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Genesis of the Eurasian Idea and Eurasian Practice in the Republic of Kazakhstan

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Abstract. The idea of creating the Eurasian Union belongs to the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Until 2011, this initiative was popular in the academic and expert community of Kazakhstan. There has been a groundswell of support. It was partially embodied in the foundation of such regional organizations as the Eurasian Economic Community, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Astana has lost leadership in promoting Eurasian integration since 2011. Although Kazakhstan is an active participant in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the initiative is gradually being transferred to the Russian Federation. This article is devoted to the analysis of the genesis of the Eurasian idea and Eurasian practice in Kazakhstan, highlighting the qualitative stages in the dissemination of the ideas of Eurasianism and Eurasian integration in Kazakhstan. Comparative analysis, event analysis, political monitoring and process of tracking were used in the article. The authors conclude that the ideological content of Eurasianism in Kazakhstan has undergone a certain genesis and has almost exhausted itself at this stage. Kazakhstan has now taken a stand on rigid economic determinism in the implementation of the EAEU project and has moved away from the broad set of tasks of Eurasian integration, as originally presented by N. Nazarbayev. This is largely due to the internal political development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the changes in the ethnic composition of the population, the arrival of a new generation of managers, the beginning of a new stage in the formation of a national state and nation-building, which are reflected in new conceptual documents and national programs. At the same time, it was Eurasianism that corresponded to the specifics of Kazakhstani society and contributed to interethnic interaction and harmony, just as at this stage, Eurasian integration helps to preserve Kazakhstan's sovereignty and strengthen its position in the system of global economic relations. However, there is a significant conceptual and semantic gap in understanding the essence of Eurasianism and the current practice of building a sustainable Eurasian integration core, an active participant of which Kazakhstan could become.

Key words: Eurasianism, Eurasian idea, Eurasian integration, Eurasian Economic Union, Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev

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Генезис евразийской идеи и евразийской практики в Республике Казахстан

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Аннотация. Идея создания Евразийского союза принадлежит первому президенту Республики Казахстан Нурсултану Назарбаеву. До 2011 г. данная инициатива была популярна в академической и экспертной среде Республики Казахстан (РК) и пользовалась широкой общественной поддержкой. Частично она нашла воплощение в создании таких региональных организаций, как Евразийское экономическое сообщество (ЕврАзЭС), Шанхайская организация сотрудничества (ШОС) и Организация договора о коллективной безопасности (ОДКБ). С 2011 г. Астана утратила лидерство в продвижении евразийской интеграции, и хотя Казахстан является активным участником Евразийского экономического союза (ЕАЭС), инициатива постепенно перешла к Российской Федерации. Статья посвящена анализу генезиса евразийской идеи и евразийской практики в РК, выделению качественных этапов в распространении идей евразийства и евразийской интеграции в этом государстве. Используются методы сравнительного анализа, ивент-анализа, политического мониторинга и отслеживания процессов. Авторы приходят к выводу, что идейное наполнение евразийства в РК прошло определенный генезис и практически исчерпало себя на данном этапе. В настоящее время Казахстан занял позицию жесткого экономического детерминизма в реализации проекта ЕАЭС и отошел от широкого комплекса задач евразийской интеграции в том виде, в каком их первоначально сформулировал Н. Назарбаев. Во многом это обусловлено внутривнутриполитическим развитием РК, изменением этнического состава населения, приходом нового поколения управленцев, а также началом нового этапа формирования национального государства и нациестроительства, что нашло отражение в новых концептуальных документах и национальных программах. При этом именно евразийство отвечало специфике казахстанского общества, способствовало межэтническому взаимодействию и межнациональной гармонии, точно так же как на данном этапе евразийская интеграция способствует сохранению суверенитета Казахстана и укреплению его позиции в системе мировых экономических отношений. Однако присутствует существенный понятийный и смысловой разрыв между пониманием сути евразийства и современной практикой построения устойчивого евразийского интеграционного ядра, активным участником которого мог бы стать Казахстан.

Ключевые слова: евразийство, евразийская идея, евразийская интеграция, Евразийский экономический союз, Республика Казахстан, Нурсултан Назарбаев

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Introduction

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) represents one of the most successful examples of the development of regional integration in the

Eurasian space, as it was created by already independent states that have clear ideas about the trends of global economic development and their place in the system of international economic

relations. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, integration interaction is not halted; on the contrary, it acquires a new dynamic, for example, the share of e-commerce is growing. Meanwhile, further development of the Eurasian Economic Union will depend on the existence of a certain ideology or strategy for the development of Eurasian integration, as well as a sustainable integration core that will set the pace of integration and determine its prospects.

The so-called “Eurasian trio” — Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus, could become such the integration core, since it is these countries that have gone the farthest in the depth of integration within the Eurasian Economic Community (and Russia and Belarus within the Union State), and it is these countries that lead in economic development rates and integration potential. However, in order for this integration nucleus to take shape, not only the political will of the countries’ leaders, which is available, but also broad support for all Eurasian integration initiatives among society, experts and businesses is needed. And herein lies the crucial problem — the lack of a unified definition of the “Eurasian integration,” its goals and objectives, as well as the Eurasian idea and Eurasian ideology.

Each of the “Eurasian trio” states has a different understanding of the Eurasianism and Eurasian integration. Each country has a large number of supporters of deeper integration, as well as a significant number of critics and opponents of greater cooperation. In Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan one can identify ideological and theoretical currents of Eurasianism, which at the same time are seriously disconnected from the practical implementation of Eurasian integration and the principles of the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union (Laruelle, 2015).

The Eurasian Idea in Kazakhstan: Background and Development

The starting point of the Eurasian idea in Kazakhstan is considered to be the speech of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the First President of Kazakhstan delivered on March 29, 1994

at the Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov, where he announced the “Eurasian Union” project for representatives of Russian business, intelligentsia, and the media.¹ Besides, two months earlier, on March 22, 1994, President Nazarbayev had a speech at the Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London, UK), analyzing the post-Soviet integration development trends and argued that there was a necessity to create a new effective union based on an integration “core” with the possible name of the “Euro-Asian Union” (Nazarbayev, 1997, p. 26).

It is generally known that N. Nazarbayev was an opponent of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and he was the first post-Soviet politician who initiated launching. Most experts agree that N. Nazarbayev provided both a political-philosophical and practical basis for the development of the idea of Eurasianism.

