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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**International Relations in the Contemporary World.
Geopolitics and Diplomacy**

**Albania-EU Relationship and the
Course towards the European Integration**

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Abstract: The collapse of the communist regime in Albania made possible the country's opening to the west, a country that had chosen the way of total isolation. Albania was the first country in the Balkans region who signed a commercial agreement in 1992 with the European Union. This article aims to study Albania's path towards European integration. The position and role played by the European Union during that critical period for our country, as the crisis of 1997. The objective of this paper is to create a clear panorama of relationships between the EU and Albania and to highlight the problems that have come across over the years. The author of this paper will also provide an overview of the political developments in Albania after the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. The method of operation is qualitative. This paper was accomplished through a bibliographic research, drawing on the European Union legislation, the agreements signed between the two countries and also the strategies of the Albanian government during these years.

Keywords: The European integration; SAA; diplomatic relations; development

1. Introduction

Albania reappeared on the international scene, immediately after the fall of dictatorships and the collapse of communist regime in Tirana. It has succeeded against a dictatorship that was known for its hardness and leaving the country in total darkness, but this instantaneous variation, caused considerable civil disturbances. The communist regime in Albania was one of the longest regimes in the Western Balkans and also one of the most regressive countries of Eastern Europe, not only in the economic viewpoint but also in the social areas.

But we cannot agree that this has been the biggest challenge of the Albanian society. The biggest problem was of a political nature, where the efforts and authoritarian ways of the Albanian political class resulted in an extremely poor dialogue between the main political parties. One of the characteristics of contemporary political life in the country is the way that Albanian politicians tend to inhibit the normal development of the post-election policy, rejecting the election results, when they are on the losing side.

The first diplomatic relationships between Albania and the European Community began in 1991, immediately after the fall of the communist regime. Until that time, the forced division of Europe was

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created by the Cold War and the mutual incompatibility of ideologies and models of economic and social development. Except for the former Yugoslavia, the Economic relationships between the European Community and Albania were more or less similar to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

2. Albania and the European Policies in the Balkans

Since the early 90s until today, the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, the independence of Kosovo, the political developments in the Western Balkans are characterized by a explicit attitude towards the division of territories. Since 1996, the EU has tried to create a regional approach in the context of establishing relationships with the regional countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.

The goal of this approach is supported by the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement¹ and the establishment of political stability and economic prosperity, which will be based on several principles:

- a) the protection of democracy and the rule of the law;
- b) Respect of the human rights and minorities;
- c) the recovery of the economic activity.

In 1999, the European Commission established the terms for a new approach to the territories of the former Yugoslavia, laying the foundations for the Stabilization and Association process, which is otherwise known as the EU project for Southeast Europe.

With the approval of the Thessaloniki Agenda, in 2003, there has been a qualitative step for the relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans. One of the major challenges at the basis of the EU policy in the last decade, is the integration of the Balkans in the European Union, also a powerful incentive for the modernization, stabilization and democratization of the region.

The European Commission, in recent years in the framework of the Stabilization and Association Agreement has developed numerous instruments to support and effectively promote the integration process of the Balkans into the European Union. The Stabilization and Association Agreement is the foundation of the relationships between the EU and the Western Balkans.

The three main objectives of this process include: the stabilization of countries in transition and their rapid accession into the market economy, the promotion of the regional cooperation and the eventual membership in the EU, if the conditions for membership are fulfilled².

The Western Balkans continue to be one of the key challenges of the European Union. The stability of the countries that are part of this region, is closely connected to the old continent, this due to their geographic and geostrategic position. Unanimously the belief of the EU as an international actor, in majority depends on its interaction in this region (Gori, 2007, p. 5). Brussels has not invested in any other area, as much as it has invested in the Balkan region, spending there millions of euros.

We can say that unlike at the beginning, when the relationship with these countries were established,

¹ The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton-Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. These accords put an end to the three and a half-year long Bosnian War, one of the armed conflicts in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

²This process helps these countries to develop the capacity for adopting and implementing the EU legislation. The relationship between Western Balkan countries and the EU are based on the following pillars: (i) concessions (ii) economic and financial assistance (CARDS since 2007 has been replaced by IPA) (iii) the Stabilization and Association Agreement

previously in one country and later elsewhere, the EU today has all the necessary instruments, experience and all strategies to assist and come to help all the countries of the region in their European journey¹. So if we try to highlight what is needed at the present, EU must decisively continue with the initiatives taken, which should lead to the “Europeanization of the Balkans”.

In March 2006, at the end of an informal meeting of the foreign European Union ministers, held in Salzburg, was issued a statement in which was argued that the enlargement process relates not only to the fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria of the countries that want to be part of the European family², but also by the capacity of the European Union to “absorb” new members. This makes us think that this issue will be in constant change, in the framework of foreign policy pursued by the EU, also by the political will of the current members.

Another approach appears in 2008 within the EU, the European Commission reaffirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries. From this moment, the Western Balkans countries have succeeded in various steps, and in others less, as has been observed in their progress during these years.

Brussels has invested so much in the Western Balkans, having spent billions of euro for humanitarian assistance, the material and institutional construction, supporting with commitment and the monetary cost of five ESDP missions³.

The Balkans have represented a fundamental test for the development of the international role of the EU. Based on EU’s experience in the Balkans from the moment of the communist regimes fall, we can say that the EU has demonstrated that it has received the appropriate lessons for developing peace⁴ and play an essential role in the events that also led in the fall of Milosevic.

The first European policies toward the Balkan countries were set by two crisis that disturbed the Balkans, the Albanian crisis of 1997 and that of Kosovo in 1999. In 1997, the violent protests, that erupted to denounce the collapse of the pyramidal schemes, drove the country into chaos, at the limits of civil war. Its effects were more pronounced in the southern part of the country, with the city of Vlora as the epicenter.

Faced with this dramatic situation, for the first time the EU was in trial, despite the initial premises to create a new regional approach, it showed that there were no proper mechanisms in order to resolve problems of this type. In fact the function of this organization became a secondary role, in the framework of the OSCE initiative with the generous support of Italy.

Another success, that can be attributed to the European Union, is the development of a strategy enshrined in Thessaloniki in 2003, that laid the basis for the Stabilization and Association Agreement for the progression and full integration of all Balkan countries.

