EAEU legislation in the field of ensuring sanitary, veterinary, and phytosanitary security of the single customs territory, and unify trade regimes and export duties. Finally, it was planned to “carry out priority work on the creation and implementation of the Integrated Information System for Foreign and Mutual Trade (IISVVT).”¹⁸

(2) January 1–December 31, 2013: at the second stage, it was planned to complete the unification of the customs legislation of the EAEU member countries, harmonize national tax systems and procedures for administrative and criminal proceedings, develop a strategic planning system for the development of the EAEU, create a methodology for the formation of the union budget, form a unified Antimonopoly and Customs Service, and complete the implementation of IISVVT. The second stage was supposed to end with the opening of representative offices of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) in the capitals of the EAEU member states.

(3) January 1–December 31, 2014: at the third, final stage, the transformation of the bodies and institutions of the EurAsEC into the EAEU format was to be completed, and new institutions were to begin work. It was planned to complete the formation and codification of the legal framework of the EAEU by signing the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union.¹⁹ Furthermore, the participants of the integration project intended to approve the Strategic Plan for the Development of the EAEU, the program for its implementation for 2015–2025 and the first budget of the Union. It was planned to form and launch a common financial market of the Union and a single payment system and to cancel passport and border control at the borders of the EAEU member states. The final step in the third stage was to be “giving EAEU international legal personality in trade and political issues” and “transfer to the EAEU bodies of authority to conduct international negotiations on trade and economic issues with the signing of international treaties on behalf of the EAEU.”²⁰

On May 29, 2014, in Astana, the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union. At the same time, it was emphasized that the new formation is primarily economic and pursues the goals of energy, financial, industrial, and innovative cooperation [Gorbachev, 2014, p. 32]. As the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation S.E. Naryshkin stated,

The Eurasian Economic Union was created in order to comprehensively modernize and strengthen

¹⁵Cited in Latukhina, K., Multiplication by three, *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, May 30 (2014). <http://rg.ru/2014/05/29/dogovor-site.html>. Cited May 12, 2021.

¹⁶Cited in Maryshev, A.A. (2013) Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Space in the Context of the Eurasian Perspective, *Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences*, St. Petersburg: Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University, p. 113.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 119.

the competitiveness of national economies. It is based on the principles of equality, the supremacy of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens and individuals, and respect for the history, culture, and national traditions of the participating states.²¹

The agreement on the creation of the EAEU, which was based on the legal framework of the Customs Union (CU) and the Common Economic Space (CES), consisted of 28 sections, 118 articles, and 32 annexes. It consolidated the status of the EAEU as a subject of international law and ordered the participating countries to act according to agreed directions from the standpoint of the EAEU, and not their own country [Iskakova et al., 2014, p. 86]. It was planned that the work of the Eurasian Economic Union will begin in January 2015 with the formation of a single market for financial, transport, telecommunications, and construction services, followed by the formation of a common market for labor, finances, and raw materials. It was assumed that integration within the framework of the EAEU by 2030 would increase the GDP of the participating countries by at least 25% [Iskakova et al., 2014, p. 87].

The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) entered into force on January 1, 2015. On January 2, Armenia joined the EAEU, and on August 12 of the same year, Kyrgyzstan did. The core body of the EAEU, which ensures the fulfillment of the conditions for the functioning and development of the Union, is the Eurasian Economic Commission, a permanent supranational regulatory body of the Union, which is formed by the Council of the Commission and the Board of the Commission. In its work, the EEC is guided by the interests of the Eurasian Community as a whole, without motivating its decisions by the interests of any of the national governments. All decisions of the Eurasian Economic Commission are taken on a collegiate basis and are binding on the territory of the EAEU member countries [Ziyadullaev, 2015, p. 4].

The EEC Board consists of ten members, two members of the Board (Minister) of the Commission from each participating country, one of which is the Chairman of the Board of the Commission. The Chairman of the Board and members of the Board are appointed for a period of four years by the decision of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the level of heads of state with a possible extension of powers.

The structure of the Eurasian Economic Commission corresponds to the areas of its activities, and each area is supervised by a member of the Board (minister):

- integration and macroeconomics of the EEC;
- economics and financial policy of the EEC;
- industry and the agro-industrial complex;
- trade;
- technical regulation;
- customs cooperation;
- energy and infrastructure;
- competition and antimonopoly regulation;
- domestic markets, informatization, and information and communication technologies.²²

In 2020, M.V. Myasnikovich (Republic of Belarus) became the Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission. The Board included S.Yu. Glazyev, R.B. Beketaev, A.K. Kamalyan, A.A. Slepnev, V.V. Nazarenko, O.M. Pankratov, E.A. Kaikiev, A.A. Shakka-liev, and G.L. Vardanyan.²³

At the same time, both the EEC and the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission already have their own history filled with importance for the present and future development of the EAEU. Let us dwell only on some of its key stages and events.

