

Chapter 14

“External Contour” of Eurasian Integration: Cooperation Between the EAEU and the ASEAN

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ABSTRACT

The Eurasian Economic Union is interested in development of cooperation with external actors. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is considered as a prospect partner. ASEAN states play a significant role in economy and international relations in the Asia-Pacific region. The ASEAN is seen as one of the key institutions in Asia-Pacific integration. Moscow keeps stable and friendly relations with many states of Southeast Asia and the ASEAN. It lays a solid foundation for development of a dialogue in Eurasian format. The EAEU signed with Vietnam a free trade agreement in 2015 and it is negotiating on similar treaties with some other states of the ASEAN. The Association expressed readiness to consider the issue of a comprehensive free trade zone between the EAEU and the ASEAN. In November 2018 the Eurasian Economic Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat adopted a memorandum of understanding. The dialogue in Eurasian format can accelerate cooperation between states of the EAEU and Southeast Asia and create more benevolent conditions for alignment of the EAEU and the ASEAN.

INTRODUCTION

In the framework of chapter the author is going to define key directions of current interaction between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and prospects of their further cooperation. Southeast Asia is one of the most intensively developing regions and the ASEAN plays the significant role as both regional and global actor. The ASEAN is trying to broaden interaction with actors beyond Southeast Asia. The EAEU is also interested in the development of

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integrating ties with “external” actors (including Asia-Pacific states). Russia traditionally keeps friendly relations with many Southeast Asian countries and has the status of dialogue partner of the ASEAN. These circumstances can be a foundation for development of relations between the EAEU and the ASEAN.

Main focus will be made on interaction with the Association on the whole. Cooperation between the EAEU and separate states of Southeast Asia will be reviewed first of all from the angle of its impact on development of a partnership with the ASEAN. To achieve this aim the author set the following tasks: define main elements of Eurasian integration in the context of development of contemporary regionalism; underline reasons for cooperation of the EAEU and the ASEAN; define evolution of the dialogue with the ASEAN in Eurasian format; find the role of cooperation with Vietnam and some other states of Southeast Asia in EAEU-ASEAN interaction; characterize the current EAEU-ASEAN interaction and its meaning for Eurasian integration; propose a forecast on future trends of cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN.

The chapter consists of a background, main part, solutions and recommendations, future research directions, and conclusion. At the main part the author analyzed the following issues: EAEU-Vietnam free trade zone (history of its establishment and its role for EAEU-ASEAN interaction), the first steps for cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN (evolution of negotiations with the ASEAN for problems of participation in Eurasian integration until the Memorandum of understanding between the EAEU and the ASEAN, signed in November 2018), the current trends of interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN after the signing of the Memorandum of understanding, the role of cooperation with the ASEAN for the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the factor of China for the EAEU-ASEAN interaction.

BACKGROUND

Eurasian integration is now one of key directions in Russian foreign policy. The idea of Eurasian integration was proposed by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1994 yet. Interaction in Eurasian format must strengthen and develop historical ties between states of post-Soviet space. Eurasian integration processes had passed several periods and were embodied in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), having functioned since the beginning of 2015. Great role for development of Eurasian integration is played not only by deepening of cooperation inside the EAEU, but also by enlargement of ties with external actors, including states of the Asia-Pacific region (APR). The idea of connectivity between integration processes in the post-Soviet space and the APR has been declared both politicians and experts for a long time ago. For example, the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the APEC summit in Vladivostok in 2012 told on the possibility of participation of the Customs Union (the predecessor of the EAEU) in economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region. (Vladimir Putin prinyal uchastie v rabote Delovogo sammita APEC, 2012) Thai researcher Paradorn Rangsimaporn stressed in 2006 yet the linkage between Eurasian ideas and interaction with the Asia-Pacific region in Russian public discourse. (Rangsimaporn, 2006, 385)

The role of the Asia-Pacific region in the foreign policy of Russia has been constantly increasing and it is connected as with rise of influence of the APR in world policy and economy, so with the initiative of “the Pivot to the East” in Russian foreign strategy. In the 1990s Russia was developing cooperation with China, Japan and South Korea in regional format. But, unfortunately, crisis in Russian economy and difficult situation in the Russian Far East were serious obstacles for full-scale cooperation with the Asia-Pacific states. Many Soviet positions in the Asia-Pacific were lost. Also the Kremlin in that period

had more urgent goals in its foreign strategy and lacked clear vision for relations of Russia with the Asia-Pacific. New impulse for Russian policy in the APR was given by the Foreign Minister (and later – Prime Minister) Evgeniy Primakov, who supported idea of diversified foreign policy of Russia and the multipolar world order. Under the Putin administration Russia has been launched new epoch in relations with the Asia-Pacific region, founded on new economic opportunities and more active diplomacy. As an essential element of Russian policy in the APR has being considered the connection between relations with Asia-Pacific states and development of the Russian Far East and Siberia. This policy was often referred as “the Pivot to the East”. Rising contradictions between Russia and the West (especially after 2014) have been converting the Asia-Pacific (and, first of all, China) in alternative direction for Russian foreign policy. So far the Asia-Pacific region has both political and economic significance for Russia. If to talk about development of Eurasian integration, approaching of states of the EAEU and the APR might be assessed as an example of formation of a “mega-region”. “Mega-regions” are often considered as one of trends in contemporary international relations. (Novikov, 2018, 85) For example, Russian scholars Aleksei Voskresenskii, Ekaterina Koldunova and Anna Kireeva pointed that by the beginning of the XXI century “Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region have become the area of competing macro/mega-regional and transregional projects”. (Voskresenskii, Koldunova & Kireeva, 2017, 49) From the point of view of Russian researchers (for example – Maria Lagutina and Natalia Vasil’eva), a “global region” with the center in the EAEU might be defined as “Neo-Eurasian space”. (Vasil’eva & Lagutina, 2012, 27) In the opinion of Russian scholar Anna Garmash, contemporary regional integration is also marked by development of transregional ties and methods of transregionalism can be applied to research of EAEU-ASEAN interaction. (Garmash, 2017, 147-148) These trends correspond with a vector of development of Asia-Pacific states, enlarging their interaction with neighboring regions. That situation gives experts a reason to talk about creation of the region of the Greater East Asia. (Voskresenskii, 2012, 43) A concept of “mega-region” is also de-facto promoted by the United States with the aim of keeping its interests in the Asia-Pacific region. In this case the US politicians and experts are vigorously supporting an idea of “the Indo-Pacific region”. (Leksyutina, 2019, 24)

