

Integration has its own logical development

EurAsEC re-organisation was among the key points on the agenda of EurAsEC Interstate Council, which recently gathered its heads of state, in addition to those from state-observers: Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia

The President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, recalled the decision to discuss EurAsEC re-organisation in March; the topic was first raised during a top level summit held on December 19th, 2011. According to Mr. Medvedev, various proposals were voiced — including the immediate liquidation of the EurAsEC. “However, after some discussion, we decided that the process should be civilised, following certain legal frameworks,” he said.

This course of development has its own logic of course. Three countries (out of five) — Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan — share close integration. The Customs Union has been operational for two years and, since early 2012, the Single Economic Space has been in force. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also showing interest in these global projects. Moreover, member-states have outlined another avenue for development: a Eurasian Union (planned for the future). Against this background, the EurAsEC seems to have a weaker interstate structure. Accordingly, its existence in its present form is no longer relevant and a decision needs to be made either to liquidate or transform it into a more advanced organisation.

After closed door discussions, the President of Russia admitted that talks have been heated, with a decision taken to form the Eurasian Economic Union by 2015. Mr. Medvedev explained, “We’ve agreed to ask our governments and the Eurasian Economic Commission’s collegium to elaborate a more efficient plan of work for the institutions of the Eurasian Economic Union. Talks will continue in May — during a



Participants of the Interstate Council session of the Eurasian Economic Community

planned session of the EurAsEC Interstate Council. We hope that a multi-sided agreement on this new union will be signed by January 1st, 2015”

Not much time lies ahead, taking into consideration the fact that it took Europe half a century to build its union. Against this background, the integration movement from the Customs Union to the Eurasian Economic Union has been speedy. Mr. Medvedev noted, “We’ve discussed a range of issues regarding our interaction within the Customs Union. Our friends from observer-countries have received a good

example from seeing us discuss all issues in an absolutely sincere and equal manner.”

Much has been spoken of the Customs Union’s tasks, as well as the advantages and difficulties which already exist or may emerge for countries which are not Customs Union members. As is normal within an international association, certain privileges exist for members and those outside may experience difficulties. A clear signal has been given: the Customs Union (and Single Economic Space — Eurasian Economic Union) is open to new members. The invitation

has been offered.

Belarus’ Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Rumas stated after the session that Belarus was ready to sign a document to establish the Eurasian Economic Union at that session, as no questions arose during preliminary consultations. However, he noted that the differing opinions of various sides — as shown by heads of state — left the issue unelaborated. Governments have been ordered to continue consultations. A document was signed ‘Working On a Draft Agreement to Transform the Eurasian Economic Community’ with all

details specified.

Mr. Rumas mentioned another important aspect of the session: that Mr. Lukashenko thanked his colleagues for their joint declarations (at the highest level) condemning sanctions against Belarus. The Eurasian Economic Commission’s collegium has decided to continue work to ensure that similar joint declarations are made, helping protect members from sanctions applied by third states.

There was another important political supplement to the processes of economic integration. The second day of

the President’s working visit to Moscow saw him attending various important meetings — held in a variety of formats. He initially met Moscow’s Mayor, Sergei Sobyenin, then attended an informal breakfast at a restaurant near Moscow, with the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev. Newly elected Russian President, Vladimir Putin, also took part, alongside the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan: Alexander Lukashenko, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Almazbek Atambayev. Among those present were the heads of the EurAsEC observer-states: Armenian Serzh Sargsyan, Ukrainian Viktor Yanukovich and Moldova’s Acting President, Marian Lupu. They informally continued their talks on integration, looking at the results of their official meeting, issues of economic co-operation and interaction in other fields.

Mr. Lukashenko then visited Naina Yeltsina, at the Barvika state residence and, before his return to Minsk, was interviewed at the airport by the Russia Today TV channel. This English speaking channel broadcasts 24 hours a day, representing a Russian view on events domestically and abroad.

Mr. Lukashenko was interviewed by the host of the *Spotlight* programme, Alexander Gurnov, who tackled topics such as the results of the EurAsEC summit in Moscow, Belarus’ views on the formation of the Single Economic Space and the efficiency of the Customs Union. The state of the Belarusian economy and EU threats to introduce economic sanctions were also discussed.

Information support surely assists our rapprochement

By Tatiana Grigorova

Co-operation between Belarus and Ecuador is developing rapidly, notes the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ecuador to the Russian Federation and Belarus (concurrent), H.E. Mr. Patricio Chavez, during a ceremony to donate books by Ecuadorian authors to National Library

H.E. Patricio Chavez notes that Belarus-Ecuador collaboration is promising, with our two countries able to achieve the greatest results in trade. “We should also develop

interaction in other areas: culture, economics, commerce, technology and the military-technical sphere,” asserts Mr. Chavez.

The Ambassador stresses that the Government of Ecuador expects the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, to make an official visit to Ecuador in 2012. Moreover, Mr. Chavez is confident that political co-operation will strengthen bilateral collaboration, making our countries strategic partners.

Belarusians will be able to learn more about Ecuador from the 61 books donated to the National Library of Belarus. All are in Spanish, published under the aegis of the

Ministry of Culture of Ecuador. According to the Ambassador, books were selected carefully. “We’ve brought books by poets, writers and journalists who have something to tell the world. We’d like them to be useful and interesting to Belarusian readers,” notes the Ambassador. He adds that the National Library of Belarus will be given more editions about the traditions and culture of Ecuador in future.

According to the Director of the National Library, Roman Matulsky, political and economic bilateral relations need information support, so the new books will definitely prove useful to readers.

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