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## **KAZAKHSTAN IN EURASIAN REGIONALISM: PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This article raises an important issue of Kazakhstan's potential to transcend the traditional understanding of Eurasian regionalism, which is mainly associated with the post-Soviet space, including the Eurasian Economic Union. The authors question the broadening of the definition of "Eurasian regionalism" and assess new opportunities for Kazakhstan's participation in the Eurasian regional process within a broader continental context. Approaching Eurasian regionalism from a new perspective allows us to consider Kazakhstan not only as a participant in the post-Soviet space, but also as a key player at the continental level. The article raises the question of Kazakhstan's capabilities in the context of Eurasian regionalism, given its geopolitical location and economic potential; the limitations of Kazakhstan's participation in regional initiatives such as the EAEU and SCO compared to global trends and roles in the region. The article examines the new challenge for Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries as maintaining independence in the face of changes in the geopolitical environment; the role of international cooperation and integration for Kazakhstan as a strategic element in its foreign policy and economic development. The necessity of diversity of external relations and strategic partnership for Kazakhstan in the conditions of multi-vector approach is emphasized. The article also points out the importance of Kazakhstan's active participation in international integration processes and its role in global production chains and infrastructure projects to strengthen the economy and increase the country's status in the global community.

**Keywords:** Kazakhstan, multi-vector foreign policy, Eurasian regionalism, EAEU

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### **Еуразиялық аймақтанудағы Қазақстан: мәселені тұжырымдау**

Бұл мақала Қазақстанның Еуразиялық Экономикалық Одақты қоса алғанда, негізінен посткеңестік кеңістікпен байланысатын еуразиялық аймақтану туралы дәстүрлі түсініктен асып түсу мүмкіндіктері туралы маңызды мәселені көтереді. Мақала авторлары "еуразиялық аймақтану" анықтамасын кеңейту туралы сұрақ қояды және кең континенттік контекст шеңберінде Қазақстанның еуразиялық аймақтану процеске қатысуы үшін жаңа мүмкіндіктерді бағалайды. Еуразиялық аймақтануға жаңа перспективадан көзқарас Қазақстанды посткеңестік кеңістіктің қатысушысы ретінде ғана емес, континенттік деңгейдегі негізгі ойыншы ретінде де қарастыруға мүмкіндік береді. Мақала Қазақстанның геосаяси орналасуы мен экономикалық әлеуетін ескере отырып, еуразиялық аймақтану контекстіндегі мүмкіндіктері туралы; өңірдегі жаһандық үрдістер мен рөлдермен салыстырғанда Қазақстанның ЕАЭО және ШЫҰ сияқты өңірлік бастамаларға қатысуын шектеу туралы мәселені көтереді. Мақалада Қазақстан мен Орталық Азияның басқа да елдері үшін геосаяси жағдайдағы өзгерістер жағдайында тәуелсіздікті сақтау ретінде жаңа сын-қатер; Қазақстан үшін халықаралық ынтымақтастық пен интеграцияның оның сыртқы саясаты мен экономикалық дамуындағы стратегиялық элемент ретіндегі рөлі қарастырылады. Көпвекторлы тәсіл жағдайында Қазақстан үшін сыртқы байланыстар мен стратегиялық әріптестіктің әртүрлілігінің қажеттілігі атап өтіледі. Мақала сондай-ақ Қазақстанның халықаралық интеграциялық процестерге белсенді қатысуының маңыздылығын және оның әлемдік өндірістік тізбектер мен инфрақұрылымдық жобалардағы экономиканы нығайту және елдің әлемдік қоғамдастықтағы мәртебесін арттыру үшін рөлін көрсетеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Қазақстан, көпвекторлы сыртқы саясат, еуразиялық аймақтану, ЕАЭО.

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### Казахстан в евразийском регионализме: постановка проблемы