For connection of Eurasian and Asia-Pacific integrations the special role might be played by the ASEAN. The ASEAN states are demonstrating high rates of economic development. The ASEAN not only unites majority of states of Southeast Asia, but also takes special place in Asia-Pacific integration. Many regional structures and institutions are working in the framework of the ASEAN and so we can talk even on an “ASEAN-centric” model of integration in the APR. (Koldunova, 2017, 59-60) Development of dialogue between the EAEU and the ASEAN might be facilitated by the experience of Russia-ASEAN cooperation. Russia got a status of dialogue partner of the ASEAN in 1996 yet. Russia and the ASEAN held joint summits in 2005, 2010, 2016 and 2018. Russia takes part in work of many institutions, functioning under the ASEAN’s support (ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit, etc.). Russia and the ASEAN keep similar views on many international problems (including the idea of multipolar world), and Russia traditionally refrains from interference in domestic affairs of states of Southeast Asia. In the circumstances of escalation of contradictions between the US and China and reluctant involvement of Southeast Asia in these disputes, the ASEAN tries to deepen cooperation with Russia which is often perceived as “the third power” in the region. However, in the opinion of some Russian experts, the partnership of Moscow and Beijing is complicating the image of Russia in many states of Southeast Asia that are concerned by the rise of influence of China. (Lokshin, Kobelev & Mazyrin, 2019, 268) Other Russian scholars point at geopolitical preconditions of cooperation with the ASEAN in Eurasian format. For instance, Yaroslav Lisovolik suggests that interaction between the

EAEU and the ASEAN might be viewed as an example of “continental-oceanic” coalition. (Lisovolik, 2017, 51) If to talk about ASEAN interests in Eurasian integration, by the words of Russian experts Evgeniy Kanaev and Alexander Korolev, “Greater Eurasia” can give the ASEAN opportunity to “enter the multipolar world”, escaping “the unipolar revenge”. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 741) The problem of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation was researched also in special works of other Russian scholars. Anton Tsvetov made deep analysis of EAEU-ASEAN relations in the context of trends of Russia’s foreign policy. (Tsvetov, 2017) Boris Kheifets researched prospects of creation of the EAEU-ASEAN free trade zone (Kheifets, 2018) Foreign scholars pay not so much attention to EAEU-ASEAN interaction, considering it, for instance, mostly in the context of general issues of Eurasian integration. (Li, 2016) It can be surmised that Russian researchers try to explore possible prospects of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation and foreign authors, in turn, are not demonstrating interest for this topic because of absence of definite results of EAEU-ASEAN interaction.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The ASEAN plays important role for Eurasian integration. However, development of cooperation of the EAEU with the Association and separate states of Southeast Asia meets with some obstacles (resulted as from nature of relations between EAEU countries and Southeast Asia, so from institutional functioning of the EAEU and the ASEAN). First of all, the level of economic cooperation between EAEU states and Southeast Asia is relatively small (and significant share of it belongs to Russia-ASEAN economic ties). Herewith, the level of political and economic cooperation of Russia with separate ASEAN states is varied. EAEU and ASEAN states have no common borders. The EAEU is an international organization with clear institutional structure in the form of an economic union, and the ASEAN is working under principles of consensus and compromise. But for last years the Eurasian Economic Union and the ASEAN have making progress in their relations. In the chapter we consider evolution of EAEU-ASEAN interaction, their role in Eurasian integration and also prospects for their further cooperation.

EAEU-VIETNAM FREE TRADE ZONE

The first steps for cooperation with the ASEAN in the framework of Eurasian integration were made yet before the official establishment of the EAEU. It was the issue of creation of free trade zones between the Customs Union and some states of Southeast Asia. Negotiations were finished successfully only with Vietnam. The first proposals of such agreements were made in 2009. Official negotiations with Vietnam were launched in March 2013. In May 2015 the EAEU and Vietnam signed a free trade agreement, entered into force in October 2016. This document strengthened positions of the Eurasian Economic Union as an international political and economic actor and let Russia institutionally unite Eurasian and Pacific directions of its policy. (Mazyrin, 2015, 78)

This agreement with Vietnam has been achieved mostly because of high level of political dialogue between Moscow and Hanoi. The interaction between Russia and Vietnam was based in many ways on the partnership between the USSR and Communist Vietnam in the period of the Cold War. Moscow supported Vietnamese Communists in their conflict with France and the US, and also Vietnam was an area of competition between Communist great powers – the Soviet Union and China. After the Second

