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**EAEU POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE –
THE FUTURE OF EURASIAN INTEGRATION**

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1. Introduction

Despite of economic discrepancies between participants and unpredictable factors, such as an international fiscal crisis, a pandemic and a subsequent socioeconomic turbulence as well as political unrest, which deteriorate the accuracy of long-term projections, development of integration policies and adoption of effective governance patterns constitute a reliable framework for the evaluation of transboundary cooperation projects. In view of these considerations, the width and depth of integration cannot be measured by periodic economic trends but should be appraised pursuant to qualitative variables extracted from the main accepted theories of the respective subfield of integration of international political economy. Correspondingly, functioning of a governance cannot be ascertained by changing factors but by stable criteria drawn from public administration and governance theoretical analyses.

The most notable theories of interstate economic integration are two: the theory of economic integration of B. Balassa and the theory of “deep integration”. The Balassa’s theory (1961), which examines forms of economic collaboration, is the cornerstone in the history of integration and the model of development of the EU that has been the most successful endeavour ever (Sapir, 2011). The deep integration theory consists of uniform approaches regarding policies on which the participants of an economic association are cooperate with each other and can be considered as a second framework of evaluation of integration projects after this of Balassa.

Functioning of public governance corresponds to a spectrum of criteria derived from the discipline of public administration; that is to say ‘checks and balances’, multilevel interaction of decision-making bodies, accountability and commitment to law. The theory of “good governance” in international organizations has enriched this spectrum with the benchmarks of “participation, fairness and transparency” (Woods, 1999), while the analysis of benefits of states’ participation in international organizations has pointed out protection of individual rights, enhanced dialogue between national institutions and pursuing of objectives of public interest as main qualitative aspects (Keohane et. al, 2009).

On this basis, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is a case study of regional integration with regard to its responsiveness to the aforementioned theories and approaches. Particularly, EAEU economic sectors are able to be assessed by the levels of integration and the policies that Balassa's and deep integration theories respectively advocate. Additionally, Eurasian governance's matching to criteria and benchmarks of public administration and governance theoretical tools is a key issue for consideration that broadens the framework of assessment of the EAEU and enhances comprehensive evaluation of Eurasian integration.

Against this backdrop, the article is developed in three parts. The first analyzes the forms and depth of EAEU integration by the two economic integration theories. The second part checks out functions and interoperability of EAEU bodies with respect to patterns provided by public administration and governance approaches. Taking into account the outcomes of the first two parts, the third validates the perspectives on the future of Eurasian integration with reference to the linkage of the EAEU with other integration organizations and associations of Eurasia, namely the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as well as Russian grand strategy and its impact on the world order.

2. EAEU's forms and depth of integration

Theory of regional integration entails differentiated approaches in relation to the forms of interstate economic partnership. In any case, the first and decisive step for a stable economic cooperation among states is the establishment of a free trade area (Lloyd, 1996). The next crucial advance is the creation of a customs union (Lipsey, 1960) and, accordingly, the setting-up of a common market follows (Baldwin and Venables, 1995). After the completion of these stages, an economic union is potential and considered the milestone in integration processes.

The most comprehensive theory of integration is that of Balassa, because it fully and concomitantly promotes analysis of economic cooperation transformations in all dimensions. Balassa (1961) considered integration as a process starting from a free trade regime and expanding successively into a customs union, a common market and an economic union that is the threshold to complete integration. Notwithstanding, prerequisites to "total integration" are the level and the effectiveness of governance, which Balassa (1961) determined as "a supranational authority" that issues "binding decisions" in association with "unification of integration policies".

The EAEU is a significant case of cumulative integration. The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (TEAEU) prescribes that the EAEU is based on

two constitutional and functional pillars: The Customs Union (CU) and the Common Economic Space (CES) (TEAEU, parts two and three). The CU brings together a free trade area, a customs union and an internal market. In particular, article 25 TEAEU defines the existence and functioning of the CU and the Common Customs Tariff (CCT of the EAEU) as well as of the internal market. Article 26 TEAEU stipulates the establishment of internal market that “includes the economic space” of member states “with free movement of goods, persons, services and capital”, without applying import and export customs duties, taxes and fees in mutual trade.