Настоящая статья поднимает важную проблему о возможностях Казахстана превзойти традиционное понимание евразийского регионализма, которое, в основном, связывается с постсоветским пространством, включая Евразийский Экономический Союз. Авторы статьи задаются вопросом о расширении определения «евразийский регионализм» и оценивают новые возможности для участия Казахстана в евразийском региональном процессе в рамках более широкого континентального контекста. Подход к евразийскому регионализму с новой перспективы позволяет рассмотреть Казахстан не только в качестве участника постсоветского пространства, но и как ключевого игрока на континентальном уровне. Статья поднимает вопрос о возможностях Казахстана в контексте евразийского регионализма, учитывая его геополитическое расположение и экономический потенциал; ограничения участия Казахстана в региональных инициативах, таких как ЕАЭС и ШОС, в сравнении с глобальными тенденциями и ролями в регионе. В статье рассматривается новый вызов для Казахстана и других стран Центральной Азии, как сохранение независимости в условиях изменений в геополитической обстановке; роль международного сотрудничества и интеграции для Казахстана как стратегического элемента в его внешней политике и экономическом развитии. Подчеркивается необходимость разнообразия внешних связей и стратегического партнерства для Казахстана в условиях многовекторного подхода. Статья также указывает на важность активного участия Казахстана в международных интеграционных процессах и его роль в глобальных производственных цепочках и инфраструктурных проектах для укрепления экономики и повышения статуса страны в мировом сообществе.

**Ключевые слова:** Казахстан, многовекторная внешняя политика, евразийский регионализм, ЕАЭС

#### Introduction

Given shifting geopolitical landscapes, regional endeavors emerge as crucial for securing stability and progress. Eurasian regionalism embodies a collective endeavor among regional nations to address shared challenges and pursue mutual objectives, lessening reliance on global frameworks and organizations.

Eurasian regionalism is evidenced by diverse initiatives, organizations, and strategies fostering enhanced collaboration and integration among Eurasian nations.

The involvement from countries with varying economic development, natural resource availability, geographic, and geopolitical positioning in Eurasian regionalism suggests the establishment of a more resilient and vibrant cooperation platform. This fosters balanced, mutually advantageous collaboration, mindful of each country's distinct capabilities and requirements. For instance, nations boasting advanced infrastructure and robust economies can extend technical and financial assistance to less developed counterparts, catalyzing their economic advancement. In return, these less developed nations can offer access to their natural resources in exchange for investment and technology transfer. Geographic and geopolitical positioning

significantly influences each country's strategic significance.

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Geographic and geopolitical positioning significantly influences each country's strategic significance. For instance, nations situated along crucial transport or maritime routes can emerge as pivotal trade hubs and logistics centers within the region, ensuring the security and stability of vital transit pathways.

Within the framework of Eurasian regionalism, fostering the inclusive participation of all nations, considering their diverse characteristics and circumstances, is paramount. This facilitates the establishment of a more resilient and cohesive cooperation system, bolstering the overall development and prosperity of the entire region.

Given the above considerations, countries like Kazakhstan underscore the importance of an inclusive approach to Eurasian regionalism, one that acknowledges their distinctiveness and actively engages them in cooperative endeavors.

### Theoretical-methodological base

Regionalism is an extensively researched topic within the realms of social sciences and the practice of international relations, economics, and cultural studies. It's crucial to consider diverse facets of the regional approach, including concepts like regionality, power dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and institutional development.

To conduct this analysis, it's imperative to delve into classical geopolitical theories, which characterize the Eurasian continent by the interplay of continental and maritime powers, as well as the competition between the continental "Heartland" and its surrounding coastal areas. Key figures in this tradition include Halford Mackinder (Mackinder, 1904) and Nicholas John Spikeman (Spikeman, 1942), who conceptualized the continent's power dynamics as systemic, where political actions in one area trigger ripple effects across the entire region. Furthermore, thinkers like Oswald Spengler and Samuel Huntington contribute to the discourse by examining the relations among major powers in Eurasia and beyond, shifting the discussion towards civilizational models of international politics (Spengler, 1922; Huntington, 1996).

The evolution of Eurasian regionalism theory primarily revolves around systemic perspectives. Within the framework of neofunctionalism, understanding Eurasian regionalism entails a focus on integration and cooperation processes among states. This encompasses collaborative efforts across various domains such as economy, transportation, energy, and security, with potential expansion into other realms. Neofunctionalism underscores the importance of specialization and differentiation, whereby states concentrate on specific areas of cooperation. In the Eurasian context, this could entail the emergence of diverse integration forms tailored to the specific interests and needs of individual states. Additionally, neofunctionalism highlights the significance of interests in integration processes, highlighting the influence of global and regional forces that can significantly shape and drive regional integration endeavors.

Examining Eurasian regionalism through the lens of constructivism offers insights into the social construction of identities within the Eurasian region and among its constituent countries, fostering the emergence of a cohesive Eurasian community. Exploring shared identities and cultural factors that influence regional interests facilitates comprehension of cooperation dynamics and conflicts within the region. Analyzing social processes

and mechanisms shaping regional security aids in grasping the foundations of trust and cooperation among states.

