

CULTURAL COOPERATION OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION COUNTRY- MEMBERS

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Abstract. Although cultural issues are not explicitly addressed in the key documents of the EAEU, cooperation in this field is actively developing at the bilateral level. Numerous bilateral agreements have been concluded, international intergovernmental commissions and working groups on cultural issues are working, and exchange programs, festivals and joint educational initiatives are being implemented. Interaction in the field of culture has become a tool of «soft power», contributing to the strengthening of trust, mutual understanding, and the formation of a positive image of the EAEU. In addition, in certain spheres, such as cinema, there are already positive facts of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia. This study analyzes the existing forms of cultural cooperation within the Union, identifies key challenges, and offers recommendations for further development of this field.

Keywords: EAEU, Eurasian integration, cultural diplomacy, soft power, international organizations, integration.

Аңдатпа. Мәдениет мәселелері ЕАЭО-ның негізгі құжаттарында бекітілмегеніне қарамастан, бұл саладағы ынтымақтастық екіжақты деңгейде белсенді дамып келеді. Көптеген екіжақты келісімдерге қол қойылған, мәдениет мәселелері бойынша халықаралық үкіметаралық комиссиялар мен жұмыс топтары жұмыс істеуде, алмасу бағдарламалары, фестивальдар және бірлескен білім беру бастамалары іске асырылады. Мәдениет саласындағы өзара іс-қимыл сенімді, өзара түсіністікті нығайтуға және ЕАЭО оң имиджін қалыптастыруға көмектесетін «жұмсақ күш» құралына айналады. Бұған қоса, белгілі бір салаларда, мысалы, кинода Қазақстан мен Ресей арасындағы ынтымақтастықтың оң үлгілері қазірдің өзінде бар. Бұл зерттеуде Одақ аясындағы мәдени ынтымақтастықтың қолданыстағы нысандары талданып, негізгі міндеттер айқындалып, осы саланы одан әрі дамыту бойынша ұсыныстар берілген.

Түйін сөздер: ЕАЭО, еуразиялық интеграция, мәдени дипломатия, жұмсақ күш, халықаралық ұйымдар, интеграция

Аннотация. Несмотря на то, что вопросы культуры не закреплены в ключевых документах ЕАЭС, сотрудничество в этой сфере активно развивается на двустороннем уровне. Заключено множество двусторонних соглашений, работают межгосударственные межправительственные комиссии и рабочие группы по вопросам культуры, осуществляются программы обмена, фестивали и совместные образовательные инициативы. Взаимодействие в сфере культуры становится инструментом «мягкой силы», способствующим укреплению доверия, взаимопонимания и формированию позитивного имиджа ЕАЭС. Кроме того, в отдельных сферах, таких, как кино, уже имеются положительные факты сотрудничества и кооперации между Казахстаном и Россией. Настоящее исследование анализирует существующие формы культурного сотрудничества в рамках Союза, выявляет ключевые вызовы и предлагает рекомендации по дальнейшему развитию данной сферы.

Ключевые слова: ЕАЭС, Евразийская интеграция, культурная дипломатия, мягкая сила, международные организации, интеграция.

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Introduction

Cultural cooperation within international relations plays a significant role. However, greater attention is usually given to political issues, the development of trade-economic, and investment partnerships, as well as military cooperation. Cultural cooperation, in its turn, acts as a buffer in interstate relations, helping to smooth out contradictions and strengthen trust between nations. It creates a platform for dialogue, expands mutual understanding, and forms a positive image of states on the international stage. Moreover, cultural interaction becomes an important tool of “soft power”, allowing countries to promote their values, traditions, and language, thereby strengthening their influence. Examples of successful cultural initiatives, such as festivals, student exchanges, and joint educational programs, highlight the significant contribution of culture to the development of international cooperation. In general, cultural diplomacy acquires particular importance, especially in regions with historically complex political relationships. In this context, cooperation in the fields of art, science, education, and sports becomes not only a means of expanding international contacts but also an important mechanism for preventing conflicts and forming stable partnerships.

In this regard, the cultural cooperation between the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) — Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia — can play an important role in the field of strengthening of cooperation between countries. Nevertheless, that EAEU stands out as one of the most developed integration unions in the world, the cultural component within the organization is not developed yet.