The eleven-page project of the Eurasian Union provides an objective analysis of the integration development processes in the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) space and convincingly proves that the new stage of integration is needed, aimed both at economic transformation and a wide range of interaction in the culture, science, education, as well as the territorial integrity, regional security, and launching the common defense zone. The project initiated the launch of the Eurasian Union as the “union of independent equal states, aimed at realizing the national interests of each participating country” and as the association with a “cumulative integration potential” (Nazarbayev, 1997, p. 44). According to N. Nazarbayev, the union should be built around three pillars: common supranational management bodies for the economy, defense, and foreign policy; common economic space (CES); common defense zone (Nazarbayev, 1997, pp. 44—50).

¹ Eurasian Project of Nursultan Nazarbayev // Izvestia [Евразийский проект Нурсултана Назарбаева // Известия]. May 13, 2014. (In Russian). URL: <https://iz.ru/news/570751> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

After the announcement of the Eurasian Union project, President Nazarbayev gave a detailed interview to the Russian “*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*” (“Independent Newspaper”) entitled “*There is no alternative to the Eurasian Union*” and caused a wide discussion among politicians, scientists, and intelligentsia.²

On June 3, 1994, the President of Kazakhstan signed the “Project on the formation of the Eurasian Union of States”. The document was sent to all CIS member states and published in Kazakh and Russian media over the next week. On June 6, 1994, Marat Tazhin, the head of the Information and Analytical Center of the Office of the President of Kazakhstan, and Imangali Tasmagambetov, the assistant to the President of Kazakhstan hosted the press conference at the presidential residence with the aim to give an adequate and detailed assessment of the proposed project.

At the press conference it was emphasized that the Eurasian Union is not an attempt to revive the USSR, as many might interpret it, but the creation of a fundamentally new integration association that will differ from the CIS by having a parliament and direct elections. Mr. Tazhin stated that the totality of the structural and functional characteristics of the Eurasian Union in the defense and economic spheres, as well as in the field of science, culture, and education, allows considering it as a more realistic and progressive project compared to the CIS (Nazarbayev, 1997, p. 52). He also noted that the draft is not final and will change during the public discussion.

Since then, the discussion of the Eurasian idea in Kazakhstan has taken on a qualitatively new dimension. The research works of Russian Eurasian thinkers — Eurasianists of the late 19th — early 20th centuries attracted new interest. The politicians and public figures hosted active discussions on the further development of

the Commonwealth of the Independent States and possible scenarios for the Eurasian project implementation (Golovnin et al., 2016).

The huge Kazakh delegation of politicians and diplomats came to Russia to hold a sensitization campaign. Mr. Tazhin spoke at the “Eurasian Integration prospects” round table that was held in the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Moscow on June 14, 1994. Ambassador Tair Mansurov outlined the essence of the Eurasian Union project at the State Duma hearings in Moscow on July 5, 1994. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Kanat Saudabayev made a special report on the point of Nazarbayev’s Eurasian initiative during the CIS Foreign Ministers Council meeting in Moscow on July 18, 1994. Thus began a new stage of development of the Eurasian idea in Kazakhstan and beyond.

The Eurasian idea was innovative and progressive, but unrealistic at the time, since all the former Soviet republics in the early 1990s “took as much sovereignty as they could swallow.”³

N. Nazarbayev, as a man of wide-ranging thinking and strategic vision, continued to develop the Eurasian idea in his public speeches, numerous articles and printed publications.

On September 19—21, 1994, the International scientific and practical conference titled “Eurasian space: Integration Potential and its Implementation” took place in Almaty. The conference gathered the leading experts, public and government figures, politicians, diplomats, scientists, writers, and publicists from all CIS countries, but participants from Kazakhstan and

² Panfilova V. There Is No Alternative to the Eurasian Union // *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* [Панфилова В. Евразийскому союзу нет альтернативы // Независимая газета]. April 29, 2014. (In Russian). URL: https://www.ng.ru/cis/2014-04-29/6_nazarbaev.html (accessed: 05.10.2021).

³ On August 6, 1990, the head of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Boris Yeltsin, speaking in Kazan, uttered the textbook phrase: “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow,” which marked the beginning of the “parade of sovereignties” of the Union republics. See: Boris Yeltsin: “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow” // Yeltsin Centre [Борис Ельцин: «Берите столько суверенитета, сколько сможете проглотить» // Ельцин Центр]. August 6, 2015. URL: <https://yeltsin.ru/news/boris-elcin-berite-stolko-suverineteta-skolko-smozhete-proglotit/> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

Russia were most of all there. The Russian delegation was the largest and included well-known and authoritative political figures, parliamentarians, leaders of political parties and movements, chief editors of the leading media.

In his speech at the conference, President Nazarbayev once again explained in detail the main provisions of his Eurasian project. He noted that the Eurasian Union “has found a civilized formula for combining national interests with the need for integration on a new basis, first and foremost in the economic sphere.”⁴

The conference’s final resolution proposed several practical steps to strengthen the integration potential of the CIS and implement the Eurasian project of Nazarbayev’s Eurasian project, in particular the creation of an institute for legal support of economic integration; the formation of an international non-governmental fund for Eurasian economic integration; the implementation of the “Eurasia — 21st century” project, and the opening of a Eurasian University.

In his interview to the newspaper “Rossiya” in October 1995, President Nazarbayev gave the theoretical explanation of the definition — *Eurasianism*. The President drew attention to the fact that in Eurasia there are several countries that have not yet defined their belonging to either the East or the West and called this space a “waiting belt.” At the same time, he argued, the future of Europe and especially Asia largely depends on how the countries of this geopolitical belt determine their positions. And, the Eurasian project, according to Nazarbayev, was the constructive force that could bring the region out of the state of geopolitical “waiting.”⁵

⁴ Speech by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev at the conference “Eurasian Space: Integration Potential and Its Implementation” (September 20, 1994) [Выступление Президента Республики Казахстан Н.А. Назарбаева на конференции «Евразийское пространство: интеграционный потенциал и его реализация»] 20 сентября 1994 года // Online.zakon.kz. September 20, 1994. (In Russian). URL: https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30007146#pos=3;-88 (accessed: 05.10.2021).