Twelve years ago the leaders of the European Union, under the leadership of the Greek Presidency, in the city of Thessaloniki gave vent to the idea for a big project in the Balkan region, “*The future of the Balkans is in the European Union*”, deciding the year 2014 as a time limit. By that time more than a decade has past and only two Balkan countries are members with full rights (Slovenia and Croatia).

¹ We refer to the countries that are not yet part of the European Union, so are excluded, Slovenia and Croatia, which are full rights members in the EU.

² This happened with the 10 countries that joined the European Union in 2004. Supported by a strong political will from the support of 15 member states, their membership was conducted with quick steps once these countries managed to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria.

³ The European Policy on security and defense.

⁴ The European Security and Cooperation policies

The year in which the project was created, was a year of great European enthusiasm: the common European single currency had been circulating for more than one year. At the same time was signed the Treaty of Athens, which ended the pre-accession process of the ten countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These countries joined the great European family in 2004. The aim of this project was that the rest of the Balkan countries would be members with full rights at the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I. We see that the situation appears quite different from what was expected to be achieved, if we try to identify the progress that these countries have made from over the years. Among the priorities of the EU, the enlargement of new countries does not seem to happen, and it is essential to overcome the economic situation. The year 2014, assumed as the “year of great changes in the region”, did not conclude anything but only reduced the hopes of this region citizens.

However, we can not say that the European integration of the Balkan countries has stopped, it is an ongoing process, but a slow one. Croatia is a member with full rights in the EU from July 2013, , Serbia and Albania hold a candidate status, but Macedonia and Montenegro have also begun negotiations. Bosnia and Herzegovina¹, on February the 16-th of this year filed a formal application for membership in the European Union. This action is considered an important step not only for the region itself but also for Europe, because it marks the possibility of joining the old continent. While Kosovo has signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement and is at the first step toward the European integration, during the last two years, the situation seems to have changed.

For the countries of the Western Balkans, the clear perspective of the EU membership granted by the EU member states is a key stabilizing factor. It supports progress toward the fulfillment of the necessary conditions, including those of the Stabilization and Association Progress².

2. The Relationships between Albania and EU in the First Decade after the Fall of Communism

Immediately after the fall of the tougher regime in communist countries, Tirana, Albania changed its political line by opening to the west. The first contacts with international institutions were with the European Community. In early 1991 the first diplomatic relationships between our country and the EC were created. From that moment on, Albania's integration in the EU appears as the most important priority on the agenda of all the political classes of Albanian.

The first date in this historical process of bilateral relationships development between the EU and Albania dates to May 11, 1992. This date marks the moment when in Brussels, was signed an agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of “Albania, about trade exchanges, commercial and economic cooperation³. It is worth pointing out that what impresses on the agreement signed for the first time between the two contracting parties, is its preamble, where specifically stated, “*taking into consideration the political developments, Albania wants to stabilize and consolidate democracy and promote the economic and social progress*”⁴. At this critical stage for a small country such as Albania, a country that had followed a tough policy, getting close to the West was important. This deal revives a thread of hope for Albanian political leaders, but in fact will simply

¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina have signed with the European Union a Stabilization and Association Agreement on 16 June 2008.

² European Commission, *EU Enlargement Strategy 2014-2015*, October 2014, p. 1.

³ The deal was negotiated and signed by the then president of the EEC, also foreign minister of Portugal, João de Deus Pinheiro, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities, Frans Andriessen, and the representative of the Albanian Government, Minister of Finance and Economy Genc Ruli.

⁴ Agreement between the Economic European Community and the Republic of Albania, on trade and commercial and economic cooperation, the official Journal of the European Communities, dated 25.11.1992 N.

remain in principle. However by this agreement, it was decided on the development of economic cooperation and expansion of trade relationships with Albania, the establishment on a contractual basis of the political orientation of Albania towards European integration into a functioning democracy and also free market economy.

The relations between our country and the European Union become solid a year later in 1993¹, the year which coincides with the establishment of the Copenhagen criteria for the accession of new countries into the EU, as a cause of major permanent changes that had occurred on Central and Eastern Europe in recent years. It was in this historical moment, happening in Tirana, the European Commission delegation, constituting a permanent diplomatic mission to represent the European Commission in external affairs.

1996 marks the first steps to a contractual agreement with the EU. This new agreement will pave the way for a classic association agreement, but the internal political problems that were highlighted by the contested parliamentary elections of May 1996, together with the deep financial and social crisis, caused by the collapse of the pyramidal schemes, caused the failure of the initiative undertaken from the EU.

In 1997, the General Affairs Council of the EU approved “the Regional Approach to countries of the region”, through which the EU set the political and economic conditions for further development of bilateral relations. The agreement mentioned above, refers to all the Western Balkan countries, part of which is also our country. In Albania, were occurring numerous disturbances, that changed the attitude of many international institutions, one of which, the European Union.

The year 1997 otherwise known as the backward year because of the collapse of “the rental firms”, had reduced the liquidity in the entire country, financially destroying a large number of families, making Albania financially depended to international organizations.

The collapse of pyramidal schemes was the beginning of massive revolts against the government, which was responsible in dual ways: first due to the fact that allowed the creation and operation of these fraudulent companies and second because it interrupted their activity precisely when citizens were expecting to receive higher interests (Fuga, 2008, pp. 334-337). During this period it is noted that the EU’s attitude towards Albania was very distanced.

Why did the EU not activate all the special mechanisms to cope with such a situation? The answers, we think are different; facing to the deteriorating situation, EU was left to the empty promises of the Albanian government, as the initiative containing the activation of a cooperation agreement signed in 1992; but in fact, had contrary attitudes by some members of the state. Therefore, the possibility of the European Union to take a leading role in the “land of the eagles” failed.

The situation had deteriorated, but despite this extremely precarious situation, the EU chose to cooperate in the coordination framework, which was confided to the OSCE mission, therefore it did not choose the leadership role. Brussels was left to organize and initiate the “Alba” mission in the management of the Italian country and also to sustain the initiative in order to create the necessary security conditions for the international aid.

We can state that the EU became aware, when the situation in Kosovo was irreversible. After noticing the escalated situation, this time the European Union needed to take a more significant role, perhaps

¹ Membership criteria, or Copenhagen criteria, were confirmed in December 1995 by the European Council of Madrid, in which they stressed the importance for the establishment of administrative structures in the applicant countries to join the EU. The aim was to create the conditions for a gradual and harmonious integration into the EU.

this was the appropriate time to undertake a regional approach. Realizing also the importance of maintaining a decisive role not only in the European continent, but also towards international actors (Gori, 2007, pp. 36-38).