Indochina war (1955-1975) Vietnam became the main partner of the USSR in the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam was a strategic stronghold of the USSR against the US and China in Southeast Asia, and the Soviet Union and Vietnam had been developing many joint economic projects. In the conditions of international half-isolation of Vietnam, Moscow played prevailing role as an economic partner of Hanoi. After the collapse of the USSR the alliance of Moscow and Hanoi was also dissolved. But, however, Russia and Vietnam have kept interaction in some spheres (for instance, in energy fields and arms sales) and friendly political dialogue. Since the beginning of the 1990s Hanoi has been conducting diversified foreign policy and so far it was interested in constructive relations with Russia as with one of centers of world policy and old partner of Vietnam. New format of cooperation was, however, only a shadow of the alliance between Moscow and Hanoi in the Cold War and carried de-ideological and much more pragmatic character. Since the 2000s the interaction between Russia and Vietnam has been expanding. In 2001 Moscow and Vietnam signed the declaration on strategic partnership, and in 2012 two states raised the level of their relations to “comprehensive strategic partnership”. (*Sovmestnoe zayavlenie ob ukreplenii otnoshenii vseob”emlyushchego strategicheskogo partnerstva...*) Vietnam is still the only ASEAN state, having a status of a strategic partner of Russia. Also Vietnam is conducting the policy of establishment of free trade zones with different states and international organizations. By the conclusion of agreement with the EAEU Vietnam has already signed 15 similar treaties. (Mazyrin, 2016, 76) These initiatives are correlating with Vietnam’s course for diversification of its foreign policy and integration into global economy. (Mazyrin, 2015, 79) The level of trade of Russia and Vietnam was relatively low (for instance, in 2014 Russian-Vietnamese trade turnover was about \$ 3.7 billion in comparison with \$ 58.5 billion of trade turnover of Vietnam with China and 34.9 — with the United States) (V’etnam. Vneshnyaya torgovlya i investitsii), and, besides, trade with Russia is more than 90% of economic cooperation between Vietnam and the EAEU. (EAEU i ASEAN: Otkryvaya novye gorizonty sotrudnichestva..., 2017, 54) However, strong political ties between Moscow and Hanoi helped to conclude the free trade agreement. At the same time, the agreement had “compromise” character. The sides tried to protect the most vulnerable spheres of export and import. EAEU officials considered this free trade zone mostly as a “test” for other similar agreements. (Tsvetov, 2015) According to Russian experts, the EAEU-Vietnam free trade zone has more political meaning, than economic, and its real results might be achieved in 10-15 years. (Mazyrin, 2015, 81) However, experts and politicians positively estimated the prospects of free trade agreement between the EAEU and Vietnam. For instance, in the opinion of Russian researchers, volume of Russian-Vietnamese trade might raise to \$ 10 billion by 2020. (Mazyrin, 2015, 77) Vietnamese officials even forecasted the increase of mutual trade turnover to \$ 20 billion. (*Tovarooborot mezhdru V’etnamom i Rossiei v yanvare-iyule vyros na 28%*, 2016) These results have to be reached yet, but in 2017 the level of the trade between the EAEU and Vietnam was increased for more than 35% and amounted \$ 5.7 billion. In 2018 the volume of Russian-Vietnamese trade exceeded \$ 6 billion. (*Torgovlya mezhdru Rossiei i V’etnamom v 2018 g.*, 2019) As Russian experts suggested, the EAEU-Vietnam free trade zone could boost mutual trade and increase the share of high-technological goods in export from the Eurasian Economic Union. (Mazyrin, 2015, 77) However, the share of export of high-technology production from Russia has not increased in 2018 in comparison with previous year (*Torgovlya mezhdru Rossiei i V’etnamom v 2017 g.* (2018)). At the same time markets of the EAEU might be challenged by flow of Vietnamese productions. Even now import from Vietnam exceeds export from Russia.

Preliminary results of the EAEU-Vietnam free trade agreement seem to be positive, but it is hardly possible to talk on a breakthrough in EAEU-Vietnam trade.

THE EAEU AND THE ASEAN: THE FIRST STEPS TO COOPERATION

In July 2014 the chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) Board Viktor Khristenko had negotiations with the Secretary General of the ASEAN Le Luong Minh about economic cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN. The sides marked positive experience of negotiations between the Customs Union and Vietnam on a free trade zone. (*Sostoyalas' vstrecha Predsedatelya Kollegii EEK Viktora Khristenko...*, 2014) In September 2014 the Eurasian Economic Commission proposed the ASEAN to sign a Memorandum of understanding. During his visit to Myanmar Andrey Slepnev, the member of the EAEC Board for trade, discussed with the Secretary General of the ASEAN possible variants of cooperation and granted the project of a Memorandum. The project contained issues of exchange of information in sphere of integration processes, technical and customs regulations, sanitary measures. (*EvrAziiskaya ekonomicheskaya komissiya mozhnet nachat' ofitsial'noe sotrudnichestvo...*, 2014)

The establishment of the free trade zone with Vietnam is often perceived as an important step for development of cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN on the whole. (Aleksey Likhachev: *V'etnam mozhnet stat' torgovo-investitsionnym mostom...*, 2015) It is also necessary to point that Vietnam traditionally has been a “connecting link” in cooperation between Russia and the ASEAN. (Kobelev, 2016, 420) Tigran Sarkisian, a chairman of the EAEC Board, called the treaty with Vietnam a “window of opportunities” for development of interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN. (*Interv'yu Predsedatelya Kollegii EEK Tigrana Sarkisiana...*, 2016)