Examining Eurasian regionalism through the lens of imperialism theory involves scrutinizing the influence wielded by dominant states or coalitions of states over the shaping and regulation of regional dynamics in Eurasia. This theoretical framework enables an exploration of which states or coalitions hold sway in the Eurasian domain and the geopolitical objectives they pursue. This analysis may encompass evaluating investments in trade agreements and the establishment of economic blocs. Additionally, imperialism theory facilitates an examination of the utilization of both soft and hard power tactics to achieve geopolitical aims in Eurasia, encompassing diplomatic maneuvers, military interventions, cultural diplomacy, and information warfare. Furthermore, imperialism theory facilitates an examination of how regional actors respond to the dominance exerted by powerful neighboring states or external forces, including strategies for balancing power dynamics and fostering collaboration with other regional and global entities. Overall, adopting the imperialism theory perspective sheds light on the global and regional dynamics of state and actor interactions within the Eurasian region, aiding in the identification of underlying formations, interests, and strategies.

Examining Eurasian regionalism through the lens of liberal institutionalism entails emphasizing the pivotal role of institutions in fostering and regulating regional integration and cooperation. This theoretical framework underscores the significance of existing institutions in shaping the rules and protocols governing interstate interactions within the region. Analyzing these institutions and their impact on regional dynamics facilitates comprehension of the nuances of regionalism. Investigation into the adoption and adherence to rules and norms within regional institutions enables the identification of common objectives and values that underpin cooperation and integration efforts in Eurasia. Liberal institutionalism prioritizes economic integration through initiatives such as the establishment of a unified market, trade accords, and investment schemes. Delving into these aspects aids in evaluating the efficacy of institutional mechanisms in bolstering economic cooperation. Furthermore, scrutinizing the coordination of foreign policy and decision-making processes within regional institutions allows for an understanding of the political factors influencing regional relations and their role in shaping a regional order.

To comprehensively analyze the evolution of Eurasian regionalism within contemporary geopolitics and Kazakhstan's role in fostering regional cooperation, it is imperative to explore various analytical frameworks. These include traditional geopolitical, economic, cultural, and civilizational models, as well as regional security paradigms such as the Theory of Regional Security Complex (TRSC) advanced by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (Buzan, 2003).

These foundational theories are centered around addressing the primary objective of regionalism: achieving cooperation and integration. They assert that integration represents a fundamental objective achievable through consideration of historical trends and prevailing realities. These theories strive to comprehend how these realities influence progress towards an improved international order. They diverge in their perspectives on pathways to this goal and the feasibility of these pathways.

Examinations of the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary regionalism reveal its inadequately developed state, despite its extensive application in practical contexts. This deficiency suggests less a dearth of ideas than the necessity to systematize and consolidate existing theoretical frameworks. Analysis indicates that regional cooperation is underpinned by diverse yet incompletely validated theories, some endeavoring to comprehend regionalism holistically, while others concentrate on specific facets. It is crucial to organize this diversity in a logical manner.

In addressing the question of expanding Kazakhstan's involvement in Eurasian regionalism, it is prudent to explore modern theories such as the theory of new regionalism. This theory conceptualizes regionalism as an inclusive and open system (Hettne, Söderbaum, 1998).

Furthermore, adopting a postmodern approach to regionalism offers a fresh perspective that acknowledges the diversity of identities, the impact of discourse, and mechanisms and forms of resistance. It enables an understanding of how regional identity is constructed and evolves in the contemporary world. Postmodern regionalism has the potential to serve as the foundation for the development of more inclusive and democratic forms of regional integration (Woodward, 2003).

Pluralistic regionalism acknowledges the diverse forms regional cooperation can assume, contingent upon context and objectives. This perspective views regionalism as a system of multi-level governance, where various levels of government (local, regional, national, international) interact. Pluralistic region-

alism underscores the importance of flexibility and adaptability in regional integration, regarding regionalization not as a replacement for other integration forms, but as a complementary component. It prioritizes practical aspects of regional cooperation and problem-solving (Mikailenko, 2020).

On the other hand, the theory of civilizational regionalism offers an alternative lens on regionalism, focusing on cultural identity and ideological disparities among civilizations. It enriches comprehension of the role of civilizational factors in regional integration processes. This theory can foster the creation of more inclusive and sustainable regional integration frameworks grounded in mutual respect and cooperation among diverse civilizations (Huntington, 1996).