As mentioned above the EU should assume a more active role in the Balkans, based on this context it must change its strategy, demonstrating with facts and concrete proofs, its ability to extend towards some geographical state that historically belonged to the old continent. Precisely at this moment, in 1998 the relationship between Albania and the European Union was intensified through the creation of a proper legal framework and administrative capacity. While, in 1999 a year later, at the end of July, in Sarajevo a new initiative was launched, taken by the European Union for the entire Western Balkans, the Stabilization and Association Agreement.

This process in the entire Western Balkans, would be conditioned by the desire and the will of the political forces, therefore the assessment of each of these states was done individually, a fact which proves that some of them have made significant strides, while others have still a long way to go. We can say that our country is in a very important moment, it must fulfill all the necessary criteria to make the membership request.

3. The Relationships between the EU and Albania after the Signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement

A new and important page in the relationship between the European Union and Albania, was signed on November 24, 2000 during the Zagreb Summit. During this summit, the EU offered to the Balkan countries the perspective of a future membership in the large European family, once the Copenhagen criteria was fulfilled and they agreed about the assistance programs to help achieve these objectives. In the meantime, these countries pledged to respect the conditions set by the European Union and to use the Stabilization and Association Agreement to prepare for their route to EU¹.

The negotiations for the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania were officially opened in 2003, but due to problems of various nature, the signing of this agreement was made possible, on June 12, 2006, and entered into force in 2009. This historical and important moment for our country, marked the transition toward a new stage, the relations between Albania and the European Union advanced further. The NATO membership, another important issue for our country, happened in 2009.

During this period, it is worth mentioning the government program for the 2005-2009 period, where it can be evidenced the intention to undertake reforms, this as a result of the commitments provided by the SAA. Among the basic goals stand out the reforms for the development and consolidation of the democratic state, the restoration of the rule of law and the eradication of the corruption system, which will be designed and implemented in order to adapt to the European models and to get European standards. The Government Programme 2005-2009 refers to the previous government (under the leadership of the Socialist Party), calling it the major slowdown in the European path. According to the government of the time, during the socialist government, have occurred phenomena which have helped turn Albania in a catastrophic politically and economically state, as *“the creation of the corruption system, the violation of free elections and the implementation of unilateral reforms have negatively impacted the Albanian citizens, making it possible to lose confidence in state institutions, which are inefficient, opaque and deeply corrupt”*.

¹ The final decision of the Zagreb Summit.

Compared with regional counterparts, who after the 90's, in particular in the last decade have made significant progress into the European integration process, in the Albania's case, the results have been relatively minor. However, after the accession to NATO in 2009, the country is oriented towards the integration into the Euro-Atlantic area. Albania has achieved one of the two most important strategic goals with her membership in NATO in 2009. EU integration is another strategic goal of Albania.

"EU membership" is the slogan that has characterized all the political programs of the governments of our country after the fall of the dictatorial regime, it has also been the main motto of the campaigns and public debates. Despite the political and social demonstrations, the main actors in Albania are at a constant state of "war", attacking each others with rigged election results and holding back the necessary reforms for the European integration.

Once the SAA entered into force on April 1st 2009, Albania at the end of the same month officially presented the request for membership. EU officially accepted the application in November 2009, and in the next month submitted to Albania the questionnaire about its willingness for membership.

However one of the main conditions for Albania's EU integration is the implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. We find the legal basis of the mutual interaction between the contracting parties in one of the provisions of the TEU, Article 217, that specifically states: "*The European Union may conclude with one or more third countries or international organizations, to establish an association agreement, which includes the mutual rights and obligations ...* After the entry into force of the SAA, Albania has tried to respect all obligations required by the EU, although often various problems have appeared inside the country, Albania has made progress in its journey toward Europe. Referred to the above mentioned, officially since 2010, Albanian citizens have the opportunity to travel without visas in the Schengen area, as a result of the completion and fulfillment of a number of criteria by the Government.

Referred to the implementation and putting into practice the legal obligations deriving from this agreement, the Government has taken the necessary legal measures, at the same time one of the key priorities of our country, respecting the remaining recommendations after receiving candidate status¹. Recently, on June 24, 2014, Albania has received the candidate status after a series of failed attempts.

During these years, there has been progress, but these changes have been due to impositions by the EU representatives, while the Albanian political elite have hampered this process, due to a lack of political dialogue between the political forces. However the journey of our country by itself presents a number of problems that must be resolved, to upgrade to a new stage, an application for membership.

According to the Report Progress for Albania in 2015, changes have been made in all the aspects, however there are still some that have a long way to go. For this reason Albania continued to actively participate in high level dialogue meetings, as well as in the related joint working groups on the five key priorities². Continuously Albania must fulfill the five key criteria for the opening of the accession negotiations, therefore our country is a big step closer to the European family, but the whole process still seems more complicated than it had been expected.

¹ Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 486, dated 25.07.2012 on the adoption of the National Plan for the Implementation of the SAA, and the definition of institutional responsibilities for aligning Albanian legislation of any act of the European Union (which is updated annually).

² European Commission, *Albania 2015 Report*, November 2015, pg. 4.

4. Conclusion

In 1997 the situation had deteriorated, but despite this extremely precarious situation, the EU chose to cooperate in the framework of coordination, which was confided to the OSCE mission, therefore it did not choose the leadership role.

The European Union should assume a more active role in the Balkans, it must change its strategy, demonstrating with facts and concrete proofs, its ability to extend towards some geographical states that historically belonged to the old continent.

During 1998 the relationship between Albania and the European Union was intensified through the creation of a proper legal framework and administrative building capacity. In 1999 a year later, at the end of July, in Sarajevo was launched a new initiative taken by the European Union for the entire Western Balkans, the Stabilization and Association Agreement.

A new important moment in the relationships between the European Union and Albania, was on November 24, 2000 during the Zagreb Summit. During this summit, the EU offered to Balkan countries the perspective for future membership in the large European family, with the fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria and the agreement for assistance programs to achieve these objectives. The negotiations for the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Albania were officially opened in 2004, but entered into force on April 1st 2009. During these years, there has been progress, but these changes have been due to impositions by the EU representatives, while the Albanian political elite have hampered this process, due to a lack of political dialogue between the political forces.

