

BORIS KHEYFETS, VERONIKA CHERNOVA. A NEW VIEW OF RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC INTEGRATION STRATEGY WITH CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES IN MODERN GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES OF WORLD ECONOMY

Keywords: Central Asia; EAEU; economic integration; regional integration associations; economic development; cumulative integration; intra-regional integration; foreign policy; economic cooperation.

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Citation. Kheyfets B., Chernova V. A New View of Russia's Economic Integration Strategy with Central Asian Countries in Modern Geopolitical Realities of World Economy // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 4 (326), P. 32–51. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.04.03

Abstract. The article analyzes the current state of integration processes in Central Asia (CA). It demonstrates that Central Asian countries, i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and

Uzbekistan are in the focus of interests of several major actors of world economy with opposing geopolitical and geo-economic interests. The goals and results of the presence in Central Asia of the U.S., China, the EU, Turkiye, and the Persian Gulf states are analyzed. Their strategies are based on the C5+1 scheme. The exception is China, which interacts with CA countries within the framework of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The article shows the specifics and new trends of each of the partnerships of CA countries with external players. Among the new trends, the intensification of integration processes between the CA states themselves is noted, which between 2018 and 2023 held 5 summits aimed at deepening their regional interaction. Special attention is paid to the problems and prospects of cooperation between Russia and the CA states, which are its long-standing foreign economic partners. The article substantiates the expediency for Russia under the conditions of tough interstate competition in Central Asia to actively use a strategy based on the principles of flexible accumulative integration. Its key feature is the use of a variety of flexible formats of interaction that most closely consider the specific conditions of cooperation and the specificities of the countries of the region. Cumulative integration does not imply the assumption by its participants of rigid obligations to open their markets, as it happens in most regional and transregional economic partnerships built on the principles of classical integration. It will require concentration of efforts on implementing joint projects and stimulation of initiatives both at the macro level ("integration from above") and at the corporate and regional levels ("integration from below").

Introduction

In the context of rapidly changing geopolitical and geo-economic conditions of modern development and intensifying external competition among the players, Central Asia (CA) is becoming an increasingly important region of world economy. At the same time, the consolidation of individual states of Central Asia strengthens. As Kazakh political scientist G. Abishev notes,