In 2012, the first composition of the EEC Board was formed. In the preface to the special edition “The Eurasian Economic Union: Architecture of the Future,” First Chairman of the EEC Board V.B. Khristenko noted the following:

Important events are taking place before our eyes and with our participation, the economic landscape is seriously changing. ...[W]e are actively moving towards the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union. Executive and judicial supranational competence is being formed. All these are absolutely new principles of economic development management for us. To coordinate efforts to implement this large-scale project at the executive level, the Eurasian Economic Commission was created, which builds its activities in accordance with the best international practices, on the principles of mutual benefit for the member states of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space.²⁴

The work of the EEC, according to the Treaty, was determined by the Council of the Commission, which included one representative of the States Parties to the Agreement: S.N. Rumas (Republic of Belarus), B.A. Sagintaev (Republic of Kazakhstan), and I.I. Shuvalov (Russian Federation), as well as the EEC Board consisting of nine members (ministers) of the EEC,

²²“The Board of the EEC” [Electronic resource], Eurasian Economic Commission. URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/commission/collegium-members/> (accessed May 7, 2021).

²³Ibid.

²⁴*Eurasian Economic Integration: Figures and Facts*, 2013, p. 4, Eurasian Economic Commission. http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Documents/broshura26_RUS_v5.pdf. Cited May 8, 2020.

²¹Naryshkin, S.E. (2015) The Eurasian Economic Union: Problems and Prospects of Development, *The Eurasian Economic Perspective: Materials of the Third International Forum, St. Petersburg, April 16, 2015*, Moscow: Publication of the State Duma, p. 7.

three members from each country participating in the Treaty.

The first composition of the EEC Board, headed by V.B. Khristenko,²⁵ included T.D. Valovaya, S.S. Sidorskiĭ, T.M. Suleimenov, A.A. Slepnev, V.N. Kores-hkov, D.K. Akhmetov, V.A. Goshin, and N.A. Alda-bergenov. All members of the Board (ministers) of the EEC had extensive experience of working in the gov-ernments of the member countries of the Treaty in the positions of prime ministers, vice-premiers, ministers of the economic bloc, or senior officials in the Gov-ernment Office. From the first steps of its activity, the Collegium of the Eurasian Economic Commission has focused on the following areas of work:

- customs-tariff and nontariff regulation;
- customs administration;
- technical regulation;
- sanitary, veterinary, and phytosanitary measures;
- enrollment and distribution of import customs duties;
- establishment of trade regimes in relation to third countries;
- statistics of foreign and mutual trade;
- macroeconomic policy;
- industrial and agricultural subsidies;
- energy policy;
- natural monopolies;
- state and (or) municipal purchases;
- mutual trade in services and investments;
- transport and transportation;
- monetary policy;
- protection of and defending intellectual activity and means of individualization of goods, works, and services;
- work migration;
- financial markets (banking, insurance, foreign exchange market, securities market), etc.²⁶

Members of the Board interacted with the autho-rized bodies of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation within the framework of their activities. Their work itself was carried out in the mode of con-stant dialogue with key partners at the interstate level. To this end, advisory committees were created for the main areas of activity (trade, technical regulation, tax policy, transport, etc.). The Committees included employees of the EEC and representatives of the authorized bodies of the States Parties to the Treaty. The second level of dialogue is various forms of work

with business representatives from Belarus, Kazakh- stan, and the Russian Federation.

The composition of the Board and the EEC was approved and started working on February 1, 2012, and already on June 15, 2012, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the EEC and the Belarusian–Kazakhstan–Russian Business Dialogue, which includes the Confederation of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Belarus, the National Economic Chamber of Kazakhstan, and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.²⁷

By the beginning of October 2012, 31 technical reg-ulations of the Customs Union were adopted, which determined the safety requirements for products cir-culating in the common customs territory—machinery and equipment, fuel, perfumery and cosmetic prod-ucts, light and food industry products, etc. On July 16, 2012, the EEC Council approved a new edition of the Commodity Nomenclature for Foreign Economic Activity and the Common Customs Tariff of the cus-toms Union.²⁸

The completion of the first four years of the EEC's activity coincided with the end of the year of the Eur-asian Economic Union's functioning. The processes that took place at that time as part of the integration efforts in the post-Soviet space, undoubtedly, had no analogues for the entire period after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over these few years, the activities of the Eurasian Economic Commission itself have taken shape. To accelerate the integration processes in the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space, serious work has been done to remove barriers in trade, technical regulation, customs administration, etc. As a result, from January 1, 2015, the EAEU began to operate, which marked the beginning of the transi-tion to a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor and the formation and implementation of a coordinated policy of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union in transport, industry, agro-industrial complex, etc.

In 2015, a single market for services was launched in the EAEU, a single market for medicines and med-ical devices was being formed. Armenia and Kyrgyz- stan joined the union.

The EAEU has established trade and economic relations with China, India, Vietnam, Iran, Egypt, Israel, and Latin American countries.²⁹

The governing bodies of the Eurasian Economic Integration have also been formed in the person of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, which includes the heads of government of the five EAEU

²⁵Before that he served as Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation (1998–2004), Minister of Industry and Energy (2004–2008), and Minister of Industry and Trade of the Rus-sian Federation (2008–2011).

²⁶Eurasian Economic Union. "Architecture of the Future," pp. 19–29.

²⁷Ibid., p. 55.