Despite a long shared history of interaction through Soviet, imperial, and pre-imperial periods, the issue of cultural cooperation does not appear on the agenda of the organization. The issue mentioned once in the preamble of the Treaty on the Establishment of the EAEU, where it states that the member states “...desire to strengthen solidarity and deepen cooperation between their peoples with respect for their history, culture, and traditions...” [1], and agreed to create the organization. As will be shown later, cultural interaction is not addressed in other key documents of the EAEU.

Nevertheless, the authors believe, and will demonstrate in this work, that cultural interaction is one of the important areas within the EAEU, carried out through networked bilateral cooperation between the countries.

Materials and Methods

Joseph Nye, who is rightfully considered the creator of the term “soft power”, noted that in the face of global challenges, the role of information technologies and communication is increasing, and the success of a state depends not only on military or economic power but also on the ability to be attractive, achieving the goal that “others make you want what they want themselves” [2].

When discussing the cultural component of international organizations and unions, the European Union serves as the most vivid example. The foundation of the European Union's work is based on so-called “European values”, which unite the member states, as outlined in Article 2 of the Maastricht Treaty: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights, including the rights of minorities. A third country cannot join the Union unless it shares and recognizes these values.

As noted, these values carry a constructive and positive meaning, forming certain images in the minds of external observers. In general, the promotion of a positive image of an organization is not possible without the use of soft power tools and the creation of a specific image, such as “The European Union – a garden of paradise”, in the terminology of the former President of the European Commission, José Borrell [3].

The European Union has also institutionalized the promotion of culture and values within its organizational structure. In the system of the European Commission, the main executive body of the organization, there is a Vice-President responsible for values and transparency, a Vice-President for the promotion of the European way of life, and a Commissioner for innovation, research, culture, education, and youth [4]. Some authors emphasize the importance of cultural interaction in international agreements and development programs on the example of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [5]. A wide regulatory framework creates a platform for active dialogue between peoples, deepening mutual understanding, and forming close ties, which together contribute to the development of cooperation within the organization. Furthermore, the authors note that cultural diplomacy within the SCO used to provide a foundation for political partnership, smoothing interstate contradictions, and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between countries. B. Bakhriev, using the example of cultural cooperation development between Central Asian countries,

points out that holding cultural events gives countries the opportunity for self-representation, increases recognition, and has a practical impact by influencing tourist inflows. In his work, he concludes that Central Asian countries, as nations with shared cultural and historical elements, can also positively influence each other and the perception of the region by the third countries, thereby strengthening each other in a unique way [6].

To study the development of cultural ties between the member states of the EAEU, authors conducted monitoring and analysis of the existing legal framework within the EAEU, as well as bilateral relations between the countries. Statistical analysis methods and content analysis of the contractual and legal framework were applied.

Results

Currently, despite the relatively deep level of integration within the EAEU, the only element related to cultural matters within the organization is the fact that, according to Article 10, Clause 1 of the EAEU Treaty, Russian is the working language of the Union's bodies. Despite the 30-year period since the collapse of the USSR and the process of distancing the societies of the former Soviet Union, the Russian language remains the unifying language of the Eurasian space. Alongside English, French, Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish, it is also a language of the United Nations. In Kazakhstan, more than 80% of the population speaks Russian fluently [7], and in Kyrgyzstan, more than 90% [8].

It is important to note that Russian remains the Lingua Franca of the Eurasian space, despite the processes of nation-building in the post-Soviet countries. The Russian Federation's Embassy Advisor in Armenia, Alexander Novikov, aptly stated on this matter: "Even though up to 80% of the country's residents speak Russian today, this is still our civilization – the Armenian world with its ancient, unique culture, language, and church" [9].

Another confirming example comes from the speech of the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, during the signing of the Law on the State Language on July 24, 2023: "Russian is used as an official language. This norm is also in the Constitution... We need the Russian language just as we need Kyrgyz. Because without Russian, we cannot work with the CIS countries... Here we call it fully mastering our own language. Watch the speeches of government officials and deputies. Half in Russian, half in Kyrgyz" [10].