⁵ Eurasian Idea of the Head of State [Евразийская идея главы государства] // Kazportal. September 23,

Two significant publications were released during that period: the guidebook edited by M. Tazhin “Eurasian space: integration potential and its implementation” (Tazhin, 1994), and N. Nazarbayev’s book “Eurasian Union: Ideas, Practice, Prospects”, which included the President’s articles and speeches on Eurasian integration from 1994 to 1997 (Nazarbayev, 1997) and was published with the support of the Foundation for the Promotion of Social and Political Sciences. It was addressed primarily to the Russian auditorium since at that time the Eurasian idea in Russia was not widely developed. N. Nazarbayev once again noted the need for the rapprochement of the post-Soviet republics in the economic, defensive, environmental, cultural, and information spheres. At the same time, the Kazakh leader stressed that Russia had a special role in the reintegration of the Eurasian space, and it can become its “core” (Nazarbayev, 1997).

The Eurasian space was understood by N. Nazarbayev as the space formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Dugin, 2004). The proposed Eurasian project was to be the basis of a new interstate association, created on the principles of equality and voluntariness and designed to solve two key tasks: “Forming a common economic space and ensuring a joint defense policy.”⁶

In general, it should be stressed that over a five-year period from 1995 to 2000, almost all the most significant integration initiatives in the post-Soviet space came from Kazakhstan and personally from N. Nazarbayev (Mostafa, 2013).

N. Nazarbayev’s statements on the Eurasian integration increased interest in the research works dedicated to the classical Eurasianism.

2015. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.kazportal.kz/evraziyskaya-ideya-glavyi-gosudarstva/> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

⁶ President Nazarbayev on Eurasian Integration. Selected // Eurasian Integration: Economics, Law, Politics [Президент Назарбаев об евразийской интеграции. Избранное // Евразийская интеграция: экономика, право, политика]. 2018. No. 1. P. 109—111. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.eijournal.ru/jour/article/view/149/134> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

Lev Nikolayevich Gumilev became especially popular in Kazakhstan at that time. Some of his works were published in collaboration with his students — K.P. Ivanov and V.Yu. Ermolayev. However, a feature of the spread of the ideas of Eurasianism in Kazakhstan was that scientists and experts who were interested in Gumilev's ideas mainly focused on his concepts of 'ethnos' and 'ethnogenesis,' 'passionarity,' 'complementarity' and paid much more attention to them than to the basics of the Eurasianism, while the works of the founding fathers of Eurasianism were not particularly popular there.

Gumilev's popularity is explained by the fact that the formation of Kazakh Eurasianism coincides in time with the search for a national state model, understanding the history of the Kazakh people and Kazakh statehood, substantiating the foundations of Kazakhstan's foreign policy based on multipolarity.

L.N. Gumilev made a significant scientific contribution to the study of nomadic history and culture. Gumilev's works on the history of the Eurasian peoples ('Ancient Turks,' 'Huns,' 'Discovery of Khazaria,' 'Ethnogenesis and the biosphere of the Earth,' 'Geography of the ethnos in the historical period,' 'Ancient Russia and Great Steppe,' 'Millennium around the Caspian Sea,' etc.) gives the comprehension of the history and origins of the Kazakh people.

"The Origin of the Kazakh Ethnos" by Gumilev analyzed the history of Kazakhs' ancestors: the Huns, Turks, Kipchaks and has a particular significance in this regard. Based on Gumilev's concept, modern Kazakh scientists make up the ethnogenesis of the Kazakh people, prove that the nomadic civilization had its own system of state administration on the vast territory of Eurasia and was tested in the Turkic Khaganate, in the state of the Kipchaks, the Mongol ulus, the Kazakh Khanate. It proves the existence of the integral civilizational process in the Eurasian region, and it proves that Eurasia has a self-sufficient culture and an independent path of historical development.

Another idea of L.N. Gumilev that was in demand in Kazakhstan in the initial period of the independence is the presence of positive complementarity between the representatives of the Russian and steppe super ethnic groups. At the time of the Soviet Union collapsed, ethnic Kazakhs did not constitute an absolute majority of the population. There was an intensive outflow of the Russian and Russian-speaking population from Kazakhstan, and therefore, it was important to find the most effective formula for interaction with Russians within the country and with Russia, as a neighboring state, to minimize risks and achieve interethnic harmony and balance. Gumilev's ideas provided many solutions to these issues.

Gumilev's theoretical heritage corresponded to the main principle of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, which implied the development of friendly and predictable relations with all states, since in his works he did not divide, did not oppose, but rather brought together the peoples of Europe and Asia, the West and the East (Druzhinin, 2021).

That is why L.N. Gumilev's ideas were in demand in Kazakhstan at that time. The Kazakh leaders often quoted him in his books and speeches. On the initiative of Nursultan Nazarbayev on May 23, 1996 the Eurasian National University (ENU) was opened, which was named after Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev. The university hosted the Museum of L.N. Gumilev, which received guests from all over the world. Since 2003, the Eurasian Forum has been held annually based on the Eurasian National University.

The Eurasian idea was partially reflected in the program strategies of Kazakhstan. The President's Address "Kazakhstan — 2030: Prosperity, Security and Ever-growing Welfare of all the Kazakhstanis" states: "We are a Eurasian country with its own history and its own future. Our model will not be like anyone else, and it will absorb the achievements of different civilizations."⁷

⁷ President's Annual Address "Kazakhstan — 2030: Prosperity, Security and Ever-growing Welfare of all the Kazakhstanis" [Казахстан — 2030: Процветание,

Nazarbayev's Eurasian initiative was further developed in the article "Eurasian Economic Union: Theory or Reality" that was published in the Russian newspaper "Izvestia" in March 2009.⁸ The article became a response to the consequences of the global economic crisis and the rationale for the fact that the Eurasian community in the 21st century can become a global factor in world politics and economics.⁹ "Now I am even more firmly convinced that in the long term there is no alternative to Eurasian integration," the President says and identifies three dimensions of the Eurasian space: economic, military-political and cultural-humanitarian.¹⁰

On January 1, 2012, the basic documents package on the Common Economic Space (CES) between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia was put into effect (Borishpolets & Chernyavsky, 2012, pp. 142—143.). In the appropriate article published then, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that he proposed to build integration based on economic pragmatism first: "Economic interests, not abstract geopolitical ideas, and slogans, are the main driver of integration processes." Here he also stated that the Eurasian Union for him is "a union of states based on the principles of equality, respect, sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs."¹¹

безопасность и улучшение благосостояния всех казахстанцев. Послание Президента страны народу Казахстана 1997 года] // Adilet.zan.kz. 1997. (In Russian). URL: https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K970002030_ (accessed: 05.10.2021).