Part two of the TEAEU lays down foreign trade policy of the Union and a bunch of policies supporting the operation of the CU. Foreign trade policy is the means for the development of EAEU’s external relations. It is implemented according to the articles 33-50 TEAEU which provide cooperation with third parties in the formats of most favored nation treatment, free trade regime and tariff preferences, within the meaning of GATT 1994¹, as well as export development measures and trade remedies that are compatible with World Trade Organization (WTO) law (Ibid., preamble). Customs regulation is complemented by technical regulation, sanitary measures, consumer protection policy and the feasibility of member states to establishing special economic areas and free warehouses as it is prescribed by articles 51, 56, 61 and 27 TEAEU, respectively. Therefore, EAEU’s CU is not only a typical customs union but is also a corridor of integration into the global economic system and a driver of growth.

Part three of the TEAEU sets up the CES that comprises a wide array of policies constituting an economic union. To Balassa (1961), an economic union, in conjunction with eradication of trade barriers, is distinguished from common market by “harmonization of economic, monetary, social and countercyclical policies”. The EAEU matches up with this approach, given that sections XIII to XXVI of the TEAEU establish macroeconomic and monetary policies, liberalization of trade in services and investments, regulation of financial markets, tax, competition, natural monopolies, energy, transport, state procurement, intellectual property, industrial, agricultural and labor migration policies. Besides common EAEU budget, within the framework of macroeconomic policy, member states develop extensive forecasts on socioeconomic development of the Union and conduct monetary policy that opens the way to a future monetary union (TEAEU, articles 62-64 and annexes 14-15). Natural monopolies and labor migration are socially impregnated policies, while financial markets and taxation conduce to countercyclical economic and monetary policies.

¹ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1994.

Furthermore, general harmonization of all EAEU policies is ensured by a flexibility clause rendered by the TEAEU. Articles 1-2 TEAEU prescribe the conduct of agreed, common and coordinated policies in economic sectors of the EAEU, wherein, respectively, harmonized and unified regulations as well as common approaches are issued and developed on the basis of decisions and working of EAEU bodies. Regardless of their categorization, EAEU policies urge intersectoral harmonization of member states' laws. For instance, economic and monetary policies, which are pillars to the completion of economic integration, despite they are not determined as common but as agreed policies, they well secure harmonization of respective national policies (Ibid.). Respectively, coordinated policies on transport and agricultural sectors² promote common markets and thus harmonized law (Ibid., sections XXI and XXV). In this way, the EAEU avoids potential nationalist centrifugal forces and fully accords with an economic union.

Although its policies are mostly harmonized and not unified, the EAEU should be regarded as a quasi-total integrated entity. The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) is the supranational body of the Union that coincides with the "supranational authority" of Balassa's theory. It is composed of a supranational Board and an intergovernmental Council (Ibid., article 8). The Board of the EEC is the "executive branch of the Union" and, just like the Council, exercises legislative responsibilities (Ibid., annex 1, paragraphs 43-46, 51-52 and 54; Apostolakis and Margaritou, 2018). It consists of members (ministers) that are nationals of member states who carry out their duties independently without interference from national governments (Ibid., annex 1, paragraphs 32-34 and annex 32, paragraph 2). According to the provisions of annex 1, paragraph 13, TEAEU, "the EEC adopts decisions with regulatory and binding effect for the Member States" and its decisions "form part of the EAEU law and are directly applicable on the territories of the Member States". Hence, the EAEU should be regarded as a quasi-total integrated entity that can be further developed.