These theories are pivotal for comprehending the dynamics of international relations in Eurasia, aiding researchers and policymakers in evaluating how cultural, geopolitical, and historical factors influence regional alliances and conflicts. They also inform the development of foreign policy and regional cooperation strategies for regional countries, including Kazakhstan, by identifying potential conflict resolutions and effective mechanisms for interstate integration and cooperation. Thus, analyzing and applying these theories are essential for understanding regional processes and nurturing enduring relationships in Eurasia.

## Literature review

In recent times, there has been a surge in interest surrounding European regionalism, evident in the increasing number of publications dedicated to this phenomenon. Much of the expert community delves into inquiries regarding how geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts influence Eurasian cooperation, alongside exploring the significance of historical and institutional factors in shaping Eurasian regionalism. For analysis, researchers often turn to the most prominent and comprehensive organizations such as the SCO, the CSTO, the EAEU, and the Asia-Pacific Development Bank.

When delineating the boundaries of Eurasian regionalism, authors typically concentrate on two primary options: the post-Soviet space alone and the post-Soviet space coupled with the PRC. The Eurasian sphere holds the potential to integrate into the global integration framework. Integration policies here not only facilitate internal interactions among the former Soviet Union republics but also act as a tool for establishing a new qualitative space. Consequently, this has spurred the advancement of

integration processes on both global and regional scales, fostering political stability and economic prosperity in the region.

R. Heller, a senior researcher at the FISH Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the University of Hamburg (Germany), concurs with this interpretation, highlighting that the term “Eurasia” typically denotes fifteen internationally recognized independent states that emerged after the dissolution of the USSR (Heller, 2022).

Adhering to this delineation, much of the research concentrates on regarding the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as the principal component of Eurasian regionalism.

The concept of “Eurasia” often becomes a focal point for political manipulation, with its proliferation linked to the intensification of integration processes in the post-Soviet sphere and the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) (Lagutina, 2019).

In reality, the concepts of Eurasianism and Eurasian policies have evolved into state ideologies, shaping domestic, regional, and foreign policies, as well as underpinning recent regional integration initiatives. The notion of Eurasia often sparks controversy, being utilized for political manipulation, particularly in relation to intensifying processes, post-Soviet dynamics, and the establishment of the EAEU. Eurasian concepts have indeed become ideological frameworks that influence internal policies, foreign relations, and serve as the foundation for ongoing regional integration efforts. The creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) stands out as a significant endeavor within this context, aiming to enhance economic cooperation among member states (Vinokurov, 2013). E. Mikhailenko (Ural Federal University, Russian Federation) supplements the term “Eurasia” with specific integration projects in the region, such as the Eurasian Economic Union (Mikhailenko, 2020).

These and similar studies highlight the multifaceted use of the term “Eurasian regionalism” by researchers and practitioners across various contexts. For instance, concepts like the “Eurasian space” (Nazarbayev, 2011) or “Eurasian integration” (Vinokurov, 2010) are frequently employed to describe political developments in the post-Soviet arena.

However, this approach has several limitations. Firstly, it confines Eurasian regionalism solely to the post-Soviet space, disregarding other regional initiatives such as the SCO, the CIS, and the OSCE. Secondly, it fails to acknowledge the historical and

cultural bonds between member countries and other regions like Europe and Asia.

Several researchers advocate for a broader understanding of Eurasian regionalism. For instance, A. Libman (Doctor of Economics, PhD in Economics from Munich University) and Anastasia Obydenkova (Institute of Economic Analysis, Spanish Council for Scientific Research) argue that the concept of post-Soviet regional integration has evolved into Eurasian regionalism, despite the fact that the boundaries of Eurasia are primarily delineated by the former borders of the USSR (Libman, Obydenkova, 2017).

Eurasian regionalism constitutes a multifaceted and intricate framework encompassing integration and collaboration among nations within the Eurasian expanse. Notably, two prominent players in Eurasian regionalism are the post-Soviet space and China. The post-Soviet nations share historical ties stemming from their Soviet legacy and actively engage in regional integration efforts through entities like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Meanwhile, China wields significant influence in the Eurasian domain owing to its economic opportunities and ambitious infrastructure initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative. Relations between the post-Soviet sphere and China within the context of Eurasian regionalism exhibit a blend of cooperation and competition.