⁸ Nazarbayev N.A. Eurasian Economic Union: theory or reality? // Izvestia. [Назарбаев Н. А. Евразийский экономический союз: теория или реальность? // Известия]. March 19, 2009. (In Russian). URL: <https://centrasia.org/newsA.php?st=1237881900> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ At the Beginning of the Second Decade of the 21st Century, the Idea of Eurasian Integration Acquires Real Features of the Common Economic Space — Nursultan Nazarbayev [В начале второго десятилетия XXI в. идея евразийской интеграции обретает реальные черты Единого экономического пространства — Нурсултан Назарбаев] // Kazinform. October 26, 2011. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.inform.kz/ru/v-nachale-второго-desyatitietiya-hhi-veka-ideya-evraziyskoy-integracii-obretaet-real-nye-cherty-edinogo-ekonomicheskogo->

In 2012, Kazakhstan widely celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of L.N. Gumilev. Dedicated to the outstanding turkologist and historian, and the Eurasianism issues, the large number of events were held, more than twenty monographs within the series "Gumilev's World" and "Questions of Eurasia" were published. A separate issue of the journal "Dialogue of Eurasia," fully dedicated to the works of L.N. Gumilev and the ideas of Eurasianism, was published.

The Eurasian National University acted as the coordinator of all festive events and hosted the IX Eurasian International Scientific Forum: "L.N. Gumilev and modern Eurasian integration," which was the final event of the anniversary year. The forum was attended by over 150 leading experts, scientists, public figures from near and far abroad: Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the USA, France, Ukraine, and other countries. The Kazakh delegation, which included representatives of the ENU, also took an active part in the solemn meeting of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Lev Gumilev in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The 20th anniversary of the Eurasian idea became a certain landmark date in the assessment and development of Nazarbayev's Eurasian project. It is symbolic that it was in the year of the 20th anniversary of the idea of the Eurasian Union that the founding Treaty on the EAEU was signed in Astana. At the signing ceremony of the agreement, President Nazarbayev said: "Kazakhstan has made a historic contribution to the promotion of the Eurasian integration ideas. The Eurasian Economic Community was created here at the beginning of the century. Several important decisions were made that determined the course and dynamics of our integration process. Therefore, it is not unexpected that Astana has become the birthplace of the Eurasian Economic Union."¹²

[prostranstva-nursultan-nazarbaev_a2414670](https://www.prostranstva-nursultan-nazarbaev_a2414670) (accessed: 05.10.2021).

¹² Speech by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Signing Ceremony of the Treaty on the

Tair Mansurov, the authoritative Kazakhstani politician, diplomat, who served as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to Russia noted in his book “Nursultan Nazarbayev’s Eurasian project, brought to life” that “the promotion of Eurasian integration has become the life’s work of the Kazakh leader. He managed to convince Vladimir Putin, Alexander Lukashenko, and other leaders of the post-Soviet states on the effectiveness of his integration ideas, with the participation of which the Eurasian project is now being implemented progressively.”¹³

By the 25th anniversary of the Eurasian idea, many publications in Kazakhstan had been dedicated to Nazarbayev’s initiative to create the Eurasian Union. He was called the author of Eurasian integration, and its ideological inspirer, one of the founders of modern Eurasianism that was adequate to the challenges of the 21st century.¹⁴ Mansurov wrote: “The First President’s outstanding leadership qualities, tireless energy, passionate will created step by step the Eurasian integration, helped to achieve success in creating the Eurasian Economic

Eurasian Economic Union // Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Выступление Президента Казахстана Н. Назарбаева на церемонии подписания Договора о Евразийском экономическом союзе // Президент Республики Казахстан]. May 29, 2014. (In Russian). URL: https://www.akorda.kz/ru/speeches/internal_political_affairs/in_speeches_and_addresses/vystuplenie-prezidenta-kazakhstana-nazarbaeva-na-ceremonii-podpisaniya-dogovora-o-evraziiskom-ekonomicheskom-soyuze (accessed: 05.10.2021).

¹³ See: Eurasian project of Nursultan Nazarbayev. The idea expressed by the President of Kazakhstan is 20 years old. News // Izvestia [Евразийский проект Нурсултана Назарбаева // Известия]. May 13, 2014. (In Russian). URL: <https://iz.ru/news/570751>; Mansurov T. Eurasians of the 21st Century // Eurasian Economic Community [Мансуров Т. Евразийцы XXI века // Евразийское экономическое сообщество]. March 26, 2014. (In Russian). URL: <http://www.evrazes.com/print/smi/79> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

¹⁴ 25 years of the Eurasian project of Nursultan Nazarbayev // Kazakhstanskaya Pravda. [25 лет Евразийскому проекту Нурсултана Назарбаева // Казахстанская правда]. March 26, 2019. (In Russian). URL: <https://kazpravda.kz/articles/view/25-let-evraziiskomu-proektu-nursultana-nazarbaeva> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

Community (EurAsEC), the Customs Union, the Common Economic Space, and the Eurasian Economic Union.”¹⁵

Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KazISS) published a collection of materials entitled “25th anniversary of the Nazarbayev’s Eurasian idea (assessment of the KazISS experts)”. The digest included both Nazarbayev’s articles and the expert assessments of KazISS employees, whose range varies, but in general it is positive.¹⁶

Nazarbayev’s official position largely influenced the practical implementation of the Eurasian idea during the formation of the Eurasian Economic Community and regional associations in the field of security. For example, Nazarbayev was a staunch supporter of the creation of supranational bodies of an integration association, and as a result, the Eurasian Economic Commission was created. Nazarbayev also advocated the creation of a Eurasian security system, and this was partly embodied in the creation of the SCO and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) (Kurylev et al., 2021).

Speaking to students and faculty of the Eurasian National University in 2000, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted: “The Eurasian idea as a theory was born in the last century. But I am sure that the Eurasian Idea as a practical implementation will be embodied in this century. Eurasianism is one of the main ideas of the 21st century.”¹⁷ “Three pillars of the Eurasian idea,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 25 Years of the Idea of Eurasian Integration N.A. Nazarbayev (according to experts of the KazISS under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan). Nursultan : Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2019. (In Russian). [25 лет идеи евразийской интеграции Н.А. Назарбаева (в оценках экспертов КИСИ при Президенте РК). Нур-Султан : Казахстанский институт стратегических исследований при Президенте Республики Казахстан, 2019.]