In order for the EAEU to fulfill total integration, the member states should advance their cooperation towards unification of integration policies and to a more supranational EAEU. To accomplish these goals, the TEAEU provides both for the expansion of policies and for an implicit transfer of responsibilities to the EEC. Article 5 TEAEU stipulates that "the EAEU has jurisdiction within the scope and under the limits of the TEAEU", whereas the member states are able to expand their cooperation in other economic sectors that are not prescribed by the TEAEU but are in line with the objectives of the Union. The main objectives of

² The TEAEU determines transport policy as "coordinated (agreed)" and, conversely, agricultural policy as "agreed (coordinated)".

the Union (Ibid., article 4), namely sustainable economic development, improvement of living standards, common market with 'four freedoms' and strengthening global competitiveness of national economies, formulate a very broad set of integration policies which is flanked by the perspective of empowerment of the EEC; given that the TEAEU reserves for the latter literally unlimited competencies (Ibid., annex 1, paragraphs 3-4)³. That is why the transition of the EAEU to the terminal of integration process is reasonable and achievable.

The second all-encompassing theory, which focuses on the range of integration policies, is the theory of deep integration. According to P. Lloyd's approach (2008), a deep integration partnership exceeds the limits of free trade transactions and extends to more extensive forms of cooperation. To S. Claar and A. Nölke (2013) a deep integration process pursues harmonization of market legislation and technical regulations as well as coordinated policies on investments, competition, industrial cooperation and intellectual policy. G. Wignaraja, D. Ramizo and L. Burmeister (2013) highlighted the sectors of investments, services, intellectual property and state procurement as essential features of deep integration. Correspondingly, J. Ahcar and J. Siroën (2017) underlined in their analysis the aforementioned policies including rural development, energy, taxation and consumer protection. In short, deep integration reflects enhanced cooperation policies that can be derived from common markets even from economic unions.

In the case of the EAEU, deep integration theory illustrates Union's dynamic perspectives using TEAEU's potential. As determined above, the EAEU far exceeds an FTA and a common market, due to the fact it is an advanced

³ Particularly, paragraphs 3 and 4 stipulate:

"The Commission shall operate within the powers provided for by the Treaty and international treaties within the Union in the following areas:

1) customs tariff and non-tariff regulation; 2) customs regulations; 3) technical regulations; 4) sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and phytosanitary quarantine measures; 5) transfer and distribution of import customs duties; 6) establishment of trade regimes for third parties; 7) statistics of foreign and mutual trade; 8) macroeconomic policy; 9) competition policy; 10) industrial and agricultural subsidies; 11) energy policy; 12) natural monopolies; 13) state and/or municipal procurement; 14) mutual trade in services and investments; 15) transport and transportation; 16) monetary policy; 17) intellectual property; 18) labour migration; 19) financial markets (banking, insurance, the currency market, the securities market); 20) other spheres as specified in the Treaty and other international treaties within the Union.

The Commission shall, within its powers, ensure the implementation of international treaties that form the Union law".

economic union with agreed macroeconomic and monetary policies close to total integration. Additionally, it totally corresponds to the proposed integration policies on technical regulation, consumer protection, investments and services, taxation, competition, energy, state procurement, intellectual property, industry and rural development (TEAEU, articles 51-55, 60-61, 65-69, 71-73, 74-77, 79-85, 89-91, 92-93, 94-95). On the whole, by considering the width and depth of policies that the TEAEU establishes, the EAEU not only concurs with the examples of deep integration theory but it clearly transcends them.

In summary, in the matter of cooperation policies, the EAEU is a successful and very promising organization of regional integration. As shown in table 1 and explained above with the assistance of the two theories of integration, since its inception the EAEU has made a fourfold transition (EEC, 2019a). By dint of the TEAEU, a free trade area, a customs union, a common market and an economic union established from the very beginning of the EAEU and an extensive set of policies has been developed over time. The EAEU manifestly exceeds standards of deep integration theory and thanks to the EEC meets with total integration model. From this point forward, the evolution of the EAEU depends on functionality of its governance.