A free trade zone between the EAEU and the ASEAN is seen as a possible sphere of interaction. The idea of such zone was announced, for example, in the joint declaration, adopted at the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi in May 2016: “Russia put forward a proposal to launch a joint feasibility study of a comprehensive free trade area between ASEAN and EAEU. ASEAN will consider this initiative”. (Sochi Declaration of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Commemorative Summit...) Issues of interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN were mentioned in the “Comprehensive plan of action to promote cooperation...” between Russia and the ASEAN. (Comprehensive plan of action...) Tat'yana Valovaya, the member of the EAEC Board for integration and macroeconomics, presented the Eurasian Economic Union before the President of Russia and heads of ASEAN states at this summit. T. Valovaya told about common aims of the EAEU and the ASEAN and supported the idea of closer cooperation. (Ministr EEK Tat'yana Valovaya prezentovala EAES..., 2016) The problem of preparation for an EAEU-ASEAN free trade zone has been discussing also at other events – for instance, at the Russia-ASEAN senior officials meeting in March 2017. (ASEAN, Russia discuss ways to further strengthen partnership, 2017)

But these documents and statements are still only declarations of intentions, but not a plan of definite measures. Simultaneously, this free trade zone may meet with some serious obstacles. Firstly, the ASEAN still has no experience of conclusion of a free trade agreement with an international organization. Negotiations between the ASEAN and the European Union were failed, because of difficulties in settling of conditions of a free trade zone with the ASEAN, those member-states kept different positions on this project. (Tsvetov, 2017) The agreement on establishment of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has been signed only recently after a long elaboration. It may arouse additional difficulties with decision-making at the ASEAN. Coordination inside the ASEAN traditionally goes through long procedure in order to settle interests of many countries. The EAEU and the ASEAN have different institutional structures. (Dave, 2016) The EAEU is a regional economic organization, created on the base of a customs union. The ASEAN is officially aimed at a broader circle of tasks. The EAEU has the Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) – a supranational executive organ, and the ASEAN

Secretariat is a structure of coordinating character. The level of trade cooperation of Russia and other member-states of the EAEU with Southeast Asia is still relatively low. For instance, the share of the EAEU in general export and import of the ASEAN was estimated in 2015 as 0.5 and 1% respectively. (EAES i ASEAN: Otkryvaya novye gorizonty sotrudnichestva..., 2017, 54) As other trend we can mention the increase of shares of energy products in Russian export to ASEAN countries and high-technology goods in ASEAN export to Russia. Other obstacles might be called lack of information in Southeast Asia about the EAEU and Eurasian integration. By the words of Russian expert and journalist Mikhail Korostikov, even leaders of states of Southeast Asia have very vague vision of these issues and consider Eurasian integration first of all as an element of relations with Russia. (Korostikov, 2018) In these circumstances it is interesting to make selective analysis of some English-speaking media resources of Southeast Asia.

In Vietnam's media problems of Eurasian integration are mostly considered from the point of the free trade agreement between the EAEU and Vietnam. The EAEU-Vietnam free trade zone is mentioned in publications, dedicated to its influence on Vietnamese economy (Vietnam-Russia economic, trade relations thrive, 2019) or in reports about summits of Russian and Vietnamese officials, where this issue was a part of joint declarations or negotiations. (Party leader to visit Russia from Wednesday, 2018) Questions of EAEU-ASEAN interaction or the role of Vietnam in this cooperation are not considered.

Publications in Thai media mostly observed the Memorandum of understanding between the EAEU and Thailand. (Arunmas, 2018) The EAEU was also mentioned in the article, dedicated to the ASEAN working group, discussing policy of the Association in the sphere of free trade agreements. (Arunmas, 2019) In the article of the columnist and expert Kavi Chongkittavorn, development of relations of the ASEAN with Russia (and, as a result – with the EAEU) and the European Union is considered as an element of the multi-vector policy of the Association. (Chongkittavorn, 2018)

Malaysian newspaper “The New Straits Times” published articles on the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi and quoted the opinion of the Prime Minister of Malaysia Najib Razak about the necessity to establish a free trade zone between the EAEU and the ASEAN. (Summit significant..., 2016)

Indonesian media sources usually mention the EAEU in the context of Russian-Indonesian relations (As Russia Faces Colder Relations With West..., 2018) or Russia-ASEAN interaction. (ASEAN, a strategic partner for Russia, 2018)

Singapore's media seems to pay definitely more attention to Eurasian integration. Singaporean newspaper “The Straits Times” published articles about the Memorandum of understanding between the EAEU and Singapore, (Lim, 2016a) and about an expected EAEU-Singapore free trade agreement. (Good progress on trade deal with EAEU, 2019) Key benefits of future free trade agreement are considered new opportunities for Singapore to invest in economy of EAEU countries and get an access to natural resources. Issues of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation were mentioned in publications, dedicated to the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the EAEC and the ASEAN (Seow, 2018), and the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi. (Lim, 2016)

“ASEAN Briefing”, an information and analytical portal on investment and trade in ASEAN states published three articles, dedicated specially to EAEU-ASEAN interaction. Authors of these publications positively evaluated cooperation of the EAEU with separate states of the ASEAN and with the Association on the whole (including prospects of a free trade zone between the EAEU and the ASEAN). (Devonshire-Ellis, 2019)

Informational cover of Eurasian integration and EAEU-ASEAN integration carries in Southeast Asia mostly fragmental character. Issues of Eurasian integration are considered through the prism of relations

with Russia and touch events, happening on a territory of any ASEAN state or linked with activities of leaders of states of Southeast Asia.