The issue of cultural cooperation is also absent in the Strategic Directions for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025 [11]. The only points related to cultural cooperation are those concerning education and physical culture. However, on December 25, 2023, a declaration was adopted regarding the further development of economic processes within the Eurasian Economic Union until 2030 and for the period up to 2045, titled "The Eurasian Economic Path" [12]. In this document, the development of cultural ties is not directly mentioned either. However, among the goals and directions of cooperation is the development of economic cooperation in areas with integration potential, including the promotion of a positive image of the EAEU and the popularization of the ideas of Eurasian economic integration. Another task involves the EAEU functioning as an economic pole of attraction on the international stage, including positioning the EAEU as one of the economic centers for forming the integration contour of the Greater Eurasian Partnership.

For instance although the European Union has 24 official languages, mainly 3 are used as working languages in the European institutions: French, English, and German. ASEAN on other hand has 10 official languages, but only one working language – English. Thus, use of a single working language within EAEU — Russian — aligns with other integration models, such as the European Union and ASEAN, where despite the existence of multiple official languages, only a few are used for day-to-day operations. With its widespread use among EAEU member states, the Russian language remains a vital cultural and linguistic link within the region.

At the same time, there is a broad legal framework for bilateral cooperation between the EAEU member states. Based on data from open sources, Table 1 has been created, listing approximately 39 agreements, contracts, memoranda, and cooperation programs at various levels between the countries in the field of culture.

Table 1. List of international legal base between EAEU member-states in the cultural sphere

	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Russia
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation dated August 24, 1990. • Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation between the Yerevan City Hall of the Republic of Armenia and the Minsk City Executive Committee of the Republic of Belarus – signed on June 6, 2002. • Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation between the Administration of Syunik Region of the Republic of Armenia and the Executive Committee of Minsk Region of the Republic of Belarus dated October 21, 2004. • Cultural Cooperation Programs for the Years 2005-2007, 2008-2010, 2011-2012, 2011-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2017, and 2019-2022. 	<p>Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Culture dated November 6, 2006.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education, Science, and Culture dated April 21, 1997. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Youth Policy dated April 28, 2006. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on the Establishment and Conditions of Operation of Information and Cultural Centers dated August 29, 1997. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Humanitarian Field dated September 10, 2010.
Belarus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Science, and Education dated January 17, 1996. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Arts dated November 4, 1999. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Press and Information, concluded in the city of Astana on October 5, 2000. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Culture, dated July 11, 2018. • Agreement between the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Culture, Information, and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Information, dated July 11, 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Culture, Education, and Science, dated February 21, 1995. • Agreement on the Establishment and Conditions of Activity of Cultural and Information Centers, dated December 10, 2009.

		and Postgraduate Education, dated June 10, 2009. • Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation, dated November 29, 2017.		
Kazakhstan			Treaty of Eternal Friendship between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, signed in Almaty on April 8, 1997.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on the Establishment and Conditions of Operation of Information and Cultural Centers, concluded in Almaty on October 12, 1998. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Culture dated April 14, 1993. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Science, and Education, concluded in Moscow on March 28, 1994. • Program of Cooperation in the Field of Culture for the years 2018-2019, 2020-2022, and 2024-2026.
Kyrgyzstan				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on Cultural Cooperation of June 10, 1992. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Culture, Science, and Education of March 27, 1995. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Information of January 13, 1999. • Agreement on the Establishment and Conditions of Operation of the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Bishkek and the Kyrgyz House of Science and Culture in Moscow of March 28, 2011. • Agreement on Cooperation in the Humanitarian Sphere of April 5, 2012.

Note: The table was compiled by the authors

Overall, as shown in this table, a solid legal framework between the EAEU member-states is already established, which stimulates the development of cooperation in the informational and cultural spheres on bilateral basis.

In addition to the legal framework, cultural cooperation issues are discussed within the framework of intergovernmental commissions, subcommittees, and committees. For example, there is a Joint board of the Ministries of Culture between Russia and Belarus. At its most recent meeting on December 16, 2024, Belarusian Minister of Culture R. Chernetsky noted that Belarus and Russia share a common cultural space and common traditions [13]. In April 2024, the Third Meeting of the Subcommittee on Cultural and Humanitarian Cooperation of the Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia took place under the chairmanship of the Minister of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan, Aida Balayeva, and the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Olga Lyubimova. Along with general cooperation issues, the meeting also highlighted the “Russian Seasons” held in Kazakhstan in 2023, as well as the V Commonwealth of Independent States Youth Theatre Forum, tours by the State Opera and Ballet Theater “Astana Opera” at the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia, joint exhibition projects, and other important events in 2024 [14].