²⁸Ibid., p. 71.

²⁹*Expanding the Space of Possibilities: Report of the Eurasian Eco-nomic Commission, 2012–2015*, pp. 10–11, Eurasian Economic Commission. [http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Docu-ments/EEC_ar2015_preview.pdf](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Documents/EEC_ar2015_preview.pdf). Cited May 9, 2021.

countries, members of the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission in the rank of vice-premiers of the governments of the EAEU countries, and the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission. The apparatus of the Board itself already included 23 departments of the EEC, which in their activities rely on the expert work of a number of advisory committees in certain areas of the economic bloc, the social sphere, etc.³⁰

As we have already noted, from the very first steps of its activity, the EEC has actively developed bilateral relations with partners interested in creating free trade zones with the EAEU countries. The result of this work was the signing in 2015 of the FTA Agreement with Vietnam. Joint research groups worked to study the prospects for such agreements with Israel, India, and Egypt. Also in 2015 Memorandums of relations between the EEC and the governments of Chile, Peru, and Mongolia were signed and a dialogue was established with the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Association of Southeast Asia (ACEAN).

In 2013, the EEC received observer status in UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.³¹

In 2014, the balance of foreign trade in the EAEU as a whole amounted to over \$56 billion (11th place in the world), and in terms of foreign investment, the Union ranked 6th in the world. The value of the volumes of mutual trade for 2010–2014 increased by more than 60%, and convergence was also observed—the convergence of GDP per capita.³²

Since February 1, 2016, under the leadership of the new Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission T.S. Sargsyan,³³ a new composition of the EEC Board began to work. It was approved in December 2015 at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council by the presidents of the EAEU countries. According to the decision of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, from now on, each state of the Union was represented not by two members (ministers) of the EEC Board, but by three. Since February 1, 2016, the total number of members of the board has been ten people.

Eight out of ten new EEC Ministers have previously held ministerial posts. A new person in the Board, in addition to its chairman, was V.O. Nikishina (Russian Federation), who took the chair of the Minister for Trade. A new position has also appeared in the

structure of the Collegium, the Member of the Collegium (Minister) for Internal Markets, Informatization, and Information and Communication Technologies. This post was taken by K.A. Minasyan (Republic of Armenia).³⁴

In his interview with the Mir TV channel in December 2016, T.S. Sargsyan spoke about the results of the work of the Eurasian Economic Commission for the first year of his activity as the Chairman of the EEC Board:

On the initiative of N.A. Nazarbayev in 2016, the establishment of trade and economic relations of the EEC with third countries and international integration associations has become one of the priorities in the activities of the EEC.³⁵

About 40 countries and associations approached the EEC with a proposal to establish such links and start negotiations on establishing free trade agreements. Relevant negotiations were conducted with India, Egypt, Iran, and a number of other countries.³⁶ An important area in the activities of the EEC has also become the work to reduce and eliminate barriers and exemptions from trade relations between the EAEU countries. An initiative was put forward to record all remaining restrictions, barriers, and exemptions in a special register, the so-called “White Paper,” in order to intensify this area of EEC activity. In this document, at the end of 2016, there were about 300 such restrictions.³⁷ T.S. Sargsyan recalled that, in 2016, work was also completed on the Customs Code, a fundamental document second in importance after the Treaty on the Establishment of the EAEU itself.³⁸

The code itself came into force on January 1, 2018. As T.S. Sargsyan noted, “in order to ensure the effectiveness of its application, we adopted [in 2017—*E.P.*] more than twenty decisions that accompany the Code and clarify its provisions.”³⁹

In May 2017, the Eurasian Economic Commission approved the common market for medicines and medical devices of the EAEU member countries.

To make it work, a lot of work has been done to create the necessary legal framework. And today the

³⁴The new composition of the Board of the EEC has begun work, Eurasian Economic Commission, Feb. 1 (2016). <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/31-01-2016-1.aspx>. Cited May 10, 2021.

³⁵Exclusive interview of the Head of the EEC Tigran Sargsyan with the MIR TV channel, Mir-24 TV channel, Dec. 8 (2016). <https://mir24.tv/news/15422294/eksklyuzivnoe-intervyu-glavy-eek-tigrana-sarkisyana-telekanalu-mir>. Cited May 10, 2021.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Alekseev, N., (2018) Chairman of the EEC Board Tigran Sargsyan: All barriers in the EAEC must be eliminated, *Soyuznoe Veche: Newspaper of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia*, Jan. 9 (2018). <https://www.souzveche.ru/articles/politics/40457/>. Cited May 2, 2021.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 36–37.

³¹Ibid., p. 53.

³²Ibid., p. 54.