At the same time, however, Russian society and establishment perceive the situation in the Southeast Asia not very well too. (Lokshin, Kobelev & Mazyrin, 2019, 268) Also, in the opinion of some Russian scholars, the EAEU is still internally instable organization and states of the ASEAN do not completely trust to Eurasian Economic Union. (Lokshin, Kobelev & Mazyrin, 2019, 265) What is more, states of the EAEU and the ASEAN have no land borders and lay in long distances from each other. So, as things are, an establishment of an EAEU-ASEAN free trade zone seems to be real only in long-term perspective. For instance, Chinese scholar Li Xing wrote that a free trade zone with the ASEAN might be created only by 2040. (Li, 2016, 15) Preliminary variant of cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN might be a non-preferential economic agreement. Russian scholar Boris Kheifets proposed an idea of multilateral agreement on investments between the EAEU and the ASEAN. This agreement might be the first step to more comprehensive treaty on economic cooperation between the EAEU and the Association. (Kheifets, 2018, 117) In the opinion of other experts, the base for a comprehensive free trade zone must be a network of free trade agreements between the EAEU and separate states of the ASEAN. (EAES i ASEAN: Otkryvaya novye gorizonty sotrudnichestva..., 2017, 75) But such agreement, as it was mentioned earlier, exists so far only with Vietnam. However, negotiations with other states of Southeast Asia are being continued and some countries (Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore) signed with the EAEU memorandums of understanding. Moreover, for the last time was emerging the trend for strengthening cooperation of the ASEAN with Russia and the EAEU. In August 2017 Russia opened its permanent mission to the ASEAN (in Jakarta). In March 2018 Alexander Ivanov, the Ambassador of Russia to the ASEAN, took part on the meeting of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee, where it was declared on the finalization of a draft of a Memorandum of understanding between the EAEU and the ASEAN. (ASEAN, Russia review progress of cooperation, 2018)

In May 2018 in the framework of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum there was the first business dialogue in the EAEU-ASEAN format. The organizers of this event were the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Russia-ASEAN Business Council, the Roscongress Foundation and the Russia-Singapore Business Council. In the words of the moderator of this dialogue, Tat'yana Valovaya, “the event confirmed enormous interest of business in states of the EAEU and the ASEAN for cooperation”. (PMEF-2018: sostoyalsya pervyi biznes-dialog..., 2018)

In November 2018 at the Russia-ASEAN summit in Singapore the sides made a joint statement on strategic partnership. Issues of cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN were also mentioned in this document. Russia and the ASEAN agreed “to explore the possibility of mutually beneficial cooperation between ASEAN and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)”. (Joint Statement of the 3rd ASEAN-Russian Federation Summit on Strategic Partnership, 2018) In the framework of this summit the Eurasian Economic Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat signed a Memorandum of understanding. The EAEC and the ASEAN declared on intention to cooperate in spheres of customs regulations, facilitation of trade procedures, sanitary control, e-commerce, investments, etc. (EAES i ASEAN uglublyayut torgovo-ekonomicheskoe i investitsionnoe sotrudnichestvo, 2018) As the chairman of the EAEC Board Tigran Sarkisian said, this memorandum had to play “important role not only for establishment of constant dialogue between the EAEC and the ASEAN Secretariat, but also for creation of trustful atmosphere for support of bilateral tracks of the EAEU with separate states of the Association and interaction of business circles of our countries”. (Mezhdu EEK i sekretariatom ASEAN budet ustanovlen postoyannyi dialog, 2018) After that the sides began to work at a program for cooperation for 2019-2020.

“External Contour” of Eurasian Integration

Unfortunately plans to sign a free trade agreement between the EAEU and Singapore at the Russia-ASEAN summit in November 2018 have not been realized. At the negotiations in Singapore the sides settled some important issues (for instance, a future framework agreement between the EAEU and Singapore), but a conclusion of a free trade agreement was forecasted for 2019. (Peregovory po soglasheniyu o ZST mezhdru EAES i Singapurom..., 2018) The Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratham, during his participation at the Gaidar Forum in Moscow in January 2019, said the EAEU was making “good progress on concluding the EAEU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the middle of the year”. (Good progress on trade deal with EAEU, 2019) Key advantages of a free trade zone between the EAEU and Singapore might be new opportunities for Singaporean investments in Russia and other states of the Eurasian Economic Union. (Kheifets, 2018, 116) For fruitful cooperation with the ASEAN the EAEU needs in addition to trade exchanges mutual investments and technological cooperation. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 746) What is more, a free trade zone between the EAEU and Singapore will have “image” significance for EAEU-ASEAN relations, because it will demonstrate the ability of the Eurasian Economic Union to successfully cooperate “not only with politically close Vietnam”. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 745) Sergey Pronin, an executive director of the Russia-Singapore Business Council, defined Singapore as a “window for export for all EAEU companies during their foreign economic activities with ASEAN countries”. (Singapore is a point of access to APR...) Singapore might be considered as a political “bridge” from the EAEU to the ASEAN. For instance, in February 2017 at the session of the joint working group of the EAEC and the government of Singapore, Tat'yana Valovaya and Singaporean officials discussed issues of assistance to the dialogue in the EAEU-ASEAN format. (Tat'yana Valovaya..., 2017)

Along with Vietnam, Singapore seems to become a key partner for the development of EAEU-ASEAN connectivity. Although the EAEU and the ASEAN did not sign a free trade agreement or other formal treaty, they created a base for further dialogue and cooperation – first of all, an instrument of interaction between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

AFTER THE MEMORANDUM

In February 2019 Tat'yana Valovaya visited the ASEAN Secretariat. The sides discussed the implementation of the Memorandum of understanding between the EAEC and the ASEAN. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN business were invited to the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum and the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in 2019. The sides also agreed the Program of cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN for 2019-2020. (About visit of Member of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission..., 2019) In the focus of the program there were consultations and exchange of opinions for simplification of trade procedures, technical regulation, development of digital economy. (Obsuzhdeny programmy sotrudnichestva EEK i ASEAN na 2019-2020, 2019)