Kyrgyzstan and Russia discuss cultural cooperation issues within the framework of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Humanitarian Cooperation. At a meeting held on March 29, 2024, a wide range of cooperation issues were discussed, including in the fields of economy, finance, energy, industrial cooperation, agriculture, transport, and culture [15].

Armenia and Russia also discuss cultural interaction within the framework of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation [16], as well as the Interparliamentary Commission for Cooperation between the Federal Assembly of Russia and the National Assembly of Armenia [17]. There is also Armenian-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, Kyrgyz-Armenian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation, Armenian-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission and Kazakh-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation. Moreover, in May 2011, an agreement on organizing a Scientific-Educational Consortium between higher educational institutions and research institutes of Kazakhstan and Belarus was signed [18].

Since 2010, with the support of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Armenia, the Kazakh Language, Culture, and History Center has been operating at the Department of Turkology of Yerevan State University. On November 30, 2016, the Kazakh Literature Center was opened at the National Library of Armenia. The opening of the center was accompanied by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the National Libraries of the two countries [19].

The countries actively organize Cultural Days and other events.

For instance, Kazakhstan's Cultural Days were held in Belarus in 2009, 2013, 2018, and 2022. Belarus's Cultural Days in Kazakhstan took place in 2014 and 2021. On April 12, 2012, the Kazakhstan Friends Club in Belarus was launched. Its members include prominent political figures, parliamentarians, heads of state bodies, enterprises, major media outlets, public figures, and scholars. In May 2012, the A. Abai Kazakh Language, History, and Culture Center was opened at the Belarusian National Technical University in Minsk. In November 2012, the Belarusian Language and Culture Center was opened at the Eurasian National University in Nur-Sultan. In March 2018, the Belarusian-Kazakh Cultural and Educational Center was opened at the Belarusian State Pedagogical University.

Kazakhstan's Cultural Days were held in Bishkek on October 7-8, 2021. Kyrgyzstan's Cultural Days in Astana were successfully held from October 27-29, 2022. In 2024, Kazakhstan successfully hosted Kyrgyzstan's Cultural Days and unveiled a monument to Manas in Astana. In Bishkek, a monument to the Kazakh philosopher and writer Abai was previously unveiled. In Russia, Kazakhstan's Cultural Days were held in Astrakhan, Kazan, and Moscow in 2022. In 2021, 2022, and 2023, Russia's Cultural Days took place in Kazakhstan, and in 2024, Astana's Cultural Days were held in Moscow, while Moscow's Cultural Days were hosted in Astana. In 2024, Armenia's Cultural Days were held in Astana, and Kazakhstan's Cultural Days are scheduled for Armenia in 2025. In Armenia, Russian Culture Days took place in 2023, and Belarusian Culture Days were held in 2019

and 2024. In Russia, Kyrgyzstan's Cultural Days took place in 2024, while Russian Culture Days were held in Kyrgyzstan in 2021. Additionally, in 2024, Kyrgyzstan's Cultural Days were hosted in Belarus

for the first time in the history of Kyrgyz-Belarusian bilateral relations. Belarus also hosted Kyrgyz Culture Days in October 2024. In 2024, Spiritual Culture Days of Russia were held in Belarus. Overall, many various events are organized within these activities, including separate exhibitions, opera and ballet performances, and other events of various nature aimed at showcasing the diversity and depth of national cultures. Because of such events, mutual understanding and respect between peoples should deepen.

When discussing practical cooperation in the cultural sphere, it is impossible to overlook a specific area: cooperation in cinema. In “Soft Power”, Joseph Nye emphasizes that, while cinema may not belong to high culture, it nonetheless has a greater impact on people than educational institutions, because “Hollywood can reach more people than Harvard”. He notes that American pop culture creates images of American values that are open, mobile, individualistic, anti-establishment, and free. Influence on external actors occurs without state involvement, achieved through the creation of an attractive image by transmitting information in the form of cinema or pop music [20].