Table 1: EAEU's integration assessment

Integration levels		EAEU
Free trade area		√
Customs union		√
Common market		√
Economic union		√
“Deep integration”		√
“Total integration”	Supranational authority	√
	Unified policies	—

Source: Developed by the author

3. EAEU governance

Public administration and governance provide analysis of organization and functioning of state sector with a large range of assessment parameters (Osborne, 2006). In principle, excluding variables that depend on periodic planning and updating (e.g., objectives during a programming period, changing inputs and outputs, etc.), the assessment parameters, whether they refer to government or intergovernmental/supranational entities, can be grouped in four core criteria. The fundamental, which originates from the political philosophy of Aristotle, Locke and Montesquieu, is separation of powers into legislative, executive and judiciary

branches (Mavrias, 2004; Kitromilides, 2004) that uphold checks and balances between institutions (Strauss, 1984). As an extension, multilevel governance secures interaction of decision-making bodies and reconciles national and supranational interests (Moravcsik, 1993). Accordingly, accountability, both hierarchical, economic and democratic, is a *sine qua non* condition for the cohesion of a governance system (Jones, 2000), while the development of law order that adheres to international law is critical for its resilience and sustainability (Sterling-Folker, 2013; Hurrell, 2007).

In general terms, EAEU governance matches to the four criteria. First and foremost, the Union's power is separated into the three branches and the TEAEU attains satisfactory checks and balances between EAEU bodies. The Supreme Eurasian Economic Council (SEEC-Heads of state), the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council (EIC-Heads of government) and the EEC (Council of the EEC-Deputy heads of government, Board of the EEC-Ministers) exercise legislative functions likewise the Board of the EEC that also constitutes the executive branch, while the Court is the judiciary body of the EAEU (TEAEU, articles 13, 17, 18, 19, annex 1, paragraph 31).

The Court exercises justice independently and has budgetary autonomy and administrative independence (Ibid., annex 2, paragraphs 3-5, 14-15, 17 and 22-27). It resolves disputes regarding the implementation of EAEU law and on possible omissions of the EEC at requests of member states and economic entities (Ibid., annex 2, paragraph 39). The Court also delivers its opinion on clarification of EAEU law and examines appeals against its own first instance decisions (Ibid., annex 2, paragraphs 46-47, 79). Despite the SEEC solves matters concerning failures of member states and of the EEC on execution of Court's decisions (Ibid., annex 2, paragraphs 114-115), which is mostly a political qualification for the further development of Eurasian integration, the judiciary is a structure that contributes to the functional balance of the EAEU.

Checks and balances between legislative and executive branches are well-articulated and frame a model to reconcile integration between intergovernmental and supranational authorities. The SEEC, the EIC and the EEC issue decisions but these of the EIC prevail over those of the EEC and, correspondingly, SEEC's prevail over the decisions of the other two bodies (Ibid., article 6, paragraph 4). Additionally, the SEEC may cancel or amend decisions of the EIC and the EEC in the same manner the EIC and the Council of the EEC are respectively able to cancel or amend decisions of the EEC and the Board (Ibid., article 12, paragraph 8, article 16, paragraph 7, annex 1, paragraphs 24 and 30). However, SEEC's and EIC's decisions are enforceable according to the procedures prescribed in national law orders, in contrast with the decisions of the EEC that have binding effect and are directly applicable in member states (Ibid., article 6, paragraph 1, annex 1, paragraph 13). Moreover, the Board of the EEC implements the decisions of the

other three bodies adopting its own decisions, dispositions and recommendations, while it prepares the agendas of their meetings jointly with the Council (Ibid., annex 1, paragraphs 43 and 51). Although at first glance the three legislative intergovernmental bodies seem to dominate EAEU governance, the supranational executive branch ensures Union's function (Margaritou, 2020).

Unquestionably, EAEU governance is multilevel and concretely developed in six levels that interlink intergovernmental and supranational bodies with national authorities and civil society. Starting from the top, the first three levels are the heads of state (SEEC), the heads of government (EIC) and their deputies (Council of the EEC), while the ministers of the Union (Board of the EEC) form the fourth level. National authorities and services, which are involved to the implementation of Union's policies, constitute the fifth level, while their delegates that participate in the advisory bodies of the Board of the EEC, in parallel with representatives from business and scientific community, NGOs as well as independent experts (Ibid., annex 1, paragraphs 44-46), shape the sixth level. At the base of governance civil society introduces its proposals and promotes them through consultations with the Board of the EEC to the higher levels of Union's institutions. As a result, the six levels of Eurasian multilevel governance embody a dual process of inputs and outputs that enhances productive cooperation and convergence between member states.