¹⁷ Nursultan Nazarbayev: “Eurasianism Is One of the Main Ideas of the 21st Century” // Eurasian Integration: Economics, Law, Politics [Нурсултан Назарбаев: «Евразийство — одна из главных идей XXI века» // Евразийская интеграция: экономика, право, политика].

practically implemented at the initiative of Kazakhstan. They are EurAsEC, CICA, and SCO. And these are three different practical expressions of one inexpressible Single Eurasian Idea.”¹⁸

Initially, N. Nazarbayev’s Eurasian idea did not exclude the geopolitical context. He repeatedly said and wrote that there is no alternative to Eurasian integration in the long term; the Eurasian community in the 21st century can become a global factor in the world economy and politics.¹⁹ In 2016, during his speech in Washington²⁰ Nazarbayev put forward the initiative to create a United Eurasian Economic Space. But that idea was not developed (Sultanov, 2017, p. 38).

Some researchers believe that Eurasianism was proposed by the Kazakh president as a “constructive geopolitical doctrine,” which offered a new mechanism for the reintegration of post-Soviet states. “Eurasianism has become one of the fundamental principles of domestic and foreign policy” (Faizova, 2011, p. 42). “Nazarbayev’s Initiative turned Eurasianism from a theoretical and intellectual construct into an effective political institution” (Grebenichenko & Sagindikov, 2015, p. 67). “The concept of Eurasianism and Eurasian policy in Kazakhstan turned into a state ideology, which was reflected in domestic, regional and foreign policy, as well as in the process of regional integration” (Mostafa, 2013, p. 160). Researcher A. Sarieva wrote that “N. Nazarbayev’s idea of Eurasianism is recognized as an important ideological

prerequisite for the development of the countries of the Eurasian region” (Sarieva, 2016, p. 416).

Some Kazakh scholars went even further, putting forward the idea that there is a “Kazakh version of Eurasianism.” “Kazakh Eurasianism is not a dry ideological scheme, but a broad international and inter-civilizational approach” (Marmontova, 2015, p. 25). According to Tair Mansurov, “the idea of ‘practical Eurasianism’ by Nazarbayev has become the basis of many political and economic practices” (Mansurov, 2012, p. 202). However, these are rather debatable statements, since the doctrinal foundations of Eurasianism were not included in any policy document or foreign policy concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan, although they were popular.

Nazarbayev’s position on the development of the Eurasian space in the first twenty years of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan resonated both in the academic environment and in society (Mansurov, 2014). Until 2011, the moment when Russia began to force the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, the theme of Eurasianism, the Eurasian idea was quite relevant in the republic (Sadykova, 2013).

Kazakhstan’s Loss of Leadership in the Implementation of the Eurasian Idea

In autumn of 2011, a new discussion on the Eurasian project began on the pages of the Russian newspaper “Izvestia.” The article by Vladimir Putin “A New Integration Project for Eurasia — a Future that is Born Today” was published first, followed by the articles by Alexander Lukashenko “On the Fate of Our Integration” and Nursultan Nazarbayev “The Eurasian Union: From Idea to History of the Future.”²¹ From that moment on, the Eurasian

2017. No. 2. P. 85—87. (In Russian). URL: <https://www.ejournal.ru/jour/article/view/114/99> (дата обращения: 05.10.2021).

¹⁸ The Main Idea of the Century [Главная идея века] // online.zakon.kz. (In Russian). URL: https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30389723 (accessed: 05.10.2021).

¹⁹ Eurasian Economic Union: Theory or Reality [Евразийский Экономический Союз: теория или реальность] // Izvestia. March 19, 2009. (In Russian).

²⁰ President of Kazakhstan: We Urge to Form the Geography of a Sustainable World [Президент Казахстана: Мы призываем сформировать географию устойчивого мира] // Kazinform. April 1, 2016. (In Russian). URL: <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/2887645/> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

²¹ See: Putin V. A New Integration Project for Eurasia — the Future That Is Born Today // Echo Moskvy [Путин В. Новый интеграционный проект для Евразии — будущее, которое рождается сегодня // Эхо Москвы]. October 4, 2011. (In Russian). URL: <https://echo.msk.ru/blog/statya/817588-echo/> (accessed: 05.10.2021); Lukashenko A. About the Fate of Our Integration [Лукашенко А. О судьбах нашей интеграции] // Izvestia. October 17, 2011. (In Russian). URL:

project received new semantic content and expression in specific initiatives, which, on the one hand, contributed to the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015, on the other, led to the loss of Kazakhstan's initiative (Dyussebekova & Dossymkhan, 2018).

These articles caused a mixed reaction in the Kazakh society, and the publication of the Russian leader on the topic of Eurasian integration had a strong response. It became clear that the initiative to implement the Eurasian project was moving from Kazakhstan to Russia (Laruelle et al., 2019).

To a large extent, this was predetermined by the internal political processes in Kazakhstan. The Eurasian identity (as a civil identity of all Kazakhstanis) or national identity of Kazakhs had not been formed during the first 20 years of the country's independent development. The outflow of the Russians and Russian-speaking population, as well as the implementation of the program for the return of compatriots (oralmans) led to a change in the ethnic composition of the population in favor of ethnic Kazakhs. The task of developing the national state, the revival of the Kazakh nation, the development of the Kazakh language, and the ethnic culture of the Kazakhs began to come to the fore. A sharp discussion unfolded around the draft of the adoption of the Doctrine of National Unity of Kazakhstan (2008—2010).²² The protest of representatives of the Kazakh-speaking intelligentsia was caused by the idea of creating a single Kazakhstani nation based on civic values. They demanded that the state protect the ethnic culture of the Kazakhs from other cultures, as well as protect the sovereignty and independence

of the Republic of Kazakhstan from encroachment by other states.

This impulse was subsequently reflected in the state program "Rukhani Zhangyru," aimed at modernizing the social creation and focusing on the revival of the spiritual values of the Kazakhstani people, taking into account all contemporary risks and challenges of globalization, as well as the preservation of national identity. The program includes several main activities: conversion of the Kazakh language into Latin, "100 new textbooks in the Kazakh language," "100 new faces of Kazakhstan," "Sacral Geography of Kazakhstan" and others.