³³T.S. Sargsyan, who headed the EEC Board, had extensive experience in working in the most responsible positions of the Republic of Armenia. He led the work of the Central Bank of Armenia in the years 1998–2008, and from 2008 to 2014 he was Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

Commission is determined to ensure that all the decisions taken come into force in full.⁴⁰

In 2017, the implementation of the Digital Transformation Program in the EAEU began to be carried out as part of individual projects. The main directions for the implementation of digital policy until 2025 were approved. One of the first such projects was the goods traceability system, and in connection with the entry into force of the Customs Code of the EAEU, many processes began to be transferred to electronic form.⁴¹

May 2019 marked the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the EAEU. The anniversary summit of the heads of state of the Eurasian Economic Union, timed to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Union Treaty, was held. In one of the anniversary interviews, the Chairman of the EEC Board pointed out that the main result of the Union's activities is that

...integration took place. The union is working. The common labor market is functioning successfully, and the freedom of movement of labor has been ensured. Citizens of the Member States have the opportunity to work freely in any country of the EAEU without additional permits. Their diplomas are mutually recognized in most areas, with the exception of some specialties, like "pharmaceuticals," "medicine," "jurisprudence," and "pedagogy" There is a common market for goods, as well as a market for services for 49 sectors of the economy. Freedom of movement of investments is ensured. The capital market is at the stage of formation.... Common markets for medicines and medical devices have been created, and 47 technical regulations have been adopted that ensure the safety of goods on the single union market.⁴²

The trade turnover between the EAEU countries also increased. Mutual trade grew by 27.4% in 2017 and by another 9.2% in 2018.⁴³ Cooperation with other countries and regional associations continued to develop successfully. The FTA with Vietnam, which has been in full operation since 2016, contributed to the fact that the trade turnover of this country with the EAEU grew by 36.7% in 2017, and by another 12.8% in 2018. In May 2018, the EAEU signed two new trade agreements: with Iran and China. The volume of trade turnover between the EAEU countries and China increased by 22.9% in 2018, and the volume of exports to China from the EAEU increased by 39%.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Tigran Sargsyan: Armenia's accession to the EAEU gave a positive impetus to its eEconomic Growth, Eurasian Economic Commission, Aug. 2 (2019). <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/02-08-2019-1-int.aspx>. Cited May 2, 2021.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Interest in more intensive relations was shown by Moldova, which was the first to receive the status of an observer country in the Eurasian Economic Union.⁴⁵ At the same time, we should not forget about the problems of "under-integration": barriers, restrictions, and exemptions in mutual trade. According to the White Paper prepared by the EEC, several dozen such problematic points were identified in trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU countries. In order to remove them and not create new ones, according to T.S. Sargsyan, the members of the Eurasian Economic Union had to agree on national political courses and harmonize the national legislation of the EAEU countries.

An important step towards deepening Eurasian integration could be major Eurasian projects involving the participation of the entire Union as a whole. According to T.S. Sargsyan, the EEC has identified over 100 such projects and is developing 12 technological platforms that could attract the EAEU business community for their implementation. As examples of such integration efforts, T.S. Sargsyan led the formation of the Lighting Complex of the EAEU countries, the "Digital Office" for the transformation of technologies and services of the EAEU, the Eurasian Jewelry Complex with the Eurasian standard in this area, etc.⁴⁶

The first Plenary Session of the XIV EDB International Conference, held on November 29, 2019, in Moscow, was devoted to the topic "Challenges and Opportunities for Integration in the Eurasian Space." As at previous similar meetings, one of the main speakers was the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission T.S. Sargsyan. He urged those present to direct their efforts towards creating world-class brands for the EAEU, and, based on the priorities of the member countries of the Union, in this case, each country could oversee and promote one priority project or another for all EAEU countries.

Proposals were also put forward to create supranational Eurasian campaigns in the future on the scale of the entire Eurasian Economic Union. It should also, emphasized T.S. Sargsyan, consider the issue of regulatory instruments to accelerate the implementation of pilot projects for the business community of the Eurasian Economic Union. All these proposals were positively received by the participants of the discussion, who noted the great role of this composition of the EEC, headed by the Chairman of the Board, in promoting integration processes in the EAEU, and expressed gratitude for the work on the eve of the end of the mandate and the change in the composition of the Board in February 2020 [Pivovar, 2021].

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Eurasian economic integration: XIII Annual International Conference, Moscow, November 22, 2018, Eurasian Development Bank. <https://eabr.org/press/conference/xiii-mezhdunarodnaya-konferentsiya-po-voprosam-evraziyskoy-integratsii/>. Cited December 25, 2020.

On March 12, 2020, the next International Economic Forum of the CIS Member States “CIS + World” opened. At the plenary session of the Forum, the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission M.V. Myasnikovich, who headed the EEC Board in February 2020, gave an address.⁴⁷ In his speech, he announced the plans set by the new composition of the EEC Board.

First of all, it is necessary to support the Eurasian industrial business through the priority formation of the production of high tech redevelopment, as well as increasing the competitiveness of the existing industrial base.⁴⁸

In addition, M.V. Myasnikovich said that the task is to bring the share of the manufacturing industry to 25% of GDP (in 2018 it was only 12.9%, and in 2019, 13%)⁴⁹ and to create Eurasian transnational corporations.