China’s engagement in the region, particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus, underscores its escalating role in financing, development, and regional dynamics. Concurrently, through endeavors like the Greater Eurasian Partnership, Russia endeavors to uphold parity with China and leverage cooperation for mutual benefit. The involvement of both the post-Soviet sphere and China in Eurasian regionalism holds significance for fostering economic collaboration, political stability, and regional integration across the Eurasian expanse. The shifting dynamics of regional relations, the emergence of new integration initiatives, and the convergence of pivotal actors such as Russia and China underscore the pivotal role of their participation in shaping the future of Eurasian regionalism.

According to Turkish researcher Gürcan, Eurasian regionalism finds its most tangible manifestation in regional governance, which arises from various competing yet complementary initiatives spearheaded by China and Russia. These mechanisms are characterized by the amalgamation of traditional security management with integration

endeavors. The essence of Eurasian regionalism largely lies in its provision of competing yet harmonizing and coexisting regional governance frameworks that regulate the competition between China and Russia in a peaceful manner. However, their prospects face challenges due to the current economic woes of Russia and China (Gürcan, 2020).

Gürcan suggests that there is a surge in regionalism in the area, spearheaded by nations like China and Russia, shaping a fresh multipolar geopolitical terrain (Gürcan, 2020).

Renowned regional studies expert M. Molchanov observes that amidst the evolving geopolitical panorama, there is a convergence, a shift towards closer economic and geopolitical bonds between Russia and China, offering promising prospects for strategic reshaping of the region (Molchanov, 2016).

Researchers advocate for broadening the scope of Eurasian regionalism, emphasizing the role of novel cooperation frameworks aimed at enhancing international competitiveness. These frameworks entail engagement with external partners like ASEAN, the European Union, MERCOSUR, AUXERRE, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, illustrating a multi-faceted approach to dialogue (Molchanov, 2016).

Certain Western scholars analyze Eurasian integration through the lens of liberal theories (Olcott, 2005). According to these perspectives, Eurasian regionalism does not stem from Russian hegemonic aspirations but represents the “inclination of states to form regional groupings” to shield against the adverse impacts of globalization through institutionalizing relations.

## Discussion and results

### *The Central Asian context*

In the Central Asian context, most studies conducted by Kazakhstani authors examine Eurasian regionalism within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and to some extent, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Discussions and critiques concerning the Republic of Kazakhstan’s membership in the EAEU primarily revolve around understanding the essence of the Union itself and the interests Kazakhstan has in this integration. However, opinions regarding EAEU membership may fluctuate depending on the geopolitical landscape in Central Asia and national priorities. Kazakhstan’s interests within the EAEU may evolve over time and in response to varying international circumstances. For instance, during periods of stability or shifts in national priorities,

experts may scrutinize how Kazakhstan should fulfill its partnership commitments within the EAEU or more actively safeguard its national interests. However, during periods of border tensions or alterations in the external political environment, viewpoints regarding EAEU membership may be less unequivocal.

Since the inception of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2014, Kazakh society has been divided into two main camps: supporters and critics. Some experts and politicians have endorsed the country’s involvement in the EAEU, contending that it fosters stronger economic connections, enhances regional competitiveness, and bolsters trade, investment, and economic growth in Kazakhstan (Laumulin, 2014). Conversely, another faction of experts and public figures has voiced criticism regarding Kazakhstan’s participation in the EAEU. They have expressed concerns about potential loss of autonomy in economic decision-making, apprehensions about potential constraints on developing foreign economic relations with other nations, and raised questions about the compatibility of EAEU regulations with Kazakhstan’s national interests and economic policy standards (Opponents of Eurasian integration (Satpayev, Ilyasuly, Mamai).

By 2022, an increasing number of experts are referring to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as a “toxic organization” for the Republic of Kazakhstan. This designation stems from the imposition of anti-Russian sanctions following Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

The imposition of anti-Russian sanctions, triggered by Russia’s military actions in Ukraine, has resulted in shared risks for Kazakhstan. Moscow’s actions contravene the fundamental principles of the alliance, including mutually beneficial cooperation, equal rights, and the protection of the national interests of all members.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has sparked a wave of anti-Russian sentiments within Kazakhstan’s civil society, influencing perceptions of the EAEU and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (Initiative for Kazakhstan’s withdrawal from the CSTO and the EAEU).

The proclaimed strategic alliance and Russia’s asserted priority raise questions regarding historical memory and ideology, which do not foster stronger bilateral relations. Statements made by Russian officials, semi-official figures, and media personalities on matters concerning territories and language policy elicit a negative response in Kazakh society.