Recently, on June 24, 2014, Albania has received the candidate status after a series of failed attempts. In the past years, Albania has smoothly implemented its obligations under the Stabilization and Association Agreement. Actually, our country is a big step closer to the European family, but the whole process still seems more complicated than it had been expected. Albania continued to actively participate in high level dialogue meetings, as well as the related joint working groups on the five key criteria.

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**Considerations on the Romanian-Soviet Historical Diplomatic Relations in
the View of Nicolae Titulescu**

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Abstract: The paper seeks a reassessment of the analysis on the model of Romania's foreign policy in the view of Nicolae Titulescu, with a particular emphasis on the Romanian-Soviet relations during the period when Titulescu was the chief of the Romanian diplomacy. The local historiographical literature has generally increased, the theoretical value of Titulescu's thinking, mentioning rarely about his utopian elements, was too focused on legal constructs, to the detriment of pragmatic realism and historical background. Our concerns in this regard were illustrated in some texts and specialized volumes on the geopolitical implications of the Romanian-Soviet relations, and this paper is intended to be a synthesis typical for a process of nuancing regarding the action of a reference personality of the contemporary Romanian diplomacy.

Keywords: Nicolae Titulescu; Romania; USSR; collective security; negotiation; treaty

The foreign policy of Romania's inter-war period was represented (especially if we consider the period from 20 October 1932 to 29 August 1936) by Nicolae Titulescu, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had previously held this position between July 6, 1927 -30 July 1928.

The complex and simultaneously contradictory personality of Nicolae Titulescu has been the subject of numerous articles, studies and books. The absolute majority of the Romanian historians consider that Titulescu is an exceptional diplomat, probably the most brilliant foreign minister that Romania has ever had. His undeniable intelligence, vast culture, oratorical grace, poise and spontaneity were his main strengths. At the same time, the man had his quirks, which some contemporaries did not hesitate to record them: exceedingly difficult, excessive spender with the ministry funds which he was leading, misbehavior, often arrogant...

The brilliance of his public statements was sometimes overshadowed by certain haste for choosing solutions, which some observers of the political life have sanctioned them harshly.

We aim in the current analysis an approach of Titulescu's vision on the diplomatic relations between Romania and the USSR, a controversial and important subject, equally adapted to the economic, historical or geopolitical paradigm.

In 1924, referring to Romania's relations with the USSR, Nicolae Titulescu considered that between the two countries it would have been a real friendship, and it ought to be maintained further identifying that goal with a profession of faith of his mission as a diplomat.

Unquestionably, the humanist, tolerant spirit, relaxed in this Titulescu's conviction can only honor if, historically speaking, the reference on the traditions of the Romanian-Russian

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relations would not be definitely forced. It is true the assertion that, in diplomatic terms, the Romanians and Russians were never until that moment at war, but it is surprising that an intellectually informed person such as Titulescu ignores a multitude of historical facts, demonstrating how nefarious was the Romanians' neighboring with the great Eastern power. It is true, the diplomacy pragmatism and the need to establish a lasting peace can be important arguments supporting Titulescu's declaration, more so as it would be absurd for Romania to maintain a state of perpetual hostility to its borders with Russia.

Nicolae Titulescu seemed for some to be overly optimistic and much too confident in this "friendship" between Romania and the USSR, considering that the duplicity and the unpredictability of Moscow's diplomacy were no longer a secret. It should have had maybe an extra backup in his statements that the temperamental structure of the Romanian diplomat did not allow it... In the summer of 1932, Nicoale Titulescu took over the actual issues related to a possible signing of a nonaggression pact between Romania and the USSR, leading to many negotiations in Paris and Geneva. He wanted to find a formula to eliminate from its contents the reference to any possible litigation between the Romanians and Soviets, while contributing to protecting the security of the eastern border of Romania. He rejected from the start the idea of introducing the Romanian-Soviet territorial litigation, considering that the part that admits a dispute over a territory, it will implicitly recognize its obligation to provide a solution to the dispute in question, this equating to either arbitration or to a plebiscite - both being unacceptable from the point of view of the Romanian diplomacy.

Even if the USSR was trying to reassure Bucharest sustaining that the acceptance of a territorial dispute between the two parties was not a tragedy, being able to be solved in time, amicably, it could not trusted the word of Moscow, which concealed the same diplomatic duplicity as always: the danger of an unpredictable armed conflict remained obvious, and only the very naïve or malicious would not have noticed it.

An elementary diplomatic principle states that between a small country and a great power, in order for any litigation to be solved amicably, it must be recognized equally by both parties. In his new quality as head of the State and of Romanian diplomacy, Titulescu had won certain sympathy from his Soviet counterparts – a new occasion to criticism, especially from the extreme right circles in Romania. The Soviets considered him as being a modern and constructive spirit, a partner in discussions without ideological prejudices and much more flexible (from their point of view) than his predecessors. (Titulescu, 1967, p. 283)

On the other hand, in February 1933 since the proposals on the definition of aggression showed a Soviet diplomacy ruling for respecting the existing treaties, the Balkan states began to regard the political actions of the Soviet Union with great interest. France, which ended in 1932 a non-aggression treaty with the USSR, wanted as its allies (including Romania) to get closer politically-diplomatically to this state. A particular aspect was represented by the report that Titulescu had with his Soviet counterpart Maxim Litvinov. Initially opponents in their ideas, engaging in numerous controversies in their official meetings, the two ended up in sincerely appreciating each other, primarily in terms of individual professional value. (Sandache, 2007, p. 283)

Defining the aggression and territory was one of the concerns of the inter-wars European diplomacy. Titulescu meant by territory, an area over which the state actually exercises its authority. (Oprea, 1966, p. 209)

The Romanian diplomat was convinced (for some - incomprehensible) that the definition of aggression would be the equivalent to a diplomatic panacea, meaning that the idea of peace

will come naturally it will arise and generate effective insurance of peace and implicitly the European equilibrium. (Oprea, 1966, p. 211)

Nicolae Iorga noticed that the diplomatic and conceptual scaffolding that argued the idea of defining aggression was purely a legal one, insufficient to ensure effective international security (Sandache, 2007, p. 283)

Titulescu's opponents have criticized him that he was seduced by the legal niceties at the expense of realism and pragmatism and, not least, he would be totally ignoring the historical records regarding the Romanian-Russian relations.