The most active cooperation in the field of cinema is developing between Kazakhstan and Russia. Currently, Kazakhstan and Russia have established the necessary legal framework for cooperation in cinema:

- On November 12, 1998, the Government Resolution No. 1160 approved the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in Culture, Science, and Education. Under this agreement, the parties agreed to jointly hold film festivals and premieres, exchange films, delegations, and experts, collaborate on film productions, share film archives, exchange literature and materials, and develop direct contacts between organizations and cultural figures [21].

- In September 2012, within the framework of the VIII International Eurasia Film Festival, a Memorandum was signed between Kazakhstan’s “Kazakhfilm” studio and Russia’s Cinema Fund to expand cooperation between the cinematographies of both countries [22]. In general, it should be noted that at the end of the 2000s and early 2010s, cooperation developed quite well, with several joint projects. Specifically:

- In 2007, the “Mongol” movie was released, created in a joint production by the Russian company “STV”, German Kinofabrika, and Kazakhstan’s Eurasia Film Production. It was a story about the early life of Genghis Khan.

- In 2010, the romantic comedy “Irony of Love” was released, produced by the Russian company “Interfest” in cooperation with “Kazakhfilm”. With a budget of \$2 million, it grossed \$4.3 million worldwide.

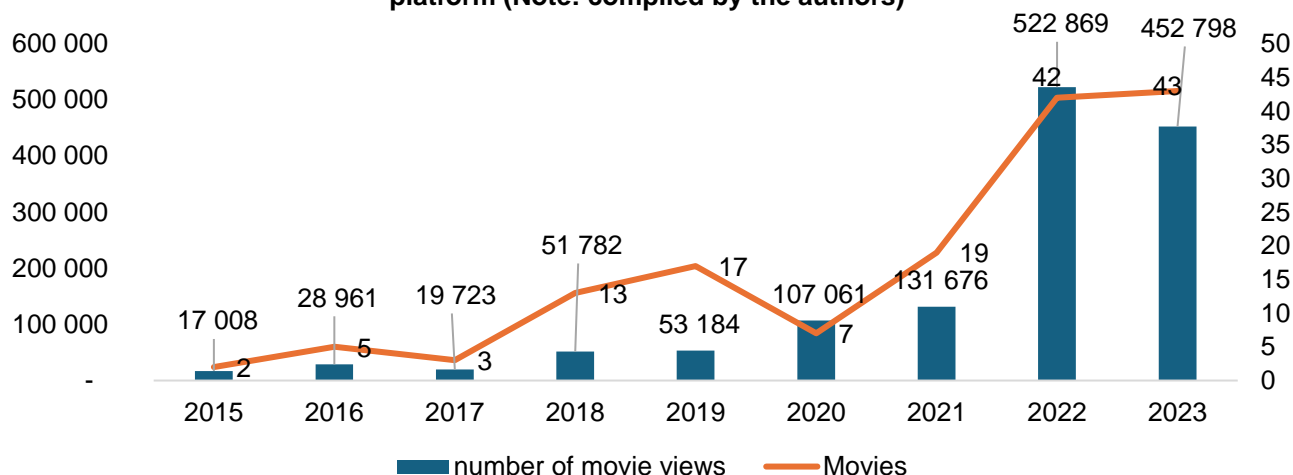
- In 2011, the film “Return to A” was released, dedicated to the legendary Boris Kerimbayev, A.K.A. “Kara-Mayor”, and the Soviet-Afghan war. The film was produced by the “BAITEREK” Production Center and PS TVC Studio of Yegor Konchalovsky at “Kazakhfilm”.

In the 2010s, co-productions significantly decreased and almost ceased, only to resume in the early 2020s. For example, in 2024, the fantasy-action film “Finist: The First Bogatyr” was released, partially filmed in Kazakhstan [23]. In 2025, the post-apocalyptic film “The Last Ronin” directed by Kazakhstani and Russian filmmaker Max Shishkin, was also filmed in Kazakhstan [24].

It is worth noting that Kazakhstani film production is actively appearing on Russian streaming platforms. A significant increase in Kazakhstani content was recorded by authors on the Kinopoisk platform, which leads among online cinemas in Russia both in terms of total subscribers and the number of paying subscribers [25].