There are two primary negative trends concerning Kazakhstan in the Russian media: nationalist and neo-imperial. The former revolves around the notion of the oppression of Russians in Kazakhstan, while the latter emerged after 2014 in light of events in Ukraine. However, these assertions are not officially endorsed. Additionally, there exists a negative trend in Kazakh media towards Russia, aiming to depict it negatively as the successor of the Russian Empire and the USSR (Russia and Kazakhstan).

Consequently, these dynamics not only bolster Russophobic sentiments but also weaken relations at the level of civil societies. While the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is considered a focal point of Kazakhstan's Eurasian regionalism in academic circles and public opinion, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is sometimes also included.

### **Kazakhstan in Eurasian regionalism in the new geopolitics**

It might appear that Kazakhstan, given its distinctive geopolitical position, abundant natural resources, and significant transit potential, has ample opportunities to engage in various forms of Eurasian regionalism. However, presently, the country's involvement in Eurasian regionalism and regionalization primarily revolves around the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This situation is influenced by several factors, ranging from differing interpretations of the term "Eurasian regionalism" and defining its boundaries to identifying the countries spearheading regionalism processes and assessing the risks and opportunities for Kazakhstan's participation in Eurasian regionalism amidst contemporary geopolitics.

The evolving geopolitical landscape in Central Asia presents both risks and novel opportunities for Kazakhstan due to its involvement in Eurasian regional processes. Risks and challenges arise from the country's participation in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which have faced criticism both domestically and globally in light of recent international developments.

One significant risk is the potential for Central Asia to become a battleground for competition among global powers and integration blocs. A new "Great Game" is unfolding in the region, particularly amidst the conflict in Ukraine and the imposition of Western sanctions, exacerbating tensions among the key players – Russia, the United States, and China.

Russia openly articulates its confrontation with the West, urging Kazakhstan to align with the so-called "non-Western world". The US National Security Strategy of 2022 designates Russia and China as strategic adversaries, further complicating the situation.

At once, China's proposition of a "Community of Common Destiny" extends beyond merely economic advancement, encompassing the dissemination of Chinese values in global and regional affairs. The "One Belt, One Road" initiative has spurred competition among nations for loans, investments, access to transportation routes traversing their territories, and other benefits. By 2023, China is poised to become Kazakhstan's primary trading partner.

Turkey's position within the realm of Eurasian regionalism significantly influences Kazakhstan's foreign policy trajectory, warranting attention. The concept of Turkish Eurasianism aims to foster a geopolitical and Turkic identity, thereby legitimizing Turkish interests in regions like the post-Soviet space, the Balkans, and Africa. Turkey's engagement in Eurasian processes spans political, economic, and energy dimensions, with the goal of enhancing cooperation with Russia and bolstering its position in energy policies. Additionally, Turkey expresses interest in participating in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The conceptual framework of Turkish Eurasian regionalism draws from the ideologies of Pan-Turkism, Eurasianism, and Neo-Ottomanism (Tufekci, 2017).

In the context of Central Asia, Turkey actively cultivates bilateral relations with regional states, particularly through the Turkic Council, underscoring the significance of the region for Turkey. While it remains a non-regional participant in Central Asia, Turkey's influence on security matters is limited, primarily controlled by Russia. However, historical, cultural, and religious ties serve as the foundation of Turkish policy in the region.

Meanwhile, other nations like India and Iran consistently engage in Eurasian integration processes, assuming influential roles in shaping the geopolitical and economic dynamics of the region. Together, they forge a strategic partnership aimed at fortifying cooperation and integration within Eurasia.

Russia actively engages in various forms of Eurasian regional cooperation, notably through institutions like the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Additionally, it fosters relations within other interregional integrations

such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS. Russia also prioritizes bilateral partnerships with other Eurasian countries like China, Iran, and India, aimed at bolstering economic and political collaboration.

Strategic concepts like the “Greater Eurasian Partnership” underscore Russia’s vision of enhancing cooperation across the broader Eurasian expanse, transcending the confines of the post-Soviet sphere. Nonetheless, amidst the contemporary geopolitical landscape, Russia’s Eurasian vision demonstrates new trends characterized by a blend of anti-Western sentiments and state-centric principles. However, in pursuing this approach to fortify regional ties, it’s crucial to consider the socio-political and cultural diversity within Eurasia to mitigate potential negative ramifications for Moscow.