On the other hand, Titulescu opined that the main threat to European peace would be represented by the Nazism, which once came to power in Germany, it would have accelerated the revisionist side of the foreign policy of this country. According to Nicolae Titulescu as long as the Soviet diplomacy would be in favor of maintaining peace and the European equilibrium, it was imperative for the USSR to be drawn into the system of collective security, whose main pivot was represented by France. Moreover, Titulescu, a trained French intellectual, actually loved France, which he considered, in some way, the second home to him. His almost mystical faith that Titulescu had in forming a European system of collective security that includes the USSR and Romania, a system able to successfully oppose any form of virtual aggression, was in essence an issue of a certain moral beauty, but the ethical side of the vision sometimes turns into utopia. Although after 1919 Romania was attached to the idea of collective security, this principle very broad, with a universalistic interpretation at first sight, illustrating primarily the Franco-British interests. As Eduard Benes or Nicolas Politis also Nicolae Titulescu relied heavily on the French card, risking a relatively one-sided and ineffective vision. From a certain point of view, Titulescu can be compared to North American President Woodrow Wilson, who tried to put into the diplomatic practice the principles of modern Christianity, specific to Presbyterianism, the Puritanism of the chair. The head of Romanian diplomacy admitted that, in economic terms, the Members of the Little Entente were rather motivations of guidance towards Germany, but starting from the idea that France is the only antirevisionist European factor resulted in a high-power, advocating a primacy of politics over the economics. Unlocking the deeper springs of this profession of diplomatic faith we can detect an obvious predominance of the idealistic paradigm theorizing, to the detriment of real-politik, of the conjectural compromise, having a pragmatic feature. Not even the structure of Titulescu's personality was showing favorable to such attitudes, which undoubtedly were counted as being petty. It is noted here also a secret taste for the exterior, for gender representation at macro scale, typical to personalities holding an exacerbated pride.

In professional terms the Titulescu's diplomacy was actually an extension of the French legal system, as the American historian Walter M. Bacon Jr. would notice. (Bacon Jr., 1999, passim)

Positioning above all principles of legality and law, The Titulescu's diplomatic vision would later become somewhat anachronistic in the sense of theorizing itself, impeccable as intent, but subject to amendment practically. After 1920 this kind of approach to international relations no longer finds its viability being reflected in the 1936 dismissal of the Foreign Minister of Romania.

Nicolae Titulescu believed continuously in the indivisible peace organization, but it corresponded to a mentality point form end of 19th century and early 20th century which subsequently acquired the data of utopia. As a theoretical proposal, the Titulescu's diplomat

model represented a brilliant doctrine experiment, having the feature of a poorly run project which failed, 1940 being significant in this respect.

Romania has not monitored anymore with the same pragmatic care the European context that was set during the 1920-1940 period. It was too late to take account only the effects of the rise of Germany. As it regards Nicolae Titulescu we should note a paradox: at a certain point in time he two held positions at the same time, namely: Romania's foreign minister and president of the Society of Nations.

Although in the latter quality it was almost natural and advisable to vehemently criticize Italy for the Ethiopian adventure of 1935, thus supporting indirectly France, the dignity of Foreign Minister of Romania had to adapt to the diplomatic coordinates i.e. an attitude closer to pragmatism.

The Titulescu's model has reunited these plans into a single line of action, which marked spectacular vigilante-ethical events, specific rather to the diplomacy of a great power. We do not overlook the fact that in military terms, despite some accumulations that should not be ignored, Romania was mediocre. King Charles IInd recognized it. Such an ambitious and idealistic policy needed covering of an appropriate military force. Without reducing the blame of the 1940 tragedy to the results of foreign policy coordinated by Nicolae Titulescu for four years or to the international plot of the totalitarianism which associated, we must note that a in a pertinent historical analysis it needs to be taken into account absolutely all the existing factors, from the registered inter-conditions resulting in situations that can be interpreted as having special meanings.

In May 1934 in France there were discussions between Titulescu and Litvinov, the dominant atmosphere being relaxed and optimistic. On that occasion, the two diplomats had finalized the agreement in principle on resuming diplomatic relations between the USSR and Romania, Litvinov recognizing the sovereignty of the Romanian state. On 9 June 1934, the Romanian-Soviet diplomatic relations were resumed. Titulescu was convinced that this event would lead implicitly to the Soviet's recognition of Bessarabia within the borders of Romania. (Sturdza, 1994, p. 82)

The Titulescu's enthusiasm was the highest in that context, being convinced that he had obtained an exceptional diplomatic success that would forever normalize the relations between Romanians and Soviets (Titulescu, 1967, p. 601)

Excellent in terms of building effective propagandistic images, the Soviet diplomacy was giving also the impression (by the position of Litvinov) that the USSR would fully engage in such a political-diplomatic endeavor, on behalf of a responsibility typical to a state eager become one of the international centers for the defense of peace and stability on the European continent (Sandache, 2007, p. 287)

We do not know what to admire first: refined cynicism of the Soviet side, excess demagogy, the bright exaggerations and equally implausible...

It surprises unpleasantly the Titulescu's excessive optimism, faith in the Soviet's good intentions, sometimes being friends with naivety. No doubt that, in terms of diplomat career, of being the knower of international relations specifics, with all its complicated alchemy, Titulescu was formally right. The argument of the historical experience in the relations between the USSR and Romania was played by the Romanian diplomacy head in a formal and conventional manner. Obviously between the Romanian and Russian it had never existed before a formal state of war, but most of the unfortunate examples of the multitude of contacts

between the two sides would have to make him more reserved and circumspect in the Romanian diplomat's statements. From where could there be a "friendship" between the Soviet state and the kingdom of Romania? The term was excessive and it seemed that Titulescu had taken into consideration of the tradition of some bilateral interstate relations exclusively analyzed in the light of his personal experiences summarized in the good dialogue with Maxim Litvinov. Titulescu was the Romanian chief diplomat and he was expressing the view of a state, and not an exclusively personal one. A certain reserve should have been imposed.

In the text of the railway Convention subsequently concluded by Romania with the USSR, the concepts of "borderline", the "borders", "customs", "border authority" were omitted.