The internal nation-building processes were also reflected in the implementation of foreign policy and integration initiatives. From that moment on, ideas about sovereignty, the creation and strengthening of the foundations of statehood and the building of a national state began to prevail in the political discourse of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Of course, this process requires a deeper analysis, for example, based on the process tracking method. However, there are no open sources that would allow for such an analysis, and there is no tradition of publication in Kazakhstan, in particular hearings in the Senate or the Majilis, or public discussion of a particular foreign policy initiative.

Kazakhstan took an active part in the formation of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space within the Eurasian Economic Community, but increasingly, Kazakh experts began to emphasize the need for integration exclusively in the economic sphere. Therefore, any Russian initiatives to boost integration develop a political or financial component of integration caused suspicion and even criticism in Kazakhstan (Isaacs et al., 2020).

For example, Russian State Duma's former speaker Sergey Naryshkin's proposal on the formation of a supranational parliament of the Eurasian Union, which he submitted for discussion on September 20, 2012, at the first meeting of the Working Group on the

<https://iz.ru/news/504081> (accessed: 05.10.2021); Nazarbayev N. The Eurasian Union: From Idea to Future History [Назарбаев Н. Евразийский союз: от идеи к истории будущего] // *Izvestia*. October 25, 2011. (In Russian). URL: <https://iz.ru/news/504908> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

²² Doctrine of National Unity of Kazakhstan [Доктрина Национального единства Казахстана] // *Online.zakon.kz*. April 29, 2010. (In Russian). URL: https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30501158&pos=6;-106#pos=6;-106 (accessed: 05.10.2021).

Parliamentary Dimension of Eurasian Economic Integration, caused a sharply negative reaction. The Kazakh participants of the meeting stated that such initiatives cannot be discussed at all, and the existing potential of inter-parliamentary cooperation within the EurAsEC should be enough. Some deputies, national-patriotic leaders in Kazakhstan also reacted very sharply and negatively to Naryshkin's speech.

Yerlan Karin, a renowned Kazakh political scientist, who was the secretary of the ruling Nur Otan party at that time, in his interview following the meeting, stated that, despite attempts to speed up the creation of supranational political structures, there is no agenda for creating a Eurasian parliament. And he emphasized that "the creation of a supranational political structure cannot be discussed by us in principle, since this directly affects the sovereignty of our country."²³ For its part, the newspaper's editorial board added that this is a unique precedent, the first time that Kazakhstan has been able to defend its position.

Most researchers admit that by 2013, Nazarbayev's original project was gradually stripped of such components as supranational macroeconomic control, coordination of defense initiatives, and the idea of a monetary union.²⁴

The idea of Eurasian integration with a trend towards economic determinism is reflected in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014—2020. "Kazakhstan will strengthen the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space in order to create the Eurasian Economic Union, considering the Eurasian economic integration as one of the effective ways to advance the country in the system of world economic relations," the document notes in the Foreign Policy Priorities and Tasks

section.²⁵ And further it is emphasized that, "within this process, such fundamental principles as the inviolability of political sovereignty, the economic feasibility of the decisions taken, the phased approach, pragmatism and mutual benefit, equal representation of the parties in all integration bodies and consensus at all levels of integration interaction will be observed."²⁶ At the same time, the Chinese project of the Silk Road Economic Belt, the American project of the New Silk Road, and association with the EU are also seen as priorities.

Eurasian Practice at the Present Stage of Kazakhstan Development

With the Ukrainian crisis and the political conflict between Russia and the "collective West," the trend that cooperation in the Eurasian space should be primarily economic in nature and should not affect the sovereignty of Kazakhstan has become a leading one in the Kazakh establishment. Even though Russia continued to be referred as a strategic ally, proposals for political integration practically disappeared from the public speeches of the Kazakhstan public officials.

A certain evolution took place in the views of N. Nazarbayev. In August 2014, in an interview with the national TV channel Khabar, he noted that "the EAEU is an exclusively economic union," and, moreover, Kazakhstan always has the right to withdraw from this union in a case of the threat to its independence. "Kazakhstan will not be part of an organization that poses a threat to our independence. Our independence is the highest value for which our ancestors fought. We will never surrender to

²³ Akhmatova Z. And Do Not Dream! [Ахматова З. И не мечтайте!] // *Vremya*. September 19, 2012. (In Russian). URL: <https://time.kz/news/archive/2012/09/19/i-ne-mechtayte!> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

²⁴ Akimbekov S. Needless Rush // *Russia in Global Affairs*. 2014. No. 1 (January/March). URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/needless-rush/> (accessed: 20.11.2020).

²⁵ On the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014-2020. Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 21, 2014, No. 741 [О Концепции внешней политики Республики Казахстан на 2014—2020 годы. Указ Президента Республики Казахстан от 21 января 2014 года № 741] // *Adilet.zan.kz*. January 21, 2014. (In Russian). URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1400000741> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

anyone and will do everything to protect ourselves,” Nazarbayev said²⁷.

On November 11, 2014, Kazakhstan’s president announced a new economic development program “Nurly Zhol” based on the “Nurly Zhol — the Path to the Future” president’s annual address.²⁸ That was an infrastructure development program. The Address’s core point was the reorientation of Kazakhstan’s economic policy in the light of new challenges and threats to the global economy. In this regard, some approaches to achieving economic growth were revised, as well as adjustments were made to development plans for the coming period. The Eurasian idea was not reflected in this program in any way, although it was a time when the Treaty on the Establishment of the EAEU had already been signed.

Since the turn of 2015—2016 the “Eurasian theme” has once again acquired additional facets and impulses. The West increased pressure on Russia in the form of sanctions policy, the competition of transcontinental integration initiatives intensified, and the response to these processes was the initiative of “Greater Eurasia” as a new vector and format of foreign economic and foreign policy cooperation.

For the first time, “Greater Eurasia” was officially announced in 2016 at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum when President Putin outlined the possible contours of future cooperation. Kazakhstan, of course, was interested in developing new formats of cooperation but had its own ideas about how to develop relations with the West and China.