The Chinese position on Eurasian regionalism can be elucidated through its global strategies, exemplified by strategic partnerships with Belarus and Kazakhstan. These alliances bolster interactions with the EU and other major stakeholders through economic cooperation and geographic advantages. China’s involvement in the Eurasian region encompasses not just the economic sphere but also security and politics, as evidenced by the concept of “Greater Eurasia.” This aligns with China’s objective to shape a multipolar world order and assert its role in the international arena, notably through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. China’s perspective on Eurasian regionalism embodies a comprehensive approach that integrates economic, political, and strategic facets, with its initiatives exerting influence not only within Eurasia but also beyond its borders (as seen in the Belt and Road Initiative).

The evolving global geopolitical landscape raises a fundamental question for Kazakhstan, along with other Central Asian nations: whether they will predominantly align with Eurasian regionalism focused on Europe and Asia under Russian leadership, or if Central Asia will integrate into Greater Asia with Beijing as the focal point.

Such a dilemma may be circumvented by acknowledging that the new geopolitical circumstances in the Central Asian region bring forth not only challenges but also fresh opportunities. These opportunities stem from the shifts and transformations occurring in the Eurasian region across political, economic, and geostrategic domains. They entail changes in state-to-state relations, the emergence of novel integration frameworks, the rise of economic influence by certain nations or alliances, as well as alterations in the security architecture and inter-country interactions within the region.

Consequently, various initiatives and processes are unfolding, alongside new approaches to cooperation in security and energy domains. The formulation of new rules and norms governing state relations in the region profoundly impacts both domestic and foreign policies. These changes also underscore the aspiration to strike a balance among the interests of diverse actors in the region and foster a more stable and predictable developmental environment.

In light of this new geopolitical context, Kazakhstan has the opportunity to adopt a broader perspective on Eurasian regionalism, extending beyond the confines of the post-Soviet space.

The current state of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) prompts an important consideration regarding whether Kazakhstan should confine its membership within the EAEU given its aspirations for regional integration in the broader Eurasian arena.

Despite the critiques leveled against the EAEU, it is noteworthy that Kazakhstan can leverage this organization to advance its objectives. For instance, fostering economic cooperation predicated on the principle of spatial integration rather than solely geographical proximity, as exemplified by Armenia’s membership despite lacking common borders with Kazakhstan. This approach also paves the way for expanding Eurasian cooperation beyond the confines of the post-Soviet space, fostering inter-regional and trans-regional connections with entities like ASEAN, MERCOSUR, and individual nations such as Vietnam, as well as establishing free trade zones with countries like Iran, Serbia, among others.

Moreover, socio-cultural ties can wield significant influence in bolstering Kazakhstan’s soft power within the Eurasian sphere.

However, criticisms directed towards the EAEU are not unfounded: intra-organizational connections are largely lacking, resulting in a decline in cultural exchanges and a rise in anti-Russian sentiments. This, in turn, hampers the development of a cohesive strategic approach among member states. Moreover, Russia’s actions in 2014 and 2022 have further underscored the geopolitical nature of the EAEU, casting doubt on its efficacy as a tool for regional integration. On the other hand, Eurasian regionalism holds promise for modernization and even Europeanization.

Kazakhstan perceives itself as a pivotal node in interregional trade networks across Eurasia and has consistently advocated for cross-border initiatives to mitigate the challenges posed by its geographical location. Joining the EAEU aligns with this strategy, continuing Kazakhstan’s involvement in regional



Eurasian integration efforts since the 1990s. Additionally, Kazakhstan actively supports the Belt and Road Initiative and its terrestrial component, the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Kazakhstan, alongside other Central Asian nations, is intricately intertwined with the processes of globalization and global governance. A paramount strategic goal for Kazakhstan is the preservation of its sovereignty while actively engaging in global economic dynamics. This involves participation in global production networks and integration into the global economic landscape. Consequently, Kazakhstan places significant emphasis on integrating into the international community through accession to diverse universal and regional organizations, as well as gaining access to multilateral and international treaty frameworks.

Kazakhstan leverages Eurasian regionalism as a pivotal instrument to pursue diverse objectives and interests:

- Actively engaging in Eurasian integration processes, Kazakhstan aims to fortify its independence and sovereignty by regulating relations with major powers and other states through platforms like the EAEU, SCO, Turksoy, CSTO, and other regional forums.

- Eurasian regionalism plays a crucial role in solidifying Kazakhstan's international identity, offering a platform to articulate its interests and values on the global stage.