According to data collected by the authors based on the streaming data, at the beginning of 2024, there were 932 Kazakhstan’s films in the Kinopoisk database, of which 20 had the highest ratings. In this online theater, 187 documentary and feature films, animated films, and series were available. A significant increase in the number of Kazakhstan’s films and views occurred in 2022, when the number of films reached 42, compared to 19 in 2021. The number of new films in 2023 was already 43. Views also increased in 2022 and 2023, with 522 thousands and 452 thousands views, respectively. In 2021, with 19 films, there were only 131 thousands views, and even fewer earlier. The presence of film ratings may indicate viewers engagement. It can be seen in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Dynamics of posting and viewing of Kazakh films on the Kinopoisk platform (Note: compiled by the authors)



The main reasons for this phenomenon are, first of all, the growth in the number of films produced in Kazakhstan. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the global spread of cinema and TV series. Due to pandemic restrictions, many people started using streaming platforms more frequently to watch films. Thirdly, the Russian-Ukrainian war led to restrictions on content from Collective West countries, both in cinemas and on streaming platforms. Throughout 2022, Western studios such as Disney, Warner Brothers, Sony, Paramount Pictures, Universal, and others canceled their releases in Russia. Since March 2023, Disney films and series have disappeared from Russian video services.

In addition to the rapidly developing bilateral ties, cooperation is also developing at the multilateral level in the field of youth policy. Since 2022, the Youth Forum of the CIS and EAEU has been held annually, and the Eurasian Youth Economic Forum has also been held annually at MGIMO. Since 2000, the Eurasian Economic Youth Forum has been held annually, representing a large international youth movement organized by several universities (UrGU, MGIMO, RUDN, and other federal universities in Russia).

Forums within the framework of the EAEU demonstrate expanding youth interaction, support for initiatives in entrepreneurship, science, digitalization, and culture. Their results show the involvement of young specialists in the processes of Eurasian integration and the creation of new cooperation mechanisms. However, despite positive results, youth forums within the EAEU face several limitations. First, they cover a relatively narrow circle of participants, primarily from educational and expert communities, which limits their influence on real youth policy. Second, the overwhelming majority of such events are organized in Russia, creating an imbalance in the representation of member states and reducing the potential for the even development of integration initiatives. Third, the broad and ambiguous approach to the concept of “Eurasia” leads to the dilution of the focus of discussions: instead of concrete initiatives within the framework of the EAEU, issues related to the broader Eurasian space, including SCO countries, ASEAN, and even the EU, are discussed. This reduces the practical significance of the forums and complicates the development of effective solutions aimed at strengthening youth interaction within the EAEU.

Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis in February 2022, certain Russian politicians and media figures have made a number of controversial statements regarding Kazakhstan. Among them are Moscow City Duma deputy from the Communist Party, Sergey Savostyanov, who suggested including Kazakhstan in a “zone of denazification”; State Duma deputy Konstantin Zatulin, who questioned Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity; and Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov and Russian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Alexey Borodavkin, who spoke of alleged “Russophobia” in the country. These remarks were met with strong responses from Kazakhstani lawmakers. For example, Majilis deputy Aigul Kuspan labeled Zatulin’s comments as unfriendly and groundless, while Senate Committee Chairman Mukhtar Kul-Mukhammed urged Russian federal authorities to respond to repeated hostile rhetoric on state television.

Additional tension is fueled by provocative statements from Russian political commentators such as Yevgeny Satanovsky, Gevorg Mirzayan, and TV host Tigran Keosayan, who have accused Kazakhstan of “ingratitude” and drifting away from Russia [26]. One of the main concerns raised by

the Russian side is the issue of so-called “language patrols”, prominently represented by activist Dias Kuzairov. The activities of these patrols involved demanding service in the Kazakh language in government institutions and public places, filming these interactions, and publishing the videos on social media—often accompanied by requests for financial support [27].

Subsequently, in 2024 Dias Kuzairov was arrested for 15 days for using obscene language to insult Russian President Vladimir Putin. Earlier, he had been the subject of a criminal investigation on charges of inciting ethnic hatred. Another organizer of the language patrols, Kuat Akhmetov, was also charged with inciting interethnic discord; according to his lawyer, he has since left the country [28].