Furthermore, multilevel governance gives rise to accountability. EAEU organization corresponds to the tenets of hierarchical and economic control but needs to enhance democratic representation. As described above, interoperability of the six governance levels dovetails with controls from the top to the bottom during the decision-making and implementation of policies processes as well as with the right of organized civil society for representation to the Union. At the same time, the TEAEU enables full review of bodies activities stipulating that an audit group and a group of inspectors conduct financial, economic and budgetary control both on the bodies and the Union (Ibid., articles 21-22). Indirectly, the EAEU achieves partial response to democratic control condition given that directly elected officials compose the SEEC and taking into account the provisions on EEC's advisory groups. Nevertheless, the establishment of a parliament would enable citizens of member states to directly elect their representatives to the Union fostering as a result individual interaction with Eurasian integration and making the latter extremely resilient in the long run.

Concerning law order, the EAEU legal system demonstrates a remarkable adherence to international law and is constantly being developed. At the preamble of the TEAEU, EAEU member states declare their attachment to WTO law and assert their commitment to the UN Charter as well as to "other universally recognized principles and regulations of international law". In this way, provisions on foreign trade policy and other integration policies contain general

references to GATT 1994 and to WTO rules and regulations. The Statute of the Court provides that “in the exercise of justice the Court applies the generally recognized principles and regulations of international law” (Ibid., annex 2, paragraph 50, subparagraph 1). Thanks to this set of provisions, the EAEU is interconnected with international organization and advances modernization of member states economies as well as reforms based on the rule of law. As has already been mentioned, the decisions of EAEU bodies are directly applicable or enforceable according to internal procedures of member states, whose national law orders provide for adaptation to international treaties and to legal acts of international organizations, such as the TEAEU and the decisions of EAEU bodies. At all events, commitment to integration processes and adaptation to a union’s law is first and foremost a matter of political will.

Apart from the core criteria, in the framework of international organizations, theory of governance has additionally emerged important benchmarks. According to the good governance approach of N. Woods (1999) “participation, fairness and transparency”, which derive from multilevel governance and accountability, should be counted as critical standards for the evaluation of governance effectiveness. In addition, with respect to law order, Keohane et al. (2009) indicated that through international organizations member states can enhance the protection of individual rights, urge dialogue between internal institutions and pursue objectives of public interest.

In this light, the EAEU responds positively to the benchmarks. Regarding good governance standards, the EAEU is an open, fair and transparent system. Member states are equally represented in Union’s bodies and have a single vote in decision-making procedures (Margaritou, 2018). The SEEC, the EIC and the Council of the EEC decide by consensus, while the Board of the EEC adopt decisions by consensus or qualified majority either qualified majority of two-thirds (TEAEU, articles 13, 17 and 18); plus, that the members of the bodies hold rotating chairmanships on a national basis (Ibid., article 8, paragraph 4, annex 1, paragraphs 28 and 33). Besides permanent interaction of the Board of the EEC with advisory groups, the chairmen of the SEEC, the EIC and the Council of the EEC can invite at their meetings any other person that may be essential for Union’s policy-making (Ibid., articles 11 and 15, annex 1, paragraph 27). Moreover, information on meetings is accessible to the public and the acts of the bodies are published on the website of the Union (Ibid., article 111, annex 2, paragraph 116).

EAEU governance is doing well at Keohane’s et al. approach. It is clear that the commitment of the TEAEU to the UN Charter, which prevails over any other international treaty (UN Charter, article 103), in conjunction with the Statute of the International Court of Justice that is an integral part of the Charter (Ibid, article 92), stands in favor of enhanced protection of individual rights on the

territories of member states. That is why the TEAEU stipulates that “in the exercise of justice the Court of the EAEU may apply other international treaties to which the states are participants” (Ibid., annex 2, paragraph 50). To this extent, direct applicability of EEC’s decisions means recognition of rights and obligations to natural persons (Ibid., annex 2, paragraph 39; Kanellopoulos, 2010). By virtue of EAEU law, in tandem with decision-making processes at the level of the Union, member states are engaged in a regular dialogue between national institutions and representatives of civil society. In the same sense, the TEAEU deploys integration policies, such as, for instance, macroeconomic programming, natural monopolies, agricultural development and labour migration that have a public interest effect both horizontally and vertically.