A business dialogue between the EAEU and the ASEAN was held at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on June, 8 2019. This session was organized with participation of the Russia-ASEAN Business Council. Tat'yana Valovaya was a moderator of the event. In the business dialogue took part entrepreneurs, diplomats and experts from states of the EAEU and the ASEAN. As T. Valovaya said, “the EAEU and the ASEAN are on the rise of their relations”. Representatives of business communities told about their achievements and plans for further cooperation between states of the EAEU and Southeast Asia. Participants of the dialogue underlined, for instance, the role of EAEU-Vietnam free

trade agreement for the rise of trade turnover and conclusion of new contracts. Important and prospect tasks of cooperation were expected to be rise of investments, diversification of trade and simplification of trade procedures. Serious attention was paid to field of high technologies. The co-founder and CEO of Singaporean company “vCargo Cloud” Desmond Tay underlined the role of the EAEC for development of cooperation with states of the EAEU. On a meeting of the working group, created in the framework of the Memorandum of understanding between the EAEU and Singapore, “vCargo Cloud” (working in the sphere of e-logistics) set contacts with a partner from Russia (the Russia-Singapore Business Council) and later expanded its business in the EAEU on the whole. The significance of digital platforms for dialogue between the EAEU and the ASEAN (and also with Singapore, Cambodia and Thailand) was also marked by T. Valovaya. (EAES i ASEAN razvivayut biznes-dialog, 2019)

On June 4 2019 the EAEC sets round table discussion, dedicated to digital transport corridors of the EAEU (including the direction to markets of the ASEAN). The event was organized with a support from the Russia-Singapore Business Council. Desmond Tay also took part in the discussion. As it was marked, “the integration of payment services will expand opportunities for interaction of the EAEU companies with the ASEAN countries”. (EAEU and ASEAN Digital Logistics, 2019)

On June 6, 2019 Sergey Pronin and Desmond Tay attended the session “Strategy for the Future of the Eurasian Economic Union”, devoted to “the influence of the latest trends, such as the digital transformation of the economy and the formation of a high-tech and innovative Eurasian space, on the prospects for further development of the EAEU”. The event was visited by the chairman of the EAEU Business Council Viktor Khristenko and Koh Poh Koon, the senior Minister of State from Singapore. (Participation of Sergey Pronin and Desmod Tay...)

The Russia-Singapore Business Council declared about intentions to promote Russian technologies and Russian companies in Southeast Asia through the use of digital platforms RSTrade and CamelONE (operated by the Russia-Singapore Business Council and “vCargo Cloud” respectively). In prospect, it let establish “full automation of trade flows between the EAEU and ASEAN”. (Interview of Sergey Pronin and Desmond Tay to RBC TV Channel) The Russia-Singapore Business Council participates also in other events, organized with support from the EAEC – for example, at the Second Eurasian digital forum, held in April 2019 in Minsk (RSTrade and CamelOne integration solution...) and in the conference “Digital Industry of Industrial Russia”, set in May 2019 in Innopolis in Tatarstan. (Russia-Singapore Business Council takes part in CIPR-2019)

The role of the Russia-Singapore Business Council seems to be a positive example of EAEU-ASEAN interaction. It may be explained by interests of Singaporean partners for EAEU markets and relevance of promoted projects. Simplification of trade and investments between the EAEU and the ASEAN (including the use of digital technologies) is considered as an important element in current EAEU-ASEAN agenda. Also it is necessary to point at the close connection of the Russia-Singapore Business Council with EAEU and Russian state structures (the Russia-Singapore Business Council was founded in 2009 on the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russia). However, these joint Russia-Singapore projects have necessary conditions to engage IT-companies from EAEU and ASEAN countries.

As we can see, interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN is being realized by the EAEC and the ASEAN Secretariat with close connection with Russia-ASEAN joint structures and business communities. It creates multi-level system of cooperation. The development of EAEU-ASEAN dialogue creates conditions for enlargement of cooperation between business communities of the EAEU and the ASEAN. Anna Garmash emphasizes the role of new platforms for dialogue and participation of both government and non-government institutions for successful development of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation. (Garmash,

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2017, 154) But, however, we can now talk only about “preliminary” period of EAEU-ASEAN integration. Business cooperation carries mostly “spot” nature – it is concentrated only in selected spheres and realized with direct and indirect support of state structures. Nevertheless, such cooperation is forming environment (for instance through simplification of trade and development of electronic logistics) for further cooperation in other fields.

Although the prospects of an EAEU-ASEAN free trade zone seem to be indefinite. The EAEU and the ASEAN have not had an experience of conclusion of such agreement. The level of economic cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN is not significant. Moreover, the sides did not begin negotiations for this issue and seem to have no certain vision of this future free trade area. But the dialogue in Eurasian format can provide development of cooperation between EAEU and ASEAN countries and has already brought the first results. Increase of trade turnover and investments between the EAEU and ASEAN will set benevolent environment for further negotiations on preferential and non-preferential agreements. Also dialogue in Eurasian dimension with the ASEAN can accelerate interest in states of Southeast Asia for the cooperation with the EAEU and pave the way for successful negotiations on free trade zones with separate ASEAN countries. At the moment interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN carries mostly “instrumental” function – it creates conditions for strengthening ties between the Eurasian Economic Union and separate states of Southeast Asia. But comprehensive and successful partnership with ASEAN countries (or, at least, with majority of them) is an essential prerequisite for a full-scale partnership between the Eurasian Economic Union and the ASEAN. For instance, as it was mentioned before, the presentation of the first results of EAEU-Vietnam free trade agreement was included into the agenda of the EAEU-ASEAN business dialogue in Saint Petersburg in 2019.