An infrastructure platform that includes all types of transport and the fuel and energy complex should become the effective supporting framework of the EAEU. The countries of the Union, noted M.V. Myasnikovich, had proposed more than thirty projects for the creation and improvement of infrastructure facilities with integration potential.⁵⁰

On December 4, 2020, the First Eurasian Congress organized by the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) began its work in Moscow [Pivovarov, 2021]. Welcoming its participants, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation M.V. Mishustin emphasized that

The Eurasian Union must reach a new level of development. It is obvious that it is necessary to continue the course towards strengthening the single market, where goods, services, capital, and the labor force move more and more freely and, at the same time, create a single digital space of the five countries. This means that the fifth freedom must be added to the four freedoms—the movement of informatization.⁵¹

During the work of the Congress, a number of large-scale integration projects of the EAEU were discussed, the integrator of which was to be the EDB. As we have already noted in an article devoted to the activities of the EDB, the Bank has established a Digital Initiatives Fund designed to stimulate and develop Eurasian digital integration.

⁴⁷Earlier, M.V. Myasnikovich served as Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus.

⁴⁸Myasnikovich, M., Strategic documents of the EAEU and the CIS complementary, Eurasian Economic Commission, Mar. 13 (2020). <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/13-03-2020-1.aspx>. Cited May 2, 2021.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹At the session of the First Eurasian Congress, they discussed “end-to-end” integration projects together with VEB.RF, *Izvestia*, Dec. 4 (2020). <https://iz.ru/1095985/2020-12-04/na-sessii-pervogo-evraziiskogo-kongressa-obsudili-skvoznye-integratsionnye-proekty-sovmestno-s-vebrf>. Cited December 28, 2020.

Industrial cooperation has become one of the priorities for 2021 in the EAEU. The EEC intended to achieve the goals set by developing a map of the industrialization of the EAEU, designed to stimulate investment and cooperation of the member countries of the Union in industrial production. As noted by the Director of the EEC Industrial Policy Department N.G. Kushnarev,

in 2020, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic had a strong negative impact on all sectors of the economy of the Union countries, including industry. As a result, industrial production in the EAEU as a whole decreased in January–November 2020 by 2.8%.⁵²

The growth of industrial production during this period was recorded in ten industries; the highest growth rates were noted in the pharmaceutical industry (21.1%), the production of textiles (11.3%), the chemical industry (5.4%), and the production of machinery and equipment (3.7%).⁵³

The EEC took a number of measures aimed at quickly responding to the spread of the infection. Thus, the pharmaceutical industry turned out to be the only industry in which an increase in production volumes was observed in all EAEU states: in Armenia by 26.9%, in Belarus by 10.6%, in Kazakhstan by 39.7%, in Kyrgyzstan by 2.3 times, and in Russia by 21.1%.⁵⁴ Within the framework of the Union, duty-free imports of a wide range of personal protective equipment, disinfectants, medical products, food products, and agricultural products have been expanded.⁵⁵

The information base for the work of the business of the EAEU states in the field of import substitution, which was called the “Map of Industrialization of the EAEU,” contains projects in 20 industries, construction, and energy, and its import-substituting potential is indicated in 30 industries.⁵⁶ Among such projects are the project of Karaket Stone Casting Plant CJSC (Armenia) for the needs of the mining industry and transport, the construction of an aircraft repair plant in Belarus, a project for the assembly of city shuttle buses in Kyrgyzstan, a project for the production of an all-terrain truck crane at the Galich Truck Crane Plant (Russia), etc.⁵⁷ Within the framework of cooperation between the EEC and the Eurasian Development Bank, more than 20 cooperation projects were proposed in metallurgy, pharmaceuticals, lighting

⁵²Kushnarev, N., In 2021, the EAEU Will Bet on Integration in the Field of High Technologies, Eurasian Economic Commission, Feb. 2 (2021). <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/speech/nikolaj-kushnarev-v-2021-godu-eaes-sdelaet-stavku-na-integratsiyu-v-sfere-vysokih-tehnologij/>. Cited May 21, 2021.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

engineering, chemistry, light industry, and the agro-industrial complex.⁵⁸

In 2021, the primary focus is on cooperation in space, biotechnology, nanoindustry, photonics, modern component base, information and communication technologies, ecology, and new technologies for the extraction and processing of natural resources.⁵⁹

In February 2021, the first meeting of the heads of government of the EAEU this year was held in Almaty. The focus was on protective measures in the field of the economy of the Union countries, and the Eurasian Economic Commission was instructed to develop them within the framework of the necessary cooperation of the Union members in these conditions in the face of external challenges.⁶⁰

The EAEU Forum was also held in Kazakhstan, at the plenary session of which the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation M.V. Mishustin spoke.