In summation, EAEU governance is functional and sustainable but has room for improvement. As it is marked in table 2, apart from Union’s responsiveness to the core criteria and benchmarks, member states may reexamine SEEC’s power to determining execution of Court’s decisions that member states or the EEC fail to comply with. In such a scenario, the Court would be more powerful deteriorating SEEC’s authority only to legal and political matters. However, the supreme body enjoys this privilege in order to preserve the unity of the Union. It is of political importance for the EAEU to finding solutions in matters that discourage member states and potential members from getting further engaged in integration processes. For this reason, a potential enhancement of the Court versus the SEEC could be a field of negotiation in the distant future, when the EAEU will be larger. Against this background, the main high priority for the Union is the creation of a direct elected parliament through which the EEC will foster and bolster strong linkages between peoples of member states; just as the EU did overtime. Be that as it may, the EAEU is in principle a model of balanced and good governance that supplements and supports economic integration.

Table 2: EAEU’s governance assessment

Core criteria		Specified benchmarks	
Separation of powers – checks and balances	√ *Potential enhancement of the Court	Participation and fairness	√
Multilevel governance	√		
Accountability	√ *Establishment of parliament	Transparency	√

Law order	√	Enhancing protection of individual rights, urging dialogue between internal institutions and pursuing objectives of public interest	√
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Source: Developed by the author

4. The future of Eurasian integration

The EAEU is not only an international organization but is the foundation of a set of multitasking integration processes that intersect each other forming a new order in Eurasia and at the level of the international system. Eurasian integration promotes both the development and security of its participants and enfold various organizations and cooperation initiatives. Aside from the EAEU, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP) constitute a very wide framework of interregional and intercontinental cooperation. By and large, Russia is at the center of organizations and most mainly in the EAEU, the CIS, the CSTO and the GEP as well as in the SCO along with China that runs the BRI. Russia and China together with India, which also is a member of the SCO, cooperate with Brazil and South Africa into the BRICS.

The EAEU, the CIS and the CSTO are tightly associated and form the most coherent part of integration. In respect of cooperation between post-soviet states, the CIS has been the continuity of the USSR and the matrix of the CSTO and the EAEU. EAEU member states and Tajikistan are member states of the CSTO wherein they join their forces in the spheres of security and defense (Margaritou, 2018); altogether, along with Uzbekistan and Moldova, are member countries of CIS free trade area (Molchanov, 2015). Into the framework of the CIS, member states systemically develop multisectoral collaboration, as for example in economic development, energy, transport and security (CIS, 2020a; CIS, 2020b), paving the way for gradual harmonization of regulations of the CIS with legislative acts of the EAEU (CIS, 2020c). The CIS also provides for closer cooperation with the CSTO and the SCO (CIS, 2021a). At all events, it is an organization that gives Moscow a stage to fight off Russophobia and to make widely known Russia's views on international relations (President of Russia, 2019). Both the CIS and especially the CSTO are ideal structures to accompany a future transition of the EAEU to the Eurasian Union (EAU) (Putin, 2011).

Like all endeavours of international cooperation, integration organizations and processes are parts of grand strategy of the most powerful state that promotes them (Papasotiriou, 2011; Margaritou, 2020). Although derived from the historic initiative of Nursultan Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev, 1998), Eurasian integration and the EA(E)U are main components of contemporary Russian grand strategy that aims to sustainable development and enhanced security of Eurasia and its adjacent regions (Security Council, 2015). In that regard, the EAEU has concluded free trade agreements with Vietnam, Iran (interim agreement), Singapore and Serbia (EEC, 2017; 2018, 2019b; 2019c) as well as memoranda of understanding with ASEAN, MERCOSUR, the Pacific Alliance, the African Union and other entities around the globe (EEC, 2019a). Eurasian integration's influence has been spread even to the Caribbean Sea, provided that the EAEU granted Cuba with the status of observer to the Union (EEC, 2020); which was a political act of high symbolic value, taking into consideration the Cold War alliance of the USSR with Cuba and their confrontation with the US (Allison and Zelikow, 1999).