An interesting aspect was represented by the offer made in October 1934 to Romania by Germany, in the sense that it took the obligation of guaranteeing all borders of Romania, both in the west and the east, proposing at the same time also the complete rearming of the Romanian army with the latest weaponry. Germany would have not imposed to Romania to leave its traditional alliances, but it claim to oppose any attempt to penetrate any Soviet troops on Romanian territory. Accepting such an offer would have blocked the military mutual assistance treaty which France was preparing with the USSR. Such a treaty would not have had any sense if the Soviet troops could not pass through the territories of Western neighbors. All the Western neighbors of the USSR (except Romania) refused to accept such a possibility. (Sturdza, 1994, p. 89)

On May 2nd, 1935 Mutual Assistance Treaty was signed between France and the USSR, a document which stated that the parties will give aid and assist each other in case one of them would become the subject of an unprovoked aggression from a European state. Both the USSR and France said that they want to militate in favor of the conclusion of a regional pact to form the core of collective security in Europe. In turn, Nicolae Titulescu participated in the drafting of the Soviet-French document, an aspect with which he will boast about later on. It is worth noting that the Romanian chief diplomat turned into an active supporter of initialing at the earliest such an act.

On February 27th, 1936, the French Parliament ratified the military alliance with the USSR, and in the night of 7 to 8 March, 1936, Richard Fransovici, the Romanian Minister of Public Works, ordered the government of Romanian Railways to focus as many transport wagons as possible at the border between USSR and Romania. In fact, they wanted to stimulate a possible transshipment of Soviet military equipment in case of a conflict, to Czechoslovakia. (Germany was on the eve of the occupation of the Rhineland). Basically, only Romania finally agreed to join the alliance between France and the USSR.

On July 14, 1936, located in France, Octavian Goga sent a letter to King Charles IInd, where among others he also criticized the obsession of our foreign policy called France, saying that the Popular Front government led by Leon Blum, had no way of abandoning its communist side. (Constantiniu, 2002, p. 333)

Titulescu did not want in any way to change his attitude, but he was trying to demonstrate to the government in Bucharest (and primarily, King Charles IInd) that in terms of poor logistical endowment in the Romanian army, the country would not have been able to resist a possible aggression by Nazi Germany itself – but it had to join a network of alliances with two representative pillars such as France, the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Titulescu's brilliant intelligence alternated in strange fixations of some interpretations, with disappointing haughty stiffness. The USSR was considered as the necessary element of European security, Titulescu

(as other Western diplomats otherwise) was convinced that only Germany was a real threat to the European peace. In July 1935 he received full authority to begin negotiating a pact of mutual assistance of Romania and the USSR, under rather complicated conditions, with a Romanian public opinion relatively divided, which have different perceptions of the USSR and of the idea of national security. Titulescu was of the opinion that the future pact would have represented a culmination of his diplomatic career and that he would achieve the old aspiration of the Romanian foreign policy, to forever ensure peace on the borders of the east, while the USSR would be waived of all claims on Bessarabia. In terms of writing it was merely a treaty of general assistance with a content rather ambiguous, with many general abstract formulations, where Romania seemed rather forced to help the Soviet side, than to enjoy a similar advantage. Titulescu's superficiality and strange trust in the good intentions of the USSR appear to have been the features of the future document. (Oprea, 1966, p. 272)

The details of the document became known in the political circles, not only in Romania, but also from Poland, Germany and Italy, generating more vehement criticism against Nicolae Titulescu, especially since the signing of the pact of Romanian-Soviet mutual assistance was made on July 21st, 1936 by Titulescu and Litvinov, the executive in Bucharest not knowing anything about this. Reaching in a moment of confusion, Titulescu tried to "get closer" in the last moment of Germany saying that, but after it was signed the pact of mutual assistance between Romania and the USSR, Romania was offering to Germany the conclusion of a similar pact, provided that Germany (as USSR) would guarantee the territorial integrity of both Romania and its allied countries. But it was too late for that, as Germany rejected the Titulescu's project. Meanwhile, in Romania, some politicians spoke out vehemently against the signing of a pact between Romania and the USSR. Among the most active critics of Titulescu and his policy were Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, A.C. Cuza, Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Octavian Goga, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Constantin Argetoianu. Finally, the Soviet-Romanian negotiations were halted. Titulescu suffered a failure, despite the ethical and legal principles that he thought he was protecting. Subsequent events showed the duplicity of the USSR, and that the principles of collective security remained rather legal texts without practical effect, amid the new European geopolitical changes.

In conclusion, we can say that in terms of theoretical scaffolding the Titulescu's concept proved to be almost flawless, representing today a recognized model of ethics, in the spirit of good ideas of international cooperation, the concept of "border spiritualization" is significant in this regard. But it was deficient in terms of estimated capacity of power relations dynamics.

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THE 11TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

Eurasia: The Rivalry of Global Integration Projects

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Abstract: The article reveals the Eurasian integration projects as major drivers of world globalization. Eurasian regionalism seems to be gaining attention in the scientific literature. Under the current political circumstance many regions are accelerating integration and many countries are opting for regional associations as a mechanism to help them overcome the global recession. Moreover, the global political leaders, some developed countries - the U.S., China, and the European Union (EU) are interested to set up regional economic blocs such as Eurasian Economic Union (The EEU), the China's project 'One Belt One Road', the U.S.'s projects - The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The goal of this paper is to introduce a number of integration initiatives and to analyze the current strategies of Eurasian regionalism.

Keywords: The European Union (EU); The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU); The One Belt One Road (OBOR); The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

In recent years there take place a various economic, political and military shocks - the economic crisis, the problem of illegal migration, the conflict in Ukraine, terrorism, military clashes in the Middle East - all of this facts tells us that existing system of international relations is needed to be transformed according to a new reality. Considering the global political instability and crisis processes the modern stage of international relation system is characterized by intensifying of integration activity. Some states are trying to solve their internal and external problems combining their efforts with other states within the integration unions.

In the XX century Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, Nicholas Spykman who are regarded as the founding fathers of both geopolitics and geostrategy in their geopolitical conceptions consider the Eurasia as a key continent and therefore as an object of political and economic rivalry between the most powerful international actors.

The major integrating centers in Eurasia are the EU, Russia, China and the USA. Each of these centers have implement their own integration initiatives and cooperation programs. The international crisis that began in 2014 because of the political events in Ukraine partly was a result of serious conflict of interest between Russia and the EU about the post-soviet space' future prospects which is perceived in Moscow as a natural historical, geographical, economic and cultural Russia's zone of influence.