The governments of the five countries had to make difficult decisions to close borders, enterprises, and social and educational institutions, to introduce a regime of self-isolation, to limit movement and contacts between people.... In the conditions of self-isolation, it is digital solutions that have become the connecting link of society.... We have a whole line of digital services that meet the needs of the modern individual.... The pandemic has not only accelerated digital transformation, but has also exacerbated the strategic challenges and threats associated with it. Countries that do not have their own digital platforms run the risk of becoming informationally, politically and economically dependent on other people's digital solutions. The Eurasian Union should give our states... the opportunity... to develop their own common digital platforms, influence its creation, and, of course, preserve national sovereignty.... [T]he threat to our economies and sovereignties is not shared digital platforms and systems but their absence.⁶¹

Further M.V. Mishustin drew attention to real achievements in the digital agenda of the EAEU. These are the applications "I travel without COVID-19" and "Work in the EAEU." The latter service helps with finding a job in the EAEU states.⁶²

Back in March 2020, by order of the Chairman of the EEC Board, the Scientific and Technical Council

was established as an advisory body of the Commission on Scientific and Technical Development of the EAEU. The Presidium of the Council included members of the Board (Ministers) of the EEC and two representatives from each of the Member States: from the leadership of national academies of sciences and ministries in the field of education and science.⁶³ On February 17, 2021, the second meeting of the Presidium of the Scientific and Technical Council was held at the EEC headquarters, at which it was proposed to develop an international agreement on scientific and technical cooperation in the EAEU.⁶⁴

As emphasized at the meeting by the Chairman of the EEC Board M.V. Myasnikovich, the Commission attaches great importance to interaction with the scientific community.

We in the Collegium hope that our council will be able to generate innovative ideas and cooperation projects. We are faced with the task of promoting the maximum self-sufficiency of the Union.⁶⁵

The Chairman of the EEC Board suggested using science to create a kind of "cementing centers" of Eurasian integration.⁶⁶

Minister for Integration and Macroeconomics of the EEC, Deputy Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Council S.Yu. Glazyev described those areas of the EAEU Strategy 2025, in the implementation of which the Commission especially needs the help of the scientific community.

Minister for Industry and the Agro-Industrial Complex of the EEC, Member of the Presidium of the Scientific and Technical Council A.K. Kamalyan proposed to create an educational platform in the field of academic mobility.⁶⁷

Minister for Internal Markets, Informatization, and Information and Communication Technologies of the EEC, and Member of the Presidium of the Scientific–Technological Counsel G.L. Vardanyan put forward the idea of stimulating the integration association through the conclusion of an agreement on the circulation of data, as well as through the attachment of regulatory "sandboxes," which will remove the excessive regulatory burden from the integration processes in the field of Information and Communications Technology and accelerate the processes of digitalization.⁶⁸

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Kryuchkova, E., The EAEU is ready for growth and defense: A meeting of the intergovernmental council of the "five" countries was held in Almaty, *Kommersant*, Feb. 6 (2021), p. 2. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4680874>. Cited May 21, 2021.

⁶¹Mikhail Mishustin took part in the work of the International Forum "Digital Future of the Global Economy," Government of Russia, Feb. 5 (2021). <http://government.ru/news/41467/>. Cited July 2, 2021.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³The scientific and technical council under the chairman of the board was created in the EEC, Eurasian Economic Commission, Sept. 10 (2020). <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/10-09-2020-1.aspx>. Cited July 3, 2021.

⁶⁴The EAEU proposed to develop an international agreement on scientific and technical cooperation, Eurasian Economic Commission, Feb. 17 (2021). <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/17-02-2021-5.aspx>. Cited July 3, 2021.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

The idea of concluding an Agreement on scientific and technical cooperation in the EAEU was unanimously supported by the representatives of the National Academies of Sciences of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan participating in the meeting.⁶⁹

Digital sovereignty and the digital agenda of the EAEU are currently in the focus of attention of the Eurasian Economic Commission, since this digital agenda itself could become one of the main incentives for Eurasian integration. According to the EAEU Strategy, the priority areas of the Union's digital agenda are the following:

- digital transformation of economic sectors and cross-industry transformation;
- digital transformation of management processes and integration processes;
- digital transformation of markets for goods, services, capital and labor resources;
- development of digital infrastructure and ensuring the security of digital processes.⁷⁰

As T.S. Sargsyan noted,

[I]t is necessary to structure common interests in the field of digitalization in the format of separate and self-sufficient roadmaps for industries and areas: energy, transport, logistics, industry, trade, customs, and agriculture. Each roadmap will be a digitalization program for a separate comparative advantage of our countries and the entire association [Sarkisyan, 2021, p. 148].

April 29–30, 2021, a regular meeting of the Intergovernmental Council of the EAEU was held in Kazan. The heads of government considered 12 agenda items, including the development of industrial cooperation and coordination of measures to regulate mutual trade. The volume of mutual trade between the EAEU member states in January–February 2021 amounted to \$9 billion or 106.8% compared to January–February 2020. In the commodity structure of mutual trade, the largest share was made up of mineral products (26.1%); machinery and equipment, as well as vehicles, 18.2%; food and agricultural raw materials, 17%; metals and metal products, 13.3%; and products of the chemical industry, 11.4%.⁷¹

The meeting approved the “Main Directions of Industrial Cooperation until 2025,” which is considered the first results and prospects for cooperation in the provision of space and geoinformation services

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Proposals for the formation of the digital space of the Eurasian Economic Union (draft), p. 5, Eurasian Economic Commission. <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/dmi/workgroup/materials/Documents/Proposals%20on%20shaping%20digital%20space.pdf>. Cited July 17, 2021.