Moreover, Moscow has remarkably expressed its interest for the Eurasian – Pacific region at the initiative of president Putin on the formation of the GEP. The GEP is going to enhance partnership of Russia with ASEAN (ASEAN, 2016) and to encompass a structured cooperation of the latter with the EAEU and the SCO taking into account the implementation of the BRI (Li, 2018). Outspokenly, Kremlin's grand strategy on Eurasian integration and organization envisages prosperity and stability both for the broader Eurasian intercontinental region (EEC, 2019d) and the world as well as a leading role for the country to the formation of a “sustainable and fair world order” as it is determined by the security and foreign policy concepts of the Russian Federation (Security Council, 2015; 2016).

Eurasian integration has also fostered the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership (President of Russia, 2016a; 2016b) and has favored Beijing to implement its aspirations for a rejuvenated economic order both in Asia and Eurasia as well as at the global level (State Council, 2017; 2019). Since its inception as ‘Shanghai Five’ and until the accession of India and Pakistan in 2017, the SCO had been a Eurasian dominated organization due to the fact that, apart from China, the rest of the members were member states of the CIS, the CSTO and the EAEU. The BRI is to a high extent dependent on the SCO (SCO, 2019) and the EAEU (EEC, 2019e), which cover a vast amount of the geographical area of the venture, plus the fact that the EAEU has concluded an agreement with China on harmonization of the BRI with Eurasian integration (Ibid., 2019e). Backed by Eurasian integration's stability and Russia's security capabilities and energy supplies (Gazprom, 2017), the PRC focused to the signing of agreement for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) that is a free trade agreement between China, ASEAN, Japan, North Korea, Australia and New Zealand (RCEP, 2020). In the meantime, China has claimed reforms on world's

financial and trade systems as well as on reconstruction of global economic governance (State Council, 2019).

As a result of Eurasian integration, Moscow's and Beijing's views on a new world order are very convergent. At the end of contemporaneous Russian chairmanships at the SCO and the BRICS, the member states issued a joint 'Moscow declaration' in each organization to claim the configuration of a new world order. In particular, at the BRICS summit, the leaders called for an "inclusive, equitable, more representative and multipolar international system" as well as for a "more democratic international governance with greater participation of developing countries" stressing the necessity for reforms in "the UN, the WTO, the WHO and the IMF" (President of Russia, 2020). Similarly, in the framework of SCO summit, heads of state argued for "multipolarity" of the world order and "reformation of the existing international financial institutions" as well as for the openness of global economy denouncing "protectionism and politicization of international economic relations" (SCO, 2020). Moreover, SCO member states marked the GEP as an ideal frame for "equal and mutually beneficial cooperation" and, except for India, which has been at odds with China, they reaffirmed their support for the BRI (Ibid.). Undoubtedly, grand strategies of Russia and China are deeply interconnected and generate new dynamics in governance of the international system as soon as the RCEP is considered as an alternative to the former US-led TPP (Hamilton, 2014), while the BRI proceeds to Europe.

Nevertheless, the potential of Eurasian integration has not yet been fully exploited. Apart from a possible connection of the EAEU with the RCEP, which is an expected option (EEC, 2021), Eurasian integration has not yet gotten in touch with Euratlantic integration. Eurasian project has been deteriorated mostly to Asia-Pacific because Western powers contain Russia in order to deter a potential USSR revival and a subsequent Russian threat against the NATO and the EU (NATO, 2020; President of the US, 2015; 2017; EU, 2016; 2019). Historically this is at least paradox, given that European powers (Napoleonic France and Hitler's Germany) tried twice to conquer Russia and Russia stand up twice with Europe and the US against totalitarianism, fascism and Nazism in two world wars.