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Whereas the European Union considers the countries of this region as an open space for economic and political integration.

The dialogue between the EU and the states of the former Soviet Union began in the process of filling the geopolitical vacuum formed after the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), and the disintegration of the USSR.

On 1 May 2004, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia - joined the European Union. Three years later, on 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined and became members of the EU. In connection with the enlargement of the EU in 2004/2007 European approach to the countries of the former Soviet Union has been changed. It was conceptualized by the term 'new neighborhood' in relation to Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the three Caucasus states. Later in 2007, the term 'neighbors of neighbors' in relation to the Central Asian states was applied. In legal terms, these initiatives were determined as the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004) and the program "Eastern Partnership" (2009).

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) uses the mechanisms of multilateral economic cooperation and regional integration through the participation of partner countries in the thematic platforms, summits and common programs.

The goal of the EaP is to bring partner countries closer to the EU through deepened cooperation and integration based on EU values, norms and standards. In addition, the EaP aims at supporting reforms that contribute to institutional strengthening and modernization of the partner states. The EaP also offered partner countries tariff-free access to the EU single market in exchange for their adoption of trade-related EU legislation through the creation of a free-trade zone that would give partner countries access to the EU's five hundred million consumers. The stated objectives of the EaP were to advance "the political association and economic integration" of the EU with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

European Neighbourhood Policy and the program "Eastern Partnership" became a challenge the presence and influence of Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States region. New agreements in the framework of the EaP highlight the competitive nature of the EU and Russia integration plans in former post-Soviet space. The policy of enlargement assume that the EU - is not only a major economic bloc or only the union of nation states, but also the global political actor whose action is forming a strategic space in the conditions of competition with other centers of power.

A continuing transformation of the post-Soviet space is presently underway as it sheds the last elements of its common Soviet past. New geopolitical and spatial configurations and integration associations are being created, with a new set of players and development priorities appropriate to today's international situation and the new challenges.

Since the end of 2013, Russia has become one of the tension area of World Politics. Russia's ambition to preserve and strengthen integration cooperation with the CIS states and EU and USA action has led to Ukrainian crisis. Ukraine is located between two big spaces. Both EU and Russia offer their own program of integration and cooperation. The Ukrainian crisis is examined as an integral part of geopolitical rivalry and competition between two integration projects - European and Eurasian.

In 2014, the leaders of three countries - the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belarus - initiated the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as regional economic union in order to enhance integration, eliminate barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, develop coordinated, coherent and unified policy in key sectors of the economy. The Treaty is expected to move integration

to a whole new level and establish the region's path of development for the next half decade. The project to establish the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is one of the most important Russian integration initiatives since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The objectives and tasks of a new integration group, as well as the makeup of the integration core and potential participants, have now been determined.

A few years earlier, on 4 October 2011, in article in *Izvestia*, Russia's then prime minister Vladimir Putin announced the creating a new integration project as an important stage in the reconfigurations of cooperation on post-Soviet space. The article, as the heading states, outlines the 'new integration project for Eurasia' and envisages the creation of a 'Eurasian Union' by 2015 (Putin, 2011). This project can be considered the organizational and institutional counterparts to the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and its eastern dimension - the Eastern Partnership. Furthermore he made focus on the geopolitical dimension of the new project, stressing that the Eurasian Union is "capable of becoming one of the poles of the modern world" and 'an effective tie between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region'. It is clear that Moscow is seeking to strengthen its positions in dialogue with the EU and secure the post-Soviet space as a priority zone of Russia's influence.

In his article, Putin writes: "... The two largest associations on our continent, the European Union and the emerging Eurasian Union — basing their interaction on the rules of free trade and the compatibility of regulatory systems, including through relations with third countries and regional agencies, are capable of spreading these principles across the entire space, from the Atlantic to the Pacific". Based on economic logic and balanced partnership, Putin concluded, "the Eurasian Union and the EU are able to create real conditions for a change of the geo-political and geo-economic configuration of the whole continent". He reminded potential skeptics that as early as 2003 the EU and Russia had agreed to coordinate their respective rules of economic management and build a common economic space "from Lisbon to Vladivostok".

However, the extreme changes in Eurasia, associated with the Ukraine crisis in 2014 has massive implications for the development of this regional organization. Due to economic and political factors, Eurasian Economic Union appears to be far from many of the prospects that was discussed for several years before its implementation. The political crisis associated with the economy recession, the devaluation of the Russian ruble, declining oil prices, international sanctions - all these problems affect to the future of the Eurasian regionalism and creates some risks for the Eurasian integration.

Despite the current circumstance the Treaty on the EEU was signed by the Presidents of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on May 29, 2014, in Astana. Apart from the three states, the Union members will also include the Republic of Armenia that signed Treaty on Accession to the Union on October 10, 2014 and the Kyrgyz Republic that signed similar Treaty on December 23, 2014. January 1, the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union EEU has become effective.

While Russia, the EU and the USA is hesitant about the extent, implications and commitment to the rebalancing, Asian powers are looking to Central Asia, the Levant, Eastern Europe and Africa as areas of economic and strategic opportunity.

President Xi Jinping first presented China's vision for a 'Silk Road Economic Belt' during a 2013 speech in Kazakhstan. The idea was to "forge closer economic ties, deepen cooperation, and expand development in the Euro-Asia region". In early 2015, the contours of Beijing's strategy began to emerge as China's leadership laid out plans for this 'Silk Road Economic Belt' through Central Asia, and a "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" through Southeast and South Asia. China referred to both

collectively as ‘One Belt, One Road’ (OBOR). Both have been portrayed as an opportunity to reshape the economic and political order in Central Asia and the Asian Pacific region by promoting a network of trade routes, political cooperation and cultural exchange.

The OBOR is an attempt by the Chinese government to revive the Silk Road of ancient times, which connected China to Central Asia, West Asia, and Europe by land transportation and to Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Africa by ship. The OBOR similarly intends to provide a platform that will facilitate economic interaction among countries along the modern Silk Road, enabling them to benefit from increased trade. Furthermore, Beijing characterizes its initiatives as an effort to encourage integration and economic growth in Eurasia, rather than an attempt to expand its own political influence in the region.