- Kazakhstan actively advocates for regional cooperation and integration, collaborating with neighboring countries to achieve mutual objectives such as enhancing trade, fostering economic cooperation, and ensuring security.

- Through Eurasian regionalism, Kazakhstan endeavors to advance to common interests within multilateral organizations and craft effective responses to contemporary challenges such as climate change, transnational crime, and terrorism.

- A key aspect of Kazakhstan's utilization of Eurasian regionalism is to prevent the establishment of major powers' spheres of influence in the region, safeguarding its interests and maintaining political and economic autonomy.

To comprehend the potential for the Republic of Kazakhstan to enhance its engagement in Eurasian regionalization, it's essential to assess its involvement in formal integrations and cooperative ventures, its integration into production networks, and its participation in infrastructure and logistics projects.

Kazakhstan's key advantage in strengthening its position in Eurasian regionalism lies in its

multilateral foreign policy, which prioritizes multilateralism. Through its multifaceted approach, the nation diversifies its diplomatic ties across various regions. Kazakhstan demonstrates its commitment to multilateralism by engaging in collective decision-making processes and joint initiatives on the global stage.

The Eurasian Strategy of Kazakhstan is founded on the aspiration to cultivate close relations and cooperation with Eurasian states, encompassing both neighboring countries and those further afield, such as Russia, China, Central Asian nations, and countries in the Caucasus. The primary objectives of this strategy are to enhance economic, political, and cultural bonds, as well as to foster security and stability throughout the region.

The multi-vector approach in Kazakhstan's foreign policy entails fostering cooperative ties with diverse states and regional alliances, rather than aligning strictly with a single nation or bloc. This strategy enables Kazakhstan to diversify its external relationships, mitigate risks, and optimize the advantages of collaboration with different partners.

Consequently, Kazakhstan's Eurasian strategy aligns harmoniously with its multi-vector foreign policy, mutually reinforcing each other. This synergy furnishes the nation with a broad spectrum of opportunities to cultivate and fortify its position regionally and globally.

Kazakhstan engages actively in formal integrations and collaborations. It participates prominently in several regional initiatives, including the EAEU, SCO, CIS, and AIIB, aimed at fostering integration and cooperation among regional nations. Kazakhstan assumes roles as both an intermediary and an initiator of projects that enhance cooperation and stability. Astana serves as a hub for international negotiations, hosting various summits and discussions, such as talks on the Syrian conflict resolution and energy cooperation events. Notably, Kazakhstan took the lead in establishing the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in 1997. CICA serves as a significant instrument for Eurasian integration, complementing other regional frameworks like the EAEU and SCO.

Kazakhstan's integration into global production networks is a crucial component of its economic advancement. The nation serves as a significant exporter of various raw materials, playing a pivotal role in the manufacturing processes of other countries. With a well-established manufacturing sector, Kazakhstan boasts a diverse range of export commodities, fostering economic expansion.

Additionally, Kazakhstan's status as a vital transit hub and a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) grants it access to expanded markets and investment opportunities. Through integration into global supply chains, Kazakhstani firms actively engage in collaborations with enterprises from diverse nations.

Nonetheless, several challenges hinder further integration into production networks. The economy's heavy reliance on raw materials and the imperative for diversification contribute to a low inverse coefficient of participation in global chains. Infrastructure upgrades and an expansion of the skilled workforce are imperative. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan is committed to enhancing its position in the global economy and adeptly responds to shifts in global trade dynamics, leveraging geopolitical crises and advancing industries such as mechanical engineering and logistics.

## Conclusion

The broadening of Kazakhstan's engagement in Eurasian regionalism constitutes a strategically significant facet of its foreign policy and economic progress. Through active involvement in diverse

regional initiatives such as the EAEU, SCO, among others, and proactive support for integration endeavors, Kazakhstan bolsters its role and influence within the region. Employing a multi-vector approach and embracing multilateralism, Kazakhstan effectively diversifies its external relations, mitigates risks, and maximizes the benefits of collaboration with a multitude of partners.

By actively participating in formal integrations and cooperative ventures, Kazakhstan forges strong ties with other states and regional blocs, both within the region and beyond. This enables the nation not only to safeguard its interests and maintain political and economic autonomy but also to broaden its avenues for development and fortify its position in Eurasia. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's expansion of involvement in global production networks and infrastructure projects forms an integral component of its strategy to heighten engagement in Eurasian regionalism, thereby bolstering its economy and elevating its stature on the global stage.

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