THE GREATER EURASIAN PARTNERSHIP: THE ROLE OF THE ASEAN

Also it is necessary to note the ASEAN is an important partner in the framework of the initiative of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. The idea of economic partnership between states of the EAEU, the ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was declared by Vladimir Putin at the end of 2015. (Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniyu, 2015) The term of “Greater Eurasian Partnership” was firstly used in the President’s speech at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2016. Also this initiative is often referred as “Eurasian Economic Partnership” (Tsvetov, 2017) and “Greater Eurasia”. (Karaganov, 2016) The principles of the Greater Eurasian Partnership were mentioned in the Concept of Russia’s foreign policy, adopted in 2016: “Russia is committed to establishing a common, open and non-discriminatory economic partnership and joint development space for ASEAN, SCO and EAEU members with a view to ensuring that integration processes in Asia-Pacific and Eurasia are complementary”. (Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation ...) This initiative still has no strict regulations and clear circle of participants, but it is open for dialogue with many partners. Russia, as an initiator of this idea and a power, occupying central position in geopolitical space of Eurasia, is presumed to play key role in the Partnership. The Greater Eurasian Partnership reflects many trends of contemporary multilateral interaction and might be considered as a practical embodiment of idea of “neo-Eurasian space”. The ASEAN has demonstrated benevolent reaction that was reflected in the Declaration, adopted at the summit in Sochi in 2016. In the framework of the Greater Eurasian Partnership the ASEAN has a foundation for cooperation with the SCO too. In 2005 yet two organizations signed a Memorandum of understanding. Four dialogue partners of the ASEAN (Russia, China, India

and Pakistan) now are members of the SCO. For the last years the ASEAN and the SCO have intensified their contacts. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 742) The ASEAN is interested in cooperation in security sphere and it may impact on other fields of interaction in the dimension of “Greater Eurasia”. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 748)

A factor of the Greater Eurasian Partnership became a part of a dialogue with the ASEAN. For instance, on the 16th ASEAN-Russia Senior Officials’ Meeting (ARSOM) at the level of deputy foreign ministers on February 19-20, 2019 there was an exchange of views for the interaction between the EAEU, the SCO and the ASEAN in the framework of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. (On the 16th ASEAN-Russia Senior Officials’ Meeting..., 2019)

On the meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov with ambassadors of the ASEAN states on April 19, 2019, the sides emphasized importance of cooperation in the format of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. (On the Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs..., 2019) At the EAEU-ASEAN business dialogue at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum in 2019 Ambassador-at-Large Kirill Barskiy told about the concept of “Greater Eurasia” and accented the role of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation. (EAES i ASEAN razvivayut biznes-dialog, 2019)

So we can assert that nowadays the Greater Eurasian Partnership is becoming more and more essential factor in EAEU-ASEAN dialogue. However, real steps for further inclusion of the ASEAN in the Greater Eurasian Partnership will be depend on development of interaction of the EAEU with the ASEAN and separate Southeast Asian states. Nowadays the Greater Eurasian Partnership is mostly an initiative and even a declaration of intentions. Transformation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership into a formalized international actor is possible through real results of cooperation of the EAEU with other potential partners (including the ASEAN).

CHINA’S FACTOR

A factor of rapprochement of the EAEU and the ASEAN might be China. Beijing has already signed the Agreement for economic cooperation with the EAEU in the framework of the initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB). The ASEAN and China are going to develop cooperation in the framework of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership that might be “a bridge” from the ASEAN to the states of the EAEU. Russian researcher Dmitrii Novikov, however, considers that possible joining of the EAEU to the RCEP as a serious challenge for Russian interests. In the case of inclusion of the EAEU into the RCEP the leading role will be played by China and integration in Eurasia will be in significant degree “China-centric”. Besides, the EAEU and the ASEAN have no free trade agreement and so that is an obstacle for joining to the RCEP. (Novikov, 2018, 90) But, in any way, these considerations have speculative character, because we need to wait results of work of the RCEP and there have not been even negotiations for joining the EAEU to RCEP. In the opinion of some Russian scholars (for instance, Anton Tsvetov), the involvement of the ASEAN in Eurasian project might be viewed as attempts of Moscow to balance the rise of China’s influence in Eurasia. Russia tries to diversify its “Eastern” policy, both promoting the initiative of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and developing of cooperation with broader circle of Asia-Pacific states, including ASEAN countries. (Tsvetov, 2017)

However, other researchers look at the EAEU-ASEAN-China “triangle” more optimistically. China might be also a logistical “bridge” between Southeast Asia and the post-Soviet space, linking two regions in the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt. (Li, 2016, 16-17) On the other hand, interaction of

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China with states of the EAEU and Southeast Asia in the infrastructure sphere might create “the trans-Eurasian connectivity arc”. (Kanaev & Korolev, 2018, 747) As it was noted by the expert from “ASEAN Briefing”, infrastructure of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) “impacts positively” upon both the EAEU and the ASEAN. (Devonshire-Ellis, 2019) And nowadays we can talk about the first practical results of that idea. At the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum in 2019 the Russia-Singapore Business Council and company “vCargo Cloud” held negotiations with Chinese company EPINDUO – “the largest platform for the sale of Russian goods in China”. It was noted that cooperation of EPINDUO “with the Russia-Singapore Business Council and “vCargo Cloud” might become a new stage in the development of digital cross-border trade on the EAEU-China-ASEAN route”. (Russia-Singapore Business Council and vCargo Cloud hold talks with EPINDUO)