²⁷ Kosenov A. Nazarbayev recalled the right of Kazakhstan to withdraw from the EAEU [Косенов А. Назарбаев напомнил о праве Казахстана на выход из ЕАЭС] // Tengrinews. August 25, 2014. (In Russian). URL: https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/nazarbaev-napomnil-o-prave-kazahstana-na-vyihod-iz-eaes-260719/ (accessed: 05.10.2021).

²⁸ The State Program “Nurly Zhol”: Tasks, Results, Prospects // Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Госпрограмма «Нұрлы жол»: задачи, итоги, перспективы // Премьер-министр Республики Казахстан]. December 28, 2017. (In Russian). URL: <https://primeminister.kz/ru/news/gosprogramma-nurli-zhol-zadachi-itogi-perspektivi-15854> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

In 2018, the National Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025 was adopted.²⁹ It was considered as “the document of the first level of the state planning system and implementation of the long-term Development Strategy of Kazakhstan until 2050.” It was assumed that because of the implementation of this plan, Kazakhstan should overcome the “point of no return” and move to a new development model.

The plan provided for the implementation of ten ‘nationwide’ priorities. Eurasian integration was considered as priority No. 9 “Active development of economic and trade diplomacy.”³⁰ From the wording of this priority, the conclusion follows that Kazakhstan will continue to promote economic interests in the Eurasian Economic Union, along with other integration associations. One of the important tasks is to ensure free access of Kazakhstani goods to the markets of the EAEU countries, the elimination of barriers, exemptions, and restrictions in the internal market of the EAEU. The other is to ensure preferential entry of Kazakhstani exporters to the markets of third countries by concluding agreements on the Free Trade Zone.

At the same time, the document emphasizes that “further development and deepening of areas of interaction within the EAEU, as before, will be considered taking into account national interests and priorities of domestic economic policy based on a pragmatic approach, equality and economic priority.”³¹ Thus, for example, the launch in 2025 of common markets for gas, oil and oil products, energy, and financial markets, requires some preparation on the part of

²⁹ On Approval of the National Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025 and Invalidation of Some Decrees of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Об утверждении Национального плана развития Республики Казахстан до 2025 года и признании утратившими силу некоторых указов Президента Республики Казахстан] // Adilet.zan.kz February 15, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1800000636> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

Kazakhstan and should meet the national interests of the country.³²

The new Foreign Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for 2020—2030, that was approved on March 6, 2020, states that the “Republic of Kazakhstan needs to consolidate the status of a responsible participant in the world community, a key element of the system of geopolitical and geo-economic coordinates of the Eurasian continent, the leading state in the Central Asian region.” At the same time, the idea of Eurasian integration is reflected only in the section “Priorities in the field of regional and multilateral diplomacy” in paragraph 4.3, as the need to continue close cooperation with the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union in the areas established by the Treaty on the EAEU. It is also noted here that to fully take into account the long-term national interests of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to “optimize approaches to conducting the negotiation process within the framework of the EAEU.”³³

Kazakh President’s Annual Addresses in 2020—2021 were entirely devoted to COVID-19 and overcoming the pandemic consequences, as well as the need for the development and consolidation of Kazakhstani society and did not affect the Eurasian project.³⁴

³² On Approval of the National Development Plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025 and Invalidation of Some Decrees of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Об утверждении Национального плана развития Республики Казахстан до 2025 года и признании утратившими силу некоторых указов Президента Республики Казахстан] // Adilet.zan.kz February 15, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1800000636> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

³³ On the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030. Approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 6, 2020 No. 280 // Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan [О Концепции внешней политики Республики Казахстан на 2020—2030 годы. Утверждена Указом Президента Республики Казахстан от 6 марта 2020 года № 280 // Президент Республики Казахстан]. March 9, 2020. (In Russian). URL: https://www.akorda.kz/ru/legal_acts/decrees/o-konceptcii-vneshnei-politiki-respubliki-kazahstan-na-2020-2030-gody (accessed: 05.10.2021).

³⁴ See: National Address of the Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the People of Kazakhstan. September 1,

At the present stage, six years have passed since the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union, but the discussion about the advisability of Kazakhstan’s participation in this international organization continues, as well as the discussion of the opportunities and challenges associated with Kazakhstan’s membership in the EAEU (Shkurkin et al., 2016; Tashtemkhanova et al., 2019).

The difficulty lies in the fact that, firstly, a strong civil society has not been formed in Kazakhstan, and the significance of public opinion is extremely low; secondly, there is no unity in Kazakh society, it is divided into separate competing interest groups and not all groups perceive Eurasian integration in the same way: there are both supporters and outright opponents, who are mainly the national patriots.

In the previous period, the figure of Nazarbayev and his authority played the main consolidating role in maintaining Eurasian integration as one of the main priorities of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. The perception of Nursultan Nazarbayev as the “architect” of Eurasian integration, its main initiator and active supporter, prevailed among foreign researchers, and until recently was actively promoted at the official level, in particular, by the Library of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan — Elbasy (Isaacs et al., 2020). In Kazakhstani historiography, the point of view also prevailed that Kazakhstan and its first president are the founders and ideological inspirers of the

2020 [Послание Главы государства Касым-Жомарта Токаева народу Казахстана. 1 сентября 2020 г.] // President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (In Russian). URL: https://www.akorda.kz/ru/addresses/addresses_of_president/poslanie-glavy-gosudarstva-kasym-zhomarta-tokaeva-narodu-kazahstana-1-sentyabrya-2020-g (accessed: 05.10.2021); National Address of the Head of State to the People of Kazakhstan: The Unity of the People and Systemic Reforms Are a Solid Foundation for the Country’s Prosperity // Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan [Послание Главы государства народу Казахстана: Единство народа и системные реформы — прочная основа процветания страны // Премьер-министр Республики Казахстан]. (In Russian). URL: <https://primeminister.kz/ru/addresses/01092021> (accessed: 05.10.2021).

established Eurasian Economic Union (Saltybayev & Parkhomchik, 2020; Yuneman, 2020). It is no coincidence that the signing of the Treaty on the EAEU took place in the capital of Kazakhstan.

The Eurasian Economic Union itself also recognizes Nazarbayev's outstanding contribution to the development of Eurasian integration, as evidenced by his appointment to the post of Chairman of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council of the EEC after his departure from the post of President of Kazakhstan (Mansurov, 2014).