Russia is both European and Asian, western and eastern, due to its civilization and geographic territory that stretch from Eastern Europe to the Far East, across from Alaska. As an intercontinental state and the largest country in the world, Russia can naturally be part of any integration process intended to assist development and to enhance security both at regional and at international level. Eurasian integration can effectively link the EAEU with the EU and the US as well as the NATO with the CSTO and the SCO uniting efforts and harmonizing policies for sustainable social and economic development of peoples in the 21st century. By taking advantage of Eurasian integration and other integration

projects, Moscow, Brussels, Washington and Beijing are able to face global and regional challenges equally and side by side.

5. Conclusion

The EAEU is a well-developed organization and Eurasian integration has the potential to influence a deep change in the current transforming world order. The concept of evaluation does not depend on changing data but it has been formed by qualitative variables that are drawn from theories of economic integration and public administration and governance, in order depth of integration and functioning of the Union to be detected. Assessment of EAEU policies and governance showed almost complete correspondence to the particular criteria. Subsequently, examination of EAEU's linkage with other Eurasian organizations and integration associations indicated that Eurasian integration endeavour as a whole has empowered Russia, China and their strategic alignment at the level of international system but it can also lead to a broader cooperation with western powers.

To a great extent EAEU policies accord with the two theories that determine grade of integration. According to the theory of economic integration of Balassa, the EAEU is a quasi-total integrated entity. Despite EAEU policies are mostly harmonized and not unified, which is one of the two main criteria for a transition to total integration, the other is function of a supranational authority that adopts binding decisions, the TEAEU incorporates a free trade regime, a customs union, an internal market and an economic union, which are governed by the supranational Board of the EEC that issues decisions with binding effect that are directly applicable in member states. Additionally, applying the deep integration theory, which proposes a diverse range of cooperation policies, the EAEU highly exceeds it via the CU and the CES that introduce a broad array of integration sectors. Thus, in order to complete total integration prerequisites, the EAEU has to shift all of its policies to supranational level and to grant the EEC with even more responsibilities.

EAEU governance tallies with core criteria and specified benchmarks derived by public administration and governance approaches. In particular, EAEU governance is organized on the basis of checks and balances principle and secures harmonious functioning of legislative, executive and judiciary bodies, while it preserves a multilevel decision-making and policy-implementing framework of operation. The SEEC, the EIC, the Council and the Board of the EEC, which is permanently connected with advisory groups of civil society and national authorities, constitute a functional whole of inputs and outputs that enhances integration as well as internal and external accountability of the EAEU. Commitment of the TEAEU to the UN Charter and WTO law and adherence of the Statute of the Court to international law tightly link the EAEU with

international organization. Equal representation and voting in EAEU bodies and publication of their acts on official EAEU websites respond to international organization's good governance benchmarks for 'participation, fairness and transparency', while Eurasian law order meets the relevant expectations for protection of individual rights, enhanced national dialogue and pursuing objectives of public interest. Hence, the appropriate step for strengthening EAEU governance is the establishment of a 'Eurasian parliament'.

Eurasian integration has the force to reshape the world order, enhancing Russia's and China's alliance in international system and increasing perspectives on a potential collective-great power cooperation that could start with a Russo-Euratlantic rapprochement. Linkage of the EAEU with the CIS and the CSTO boosted integration of Eurasian states, while their interaction with the SCO upgraded the convergence of Russian and Chinese grand strategies, which in turn led to the expansion of Eurasian integration to broader projects such as the BRI and the GEP. Although the BRI is steadily being developed and ideally supplements the RCEP as well as Chinese aspirations for a restructured world economic system, the GEP has to make further steps not necessarily only towards ASEAN and the RCEP but also to the EU and the US. Eurasian integration is an open and very promising multisectoral project that can bring together the great powers of the 21st century in equal and fair terms for the sake of global peace and uniform development of the world. For this to happen, Brussels and Washington need to reconsider risks and losses of the long-term containment policy against Russia and to reexamine the importance of Moscow's full participation to global governance's consultations. Russia is the 'heart' of Eurasian integration and bridges Europe with Asia and Northern America.

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