⁷¹Smirnova, I., Mobilization rate: The Intergovernmental Council of the EAEU approved new directions for development, Portal Eurasia-Expert, May 4 (2021). <https://eurasia.expert/mezhpravsovet-caes-utverdil-novye-napravleniya-razvitiya/>. Cited July 17, 2021.

based on remote sensing data for the period 2021–2025. The program includes the production of 4–5 new spacecraft and provides for up to 5% of the total world remote sensing market for the EAEU; the volume of sales of remote sensing products will be provided by expanding the markets of South America, Africa, and the Middle East.⁷²

The next month (May 21, 2021), under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.Zh. Tokayev, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (SEEC) was held in the format of a videoconference with the participation of the heads of state of the EAEU, the honorary chairman of the SEEC, the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Cuba M. Diaz-Canel Bermudez, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, Chairman of the EEC Board M.V. Myasnikovich, and Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee S.N. Lebedev.

The Heads of State of the EAEU reported on the implementation of the instructions of the Supreme Council dated December 11, 2020, to agree on approaches to pricing in the EAEU common gas market and the tariff for gas transportation to third countries. The draft agreement on the common gas market developed by the Russian Federation was submitted by the EEC at the end of April 2021 for approval. The signing of the final document is planned for 2022, with the entry into force of the common gas market no later than January 1, 2025. The EEC has prepared a plan and schedule for agreeing on this document.

The Supreme Council approved the main guidelines of macroeconomic policy for 2021–2022, a list of measures aimed at unifying the EAEU legislation in the areas of testing varieties and seed production of agricultural plants, considered the report of the Eurasian Economic Commission on the state of competition and measures to suppress the general rules of competition, and decided to develop a plan of measures until 2024 to increase the level of provision of the EAEU countries with strategically important drugs. The Heads of State signed an agreement on joint activities for the transfer and distribution of import customs duties and their transfer to the budgets of the Union Member States.⁷³

The Supreme Council appointed new members of the EEC Board from the Kyrgyz Republic, M.S. Mamytkanov as Minister for Customs Cooperation and T.I. Asanbekov as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council on May 21, 2021, Eurasian Economic Commission. <https://eec.eaeu-union.org/news/zasedanie-vysshego-evrazijskogo-ekonomicheskogo-soveta-ot-21-maya-2021/>. Cited July 4, 2021.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Table 1. The main socio-economic indicators of the EAEU

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Resident population at the end (thousand people)	183318.7	183715.4	183960.3	184273.9	184000.4
GDP, billion dollars US	1481.9	1815.3	1920.7	1956.4	1738.3
Industrial production (billion dollars)	889.6	1137.9	1254.0	1226.9	1042.8
Agricultural product (billion dollars)	99.6	114.4	112.7	118.1	114.4
Investments in fixed assets (billion dollars)	255.3	315.6	332.1	348.5	323.6
mutual trade (billion dollars)	43.0	54.7	60.3	61.6	54.9

Source: *Eurasian Economic Union in Numbers: Collection of Brief Statistics*, Moscow: Eurasian Economic Commission, 2021, p. 188 [in Russian].

Describing the results of the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, Chairman of the EEC Board M.V. Myasnikovich noted that the participants made proposals regarding the expansion of integration, voiced new ideas and proposals for strengthening the financial market of the EAEU, providing medicines and substances for their production, developing seed production, and minimizing imports in this area, thus further removing barriers and obstacles in the domestic market. He stressed that, at the beginning of 2020, there were 70 obstacles left, of which 19 were barriers. During the course of the year, the number of obstacles to trade was reduced to 58, and barriers, to 12, and rather sensitive positions were removed that hindered the movement of goods in the EAEU space. The largest number of trade barriers was, according to M.V. Myasnikovich, eliminated by the Russian Federation (seven out of all available). Armenia removed two barriers, and Belarus, one. One was eliminated by all member states of the Union, and one, by four countries.⁷⁵

As M.V. Myasnikovich emphasized, the EEC Council also created a High-Level Committee for the accelerated resolution of problematic issues in the field of movement of goods.⁷⁶

The main socioeconomic indicators of the development of the Eurasian Economic Union for 2016–2020 shown in Table 1. They also testify to the difficult situation in which the Eurasian Economic Commission has had to and still has to act today. The above data show that the growth dynamics observed at the initial stage of the functioning of the EAEU was replaced by a certain slowdown, which was especially evident in recent years and was primarily due to the consequences of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, one cannot fail to recognize certain successes of Eurasian integration. In a statement on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union,

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

Chairman of the EEC Board M.V. Myasnikovich noted that

[T]hanks to the consistent work to implement the provisions of the Treaty... the single market of goods is successfully functioning in the EAEU.... Significant progress has been made in the formation of the services market, which already covers 53 sectors. A unified Customs Code and the Pharmacopoeia of the Union have been adopted. Freedom of movement and social guarantees for workers are ensured, and in January 2021, the Pension Agreement came into force. There are 49 technical regulations and more than 12000 international standards, thanks to which ... 85% of goods are certified according to uniform technical standards.... Over the first five years... the GDP of the Eurasian Economic Union increased by 21%.... Industrial production increased by 13.2%.... The volume of mutual trade of the EAEU states over the same period increased by 27.7%.⁷⁷