The role of China for EAEU-ASEAN relations seems to be contradictory. China is definitely more essential partner for Russia and the EAEU, than the ASEAN. Projects of cooperation in the framework of EAEU-ASEAN-China “triangle” are still only ideas or prepositions without real results or even discussions. Development of interaction between the EAEU and China may stimulate EAEU-ASEAN cooperation (because of strengthening of international status of the EAEU), but, on the other hand, this influence will carry indirect character and affect only in distant prospect.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For more effective use of opportunities, granted by EAEU-ASEAN interaction, it seems to be necessary to enlarge collaboration between national and supranational institutions, business community and public associations. Simultaneously it might be recommended to develop exchange of information on EAEU and ASEAN countries, their business environment and conditions, Eurasian and ASEAN’s integration. As a positive example we can name the Russia-Singapore Business Council, working in close coordination with the EAEC and promoting ideas of cooperation with Singapore both in bilateral and multilateral formats.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One of perspective directions for research appears to be further analysis of the role of the ASEAN in the Greater Eurasian Partnership (including the interaction with China in the format of the Belt and Road Initiative or on bilateral base). The ASEAN has not only economic, but also political significance for Russia in the framework of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. The ASEAN, in turn, considers Russia as an alternative partner under conditions of rising struggle of Washington and Beijing for regional influence.

EAEU-ASEAN interaction might be assessed as a model of relations between two regional organizations and also from the point of the influence of inter-state relations and relations in format “state-organization” upon cooperation of supranational institutions. As a good example for such exploration it seems to be Singapore – one of leading actors in providing of EAEU-ASEAN cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The Eurasian Economic Union and the ASEAN have serious reasons for cooperation. Interaction of the EAEU and the ASEAN is developing through several initiatives. On one hand, it is direct dialogue between the EAEU and the ASEAN. On the other hand, it is cooperation with separate states of the Association. Also we can mention attempts of Russia to involve the ASEAN into the Greater Eurasian Partnership. EAEU-ASEAN interaction is closely connected with the partnership between Russia and the ASEAN.

Interaction of the EAEU and the ASEAN at the moment has no formal structure. The sides signed the Memorandum of understanding, but an initiative of EAEU-ASEAN free trade zone was announced only in the form of declaration of intentions. In some degree it responds to the spirit of the Association which collaborates with its members and external partners on principles of compromise and consensus (in the framework of so-called “ASEAN way”). (Acharya, 1997, 328-329) EAEU-ASEAN cooperation is creating conditions for development of ties between EAEU and ASEAN states. Eurasian dimension is becoming an essential element of interaction between EAEU countries and Southeast Asia.

Russia, the EAEU and the ASEAN have some serious political motives for dialogue. As for economic interaction, the situation seems to be more complicated. The level of economic cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN is relatively low. The EAEU, in turn, as it was demonstrated in the case with the free trade agreement with Vietnam, is quite carefully approaching to an establishment of free trade zones with “external partners”, trying to protect its markets. It creates additional obstacles for further integration. However, at the moment we can talk about new trend in EAEU-ASEAN interaction. Singapore, for instance, actively supports collaboration with the EAEU, observing the Eurasian region as a perspective area for its investments. Singapore can be a “bridge” between the EAEU and the ASEAN and give an impulse for new joint innovative projects (including the IT-sphere).

Success of further cooperation between the EAEU and the ASEAN will depend on results of relations of the EAEU with separate states of the ASEAN. In turn, the EAEU-ASEAN dialogue will assist to negotiations on free trade zones with separate states of Southeast Asia and economic cooperation in other formats. In the near future key factors, influencing on interaction between the EAEU and the ASEAN, seem to be achievements of the EAEU-Vietnam free trade zone, signing of new free trade agreements (first of all, with Singapore) and development of the partnership between Russia and the ASEAN.

The phenomenon of the EAEU-ASEAN cooperation is expressed not so much in establishment of certain joint structures and format of interaction, as in assistance to connectivity between states of the EAEU and Southeast Asia (including Eurasian dimension of cooperation). Eurasian dialogue with the ASEAN was launched mostly as a political initiative. Russia is often perceived in the Asia-Pacific region as a rather political, than economic figure, and the EAEU – as a pure Russian integration project. However EAEU-ASEAN interaction has certain potential to convert political “resource” of Russia and the EAEU into the first steps of real economic integration of post-Soviet space with Southeast Asia

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ASEAN Dialogue Partners: States, cooperating with the ASEAN and sharing mission and vision of the Association. Cooperation is based on joint decisions and joint planning and implementation of cooperation activities. Cooperation is more focused on larger programs of mutual benefit, which have impact on the development of Southeast Asia and the dialogue relations.

ASEAN Secretariat: A unit in the framework of the ASEAN. It coordinates works of the ASEAN organs and assists to implementation of ASEAN projects and activities.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): A regional inter-government organization, uniting ten states of Southeast Asia, which promotes inter-government cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and socio-cultural integration among its members and other countries.

Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC): The permanent regulatory body of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) that aims to ensure the functioning and development of the EAEU.

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU): An international organization for regional economic integration on the Post-Soviet space. It has international legal personality. The EAEU entered into force since the beginning of 2015 and consists of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

Greater Eurasian Partnership: The Eurasian initiative of Russia, aimed at the formation of a complex, multi-level system of multilateral cooperation with the participation of the EAEU, the ASEAN and the SCO countries.

Indo-Pacific Region: A concept of the expanded Asia-Pacific region with inclusion of the area of the Indian Ocean. This concept is promoted by the United States under conditions of rise of contradictions with China.

One Belt, One Road (OBOR), or ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative (BRI): The Chinese infrastructure mega-project, aimed at connectivity with Europe and followed by investments from China.

Pivot to the East (or ‘Povorot na Vostok’): A concept of Russian government and complex of measures, having been realized in the 2000-2010s and oriented for the enlargement of cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region and development of Eastern territories of Russia.