In accordance with the Constitutional Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan — Elbasy", Nazarbayev, by virtue of his historical mission, has the right to apply to the people of Kazakhstan, state bodies and officials with initiatives on the most important issues of foreign policy.³⁵ Thus, up to the present moment, he is the guarantor of the continuation of the course towards the development of Eurasian integration. At the same time, the political agenda of Kazakhstan currently prevails the line on the creation of a national state and the development of the foundations of sovereignty, the formation of national or civil identity, but not the Eurasian identity.

Having already left the post of head of state, Nursultan Nazarbayev, speaking at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council on May 21, 2021, proposed an option for resolving the contradiction between the concepts of "cooperation" and "independence," noting that "only in cooperation with reliable proven partners-allies we may ensure the economic security and independence of our countries." "In today's conditions, we need even greater integration, even greater mutual understanding,"

³⁵ About the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan — Elbasy. Constitutional Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 20, 2000 No. 83-II [О Первом Президенте Республики Казахстан — Елбасы. Конституционный закон Республики Казахстан от 20 июля 2000 года № 83-II] // Adilet.zan.kz. July 20, 2000. (In Russian). URL: https://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z000000083_ (accessed: 05.10.2021).

he concluded.³⁶ However, the Eurasian idea in Kazakhstan began to develop in a downward direction.

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the development of the Eurasian movement. However, no significant events in Kazakhstan were timed to coincide with this date. As part of the large-scale XVII Eurasian Media Forum chaired by Dariga Nazarbayeva, a wide range of modern challenges and international issues was considered. Much attention was paid to the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence. The Eurasian idea and Eurasianism as a philosophical and political trend were not reflected in the agenda of the Media Forum.

Conclusion

To sum up, it should be noted that the ideological content of Eurasianism in Kazakhstan has practically exhausted itself in its classical and modern form. At the beginning of the path — the moment of acquiring sovereignty — one could still count on broad public support for the ideas of Eurasianism, the formation of Eurasian identity, the acceptance of the idea of cooperation between the "Kazakh steppe" and the "European plain," the new Slavic-Turkic integration as the basis for dominance in Eurasia, the existence of the Eurasian civilization and the Eurasian region (Koshel, 2014. p. 51). Now the classical foundations of Eurasianism have lost their significance and have given way to the economic determinism as the basis for the development of relations between Kazakhstan and integration partners.

Currently, for Nur-Sultan the Eurasian idea is regional rather than global, external rather than domestic agenda factor (Butorina, 2021). Therefore, it is unlikely that in the short term Kazakhstan will be the leader of Eurasian

³⁶ Elbasy on the EAEU: In Today's Conditions, We Need Even Greater Integration [Елбасы о ЕАЭС: В сегодняшних условиях нам требуется еще большая интеграция] // Kazinform. May 21, 2021. (In Russian). URL: https://www.inform.kz/ru/elbasy-o-eaes-v-segodnyashnih-usloviyah-nam-trebuetsya-esche-bol-shaya-integraciya_a3790941 (accessed: 05.10.2021).

integration, part of the integration core or the locomotive for the creation of Greater Eurasia. This is partly due to a certain evolution in Russia's approach to the development of the Eurasian project, which is reflected in the current version of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved in November 2016.³⁷ Thus, the deepening and expansion of Eurasian integration are referred in this document to the section "Regional Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy." The "Greater Eurasia" initiative, voiced by President Putin, has not yet received its conceptual or institutional design. Although, according to many experts, including foreign ones, the EAEU, as an international organization, is able to play a serious role in geopolitics and the formation of Greater Eurasia, and Eurasianism / neo-Eurasianism, as an ideology, can make its theoretical contribution to the emergence of a multipolar world (Dynkin et al., 2018; Pizzolo, 2020).

At the same time, Kazakhstan certainly is one of the active participants in integration associations. The state is still interested in promoting Eurasian integration, and will keep the EAEU "as a priority for the development of regional trade and a way to increase its competitiveness." Nur-Sultan's pragmatic approach to EAEU, the focus on the implementation of the national interests of Kazakhstan are reflected in the priorities of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in EAEU in 2021, such as the development of industrial cooperation, the elimination of remaining barriers to mutual trade, the development of transport and investment opportunities, digitalization and expansion of trade and economic relations with third countries, and integration associations.³⁸

³⁷ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 30, 2016 No. 640 "On Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" [Указ Президента РФ от 30.11.2016 № 640 «Об утверждении Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации»] // Consultant Plus. (In Russian). URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_207990/ (accessed: 05.10.2021).

³⁸ The Main Priorities of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the EAEU Were Announced by Askar Mamin [Основные

At the moment, there is no possibility of creating a common Eurasian ideology or a Eurasian unifying idea for all countries. While the economic potential of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus makes it possible to create a "strong integration core," public support and business interest in the development of Eurasian integration remain extremely low.

The Eurasian Economic Union can become a competitive integration association, however, within the EAEU, and in the Republic of Kazakhstan particularly, it is necessary to host educational, analytical, and informational activities to create a reliable semantic foundation and support among the population and entrepreneurs. In general, it is necessary to update the integration development from the "grassroots." Explanatory work on the "Eurasianism" is in the modern context is needed. The 110th anniversary of Gumilev's birthday that will be celebrated in 2022 could be a good reason to update the interest in Eurasianism.

The concepts of Eurasianism, Eurasia, Greater Eurasia as well as the Eurasian Economic Union require a new conceptual and theoretical understanding. At this stage, the Eurasian idea (Eurasian ideology, Eurasian doctrine) and the practical implementation of the Eurasian project have no direct or causal connection. The Eurasianism concept has different meanings, and its various interpretations are given in the context of the Eurasian Economic Union launching. The deeper we analyze Eurasianism and the practice of implementing the EAEU project, the more obvious the critical dissonance becomes. Eurasianism in Kazakhstan has become quite widespread due to a certain ideological and terminological vacuum. At the same time, Eurasianism has not become the platform of any political party or political movement; it is

приоритеты председательства Казахстана в ЕАЭС озвучил Аскар Мамин] // Kazinform. February 5, 2021. (In Russian). URL: https://www.inform.kz/ru/osnovnye-priority-predsedatelstva-kazakhstana-v-eaes-ozvuchil-askar-mamin_a3749832 (accessed: 05.10.2021).

personified and received its legitimacy due to the authority of the First President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev. Therefore, at the present stage, Kazakhstan's participation in the EAEU is becoming politicized, becoming an instrument of political competition.

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