In reality, Beijing has been using infrastructure projects to bolster its influence among needy nations for some time, most notably in Africa. But the One Belt, One Road takes those ambitions to another level. One arm, the Silk Road Economic Belt, will pass from China to Europe through Central Asia, and the other, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, will better link the country to Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa along vital sea lanes. China’s plan is to construct roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure across Asia and beyond to bind its economy more tightly to the rest of the world.

In March 2015, China used the Boao Forum for Asia to clarify its vision for the OBOR. Following a keynote address by President Xi, the National Development and Reform Commission, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, unveiled a “blueprint” providing the clearest picture to-date of China’s strategy. The ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative hangs on four interrelated objectives: Improving regional infrastructure, increasing regional economic policy coordination, removing barriers to trade, and encouraging cultural ties to build support for the broader project. The blueprint lays out a set of transportation, energy, and telecommunication infrastructure projects, coupled with plans for increased regional diplomatic coordination, financial integration, and cultural exchange. President Xi stated that China hopes its annual trade with countries involved will exceed \$2.5 trillion in roughly a decade. China’s trade with the Central Asian region has grown dramatically in recent years, from roughly \$1 billion in 2000 to over \$50 billion in 2013 (Cooley, 2015). In July 2015, The Chinese Ministry of Commerce announced that in the first half of the year Chinese companies signed 1,401 contracts for projects in countries included in the OBOR framework. These contracts were said to be worth \$37.6 billion (an increase of 16.7% year on year) and equal to 43.3% of all overseas contracts signed during that period.

China identifies transportation bottlenecks as a primary barrier to regional economic integration. In its initial stages, the Silk Road Economic Belt is being framed as a series of transportation, energy, and telecommunication infrastructure projects. The blueprint describes the development of a “Eurasian Land Bridge” as well as “China-Central Asia-West Asia and China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridors” that will be constructed by connecting a series of “core cities” from China to Europe. In June 2015, Hungary became the first European country to sign a cooperative agreement with China to participate in the Silk Road Economic Belt, something Beijing hopes will become a model for greater European participation. Financing for Silk Road projects will come from Chinese state-owned banks and a series of government and multilateral funds, including a Silk Road Fund, the AIIB, and the BRICS New Development Bank.

Also, China has pushed for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to establish a financial institution that would provide an additional funding stream for OBOR projects.

It is important to note that Russia has historically been concerned over the potential of an SCO development bank increasing China's leverage in Central Asia, but this dynamic appears to be shifting. In March 2015, SCO General Secretary Dmitry Mezentsev said that the organization would "combine its development strategies" with China's Silk Road strategy and that all members would be invited to participate in the initiative. Four months later, President Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to take steps to integrate the Silk Road Economic Belt with the EEU, using the SCO as a coordinating platform. Beijing appears to view the SCO as a primary mechanism to rally regional support for its initiatives as the organization increasingly looks to play a greater role in global affairs. Chinese policy experts have described plans for the SCO to play a "driving role" in OBOR. The SCO granted Afghanistan observer status in the SCO in 2012 and, in July 2015, voted to grant full membership to India and Pakistan.

Chinese and Russia integration strategies is supplemented by U.S.'s vision of integration configuration in Eurasia. "If we don't set the rules for world trade, then China will do it for us" said Barack Obama. There is clearly no need to detail the depth of rivalry going on between the United States and China. Today China is the US's largest and most direct competitor in the Asia-Pacific Region. But if Russia and China are attempting to expand on their existing processes of integration — while respecting each other's interests in their development — then the United States ploughs on with its latest project, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), also known as the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, is a multilateral free trade agreement formed in summer 2005 by a group of small pacific countries including Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. It was entered into force in May 2006. These first-adopters were soon joined by the USA, Australia, Canada, Peru, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, and Mexico.

The TPP plays a key role in U.S. trade policy as it helps accomplish key goals: disseminating new rules on trade and investment through free trade agreements; avoiding marginalization from a process of Asian regionalism that could end up being dominated by China; and building an Asia-Pacific platform for high standard integration that could deliver significant economic payoffs if larger trading partners eventually join and could help solidify the broader strategic goal of "turning" to Asia in the attempt to rebalance U.S. foreign policy. Economically, TPP would bind together a group that represents 40 percent of global GDP and about a third of world trade. Strategically, TPP is the avenue through which the United States, working with nearly a dozen other countries (and another half dozen waiting in the wings), is playing a leading role in writing the [trade] rules of the road for a critical region in flux (Froman, 2014).

After years of negotiating the much debated Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement has been signed at a Trade Minister level on 4 February 2016 in New Zealand. The TPP will now undergo a two-year ratification period in which at least six countries - that account for 85 percent of the combined gross domestic production of the 12 TPP nations - must approve the final text for the deal to be implemented. The potential Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement has strategic policy implications for the United States, including with respect to trade policy, but the substance of the proposed agreement and its future remain undecided.

It should also be noted that, there is widespread opposition to the TPP in many countries. Opponents have criticized the secrecy surrounding TPP talks, raised concerns about reduced access to things like affordable medicines, and a clause, which allows foreign investors the right to sue if they feel their profits have been impacted by a law or policy in the host country.

There is another agreement on the other side of the globe, one that will encompass 46% of the world's economy. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a free trade agreement currently being negotiated between the European Union and the United States. The primary motivation behind the negotiations is to boost economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

The United States and Europe have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world, with 1 trillion dollars in goods and services flowing annually between the two and 4 trillion dollars invested in each other's economy, supporting more than 13 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. Taken together, both economies account for almost half of global GDP and nearly one-third of global trade. But leaders on both sides continue to believe that the full potential of this relationship has yet to be realized. If the TTIP succeeds, it will change the political and economic landscape of Eurasia for decades.

To summarise it is important to note that one of the main characteristics of the modern world are the growing chaos in international relations, economic and political crises at the global and regional levels. Against the backdrop of the recent global economic crisis, many regions are accelerating integration and many countries are opting for regional associations as a mechanism to help them overcome the global downturn. That is why for the current agenda the idea of regional integration is extremely urgent.

In the process of globalization there take place deepening of economic and political cooperation. Regional unions of states, which form certain geopolitical space to combine their resources, are created.

Finally, one has to notice that the Eurasian space at the same time involved in the opposite trends, where there is a rivalry between several geopolitical centers - The EU, Russia, China and the USA. Each offer their own programs of cooperation and integration.

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