The Eurasian Economic Commission has also achieved important results in its international activities. By the beginning of 2021, the EEC signed 14 memorandums of cooperation and mutual understanding with the governments of third countries and nine memorandums with regional integration associations. Three states received observer status with the EAEU (Moldova, Cuba, and Uzbekistan), and the Union concluded trade agreements with five countries (Vietnam, Iran, China, Singapore, and Serbia).⁷⁸ As emphasized in his speech at the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in May 2021, Putin stated that it is necessary to continue work on concluding agreements on cooperation between the EAEU and India, Egypt, Israel, Indonesia, and Mongolia on the formation of

⁷⁷Seven years of the EAEU Treaty, Internet portal of the CIS, June 1 (2021). <https://e-cis.info/news/566/92483/>. Cited July 4, 2020.

⁷⁸Ibid.

a “great Eurasian partnership in the field of security and economic and humanitarian areas.”⁷⁹

Eurasian integration within the EAEU is only gaining momentum; a development plan has been adopted for the next five years and for the long term. At the same time, the Eurasian Economic Commission is guided by the ideas of conjugation of the EAEU and the Chinese initiative “One Belt, One Road,” and the construction of a Greater Eurasian Partnership. Socioeconomic integration within the EAEU will contribute to the unification of the efforts of large corporations of the participating countries, their industrial cooperation, and the creation and promotion of new trade routes on world markets from the Baltic Sea to the coast of India, connecting China and the countries of Eurasia, through the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Northern Sea Route. The EEC has every opportunity to implement projects and formats of cooperation both within the Union as a whole and in the format of bilateral relations between the participating countries both in the financial and economic segment of multifaceted cooperation and in the field of humanitarian ties: in education, science, healthcare, tourism, and culture.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he has no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

- Bakhtina, R.G. (2013) “Customs union or World Trade Organization: Development perspective,” in *World Trade Organization and Customs Union: Integration Development Perspective: Proceedings of the 4th International Scientific and Practical Conference of Students, Graduate and Postgraduate Students, Academicians, Practitioners, 2013, May 27*, Saratov: Saratovskii istochnik, pp. 21–25 [in Russian].
- Chufrin, G.I. (2013) *Essays on Eurasian Integration*, Moscow: Ves’ mir [in Russian].
- ⁷⁹Results of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, Eurasian Economic Commission, May 24 (2021). <https://ecc.eaeunion.org/news/itogi-vysshego-evrazijskogo-ekonomicheskogo-soveta/> Cited June 4, 2021.
- Gorbachev, M.V. (2014) The project of the Eurasian Economic Union in the discursive space of the media, *Vestnik Povolzhskogo instituta upravleniya*, No. 5, pp. 31–36.
- Gushchin, A.V., Khanova, I.Ye., Levchenkov, A.S., and Pivovarov, E.I. (2019) Role of Kazakhstan in the processes of Eurasian integration at the turn of 21st century, *Istoriya* **10** (1). <https://history.jes.su/s207987840002549-2-1/>. Cited June 12, 2021.
- Iskakova, Z.D., Kabasheva, N.V., and Esenova, G.Zh. (2014) “About the integration association of members EEU: expectations and implementation mechanisms,” *Mezhdunarodnyi zhurnal prikladnykh i fundamental’nykh issledovaniy*, No. 10, pp. 86–88.
- Maryshev, A.A. (2013) Integration processes in the post-Soviet space in the context of Eurasian perspective, *Candidate’s (Politicalology) Dissertation*, St. Petersburg: Herzen State Pedagogical University [in Russian].
- Pivovarov, E.I. (2021) Eurasian Development Bank: The main directions of financial and expert-analytical activities (2006–2020), *RSUH/RGGU Bulletin*, Ser.: *Eurasian Studies. History. Political Science. International Relations*, No. 3, pp. 10–48. <https://doi.org/10.28995/2686-7648-2021-3-10-48>
- Ratushnyak, E.S. (2014) Establishment of a single economic area within the EAEU, *Candidate’s (Economics) Dissertation*, Moscow: Moscow State Institute of International Relations [in Russian].
- Sarkisyan, T. (2021) Integration as the GOELRO plan for the 21st century, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 3, pp. 136–149 [in Russian].
- Shumskii, N.N. (2019) *Regional Economic Communities of the Post-Soviet States: Institutional-Legal Integration Framework*, Minsk: Belorusskaya nauka [in Russian].
- Smirnova, M.N. (2012) Integration processes in Eurasia: The case of the Eurasian Economic Community and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *Candidate’s (Economics) Dissertation*, St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University [in Russian].
- Stolbovskaya, A.G. (2015) The results of the Eurasian Economic Community activities, *Molodoi uchenyi*, No. 10, pp. 806–809.
- Yurgens, A.A. (2015) Financial and economic integration of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, *Candidate’s (Economics) Dissertation*, Moscow: Moscow State University [in Russian].
- Ziyadullaev, N.S. (2015) Formation of the Eurasian Economic Union: The risks and chances in the period of turbulence, *Russian Foreign Economic Journal*, No. 5, pp. 3–18 [in Russian].