President Tokayev, for his part, has repeatedly emphasized that the language issue must not be used for manipulation. He stated that the activities of the “language patrols” are provocations aimed at undermining Kazakhstan’s national unity. Russian officials have also emphasized interstate any form of manipulation should not affect relations. Thus, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov refuted the statements attributed to Ambassador Borodavkin, emphasizing that solely the presidents determine foreign policy. The Kremlin, through presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov, has clarified that some Russian commentators do not represent the official government position. Thus, at the official level, both Kazakh and Russian leaderships reject inflammatory rhetoric [26]. Another example is the tightening of labor migration legislation in the Russian Federation following the deadly terrorist attack at Crocus City Hall on March 22, 2024. In 2024 alone, six laws concerning migration were adopted, including those regulating military registration requirements for obtaining Russian citizenship and the provision of migration-related public services by the passport and visa service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. Russia remains the primary importer of the labor force within the EAEU, a trend that has remained unchanged since the union’s inception. According to official data from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, the majority of migrants arriving in Russia come from CIS countries. The share of migrants from CIS states decreased from 91% to 88% between 2021 and 2023, with the absolute number falling from 606,000 to 490,000 people. However, a more detailed look reveals an increase in the number of migrants from Tajikistan, whose share rose from 19% to 31%, growing from 126,800 to 171,200 people [29]. The legislative tightening has affected all migrants from Central Asian countries, including Kyrgyzstan, which is a member state of the EAEU.

In this regard, to address sensitive and problematic issues between countries, cultural cooperation must be actively pursued. It serves as a vital instrument for building mutual understanding, fostering trust, and creating channels for open dialogue. Through cultural exchange programs, joint artistic and educational initiatives, and the preservation of shared historical heritage, nations can overcome misunderstandings, reduce tensions, and strengthen people-to-people connections. This form of soft diplomacy is especially important in multicultural and multilingual contexts, where cultural engagement can promote unity and long-term stability based on respect and shared values.

Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis of cultural cooperation within the EAEU has shown that, despite the lack of systematic consolidation of this area in the Union’s legal documents, integration in the cultural field continues thanks to bilateral initiatives. The shared historical and cultural background, the Russian language as a lingua franca, and the ongoing projects allow the EAEU countries to develop humanitarian ties. However, the absence of a unified strategy and institutional support mechanisms limits the potential for cultural interaction. There is a need to develop common Eurasian programs aimed at supporting national cultures, expanding academic mobility, and promoting a shared cultural space.

Cultural diplomacy plays a key role in international relations, as it helps build trust between countries, overcome prejudices, and strengthen mutual understanding. Interaction through culture helps the EAEU countries not only preserve their national identities but also build stronger ties with other international organizations, such as the SCO, CSTO, and CIS. Investments in cultural initiatives can enhance the level of integration, improve the Union’s image on the world stage, and strengthen socio-cultural ties between nations.

Cultural cooperation within the EAEU plays an important role in strengthening integration processes and shaping a common identity. For its further development, it is necessary to strengthen institutional support, develop strategic programs, and intensify intergovernmental dialogue in the

humanitarian sphere. Including culture in the Union's official agenda could contribute to deepening integration, forming a unified Eurasian space, and enhancing the international authority of the EAEU. The development of cultural diplomacy within international organizations contributes to creating sustainable partnerships and peaceful coexistence among states. In conditions of geopolitical tension, culture remains a powerful tool for strengthening trust, preventing conflicts, and creating a favorable atmosphere for economic and political cooperation. Strengthening cultural interaction between EAEU countries can become an important factor for stability and progress in the Eurasian region.

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ЕУРАЗИЯЛЫҚ ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ОДАҒЫНЫҢ МҮШЕ-МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРДІҢ МӘДЕНИ ҒЫЛЫМ АКАДЕМИЯСЫ

Өжет ШЕГИРБАЕВ*, РФ Президенті жанындағы Ресей халық шаруашылығы және мемлекеттік қызмет академиясы Құқық және ұлттық қауіпсіздік институтының аспиранты, Қазақстан Республикасы Парламенті Сенаты Аппаратының Ақпараттық-талдау департаменті басшысының орынбасары, Астана, Қазақстан, Ojetov@mail.ru. ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7414-4689>

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КУЛЬТУРНОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО СТРАН-УЧАСТНИЦ ЕВРАЗИЙСКОГО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СОЮЗА

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