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INTEGRATION BETWEEN BELARUS AND RUSSIA

Интеграция Беларуси и России

The question of the integration between Belarus and Russia has crucial meaning for these states, their citizens, and international relations in the post-Soviet space. The purpose of the article is to overview the main aspects of the integration, such as political, economic, and social, looking through the relations of two states in terms of the post-Soviet period.

The starting point of relations between Belarus and Russia was the creation and signing of the agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, also called the Belovezha Accords. This document confirmed the dissolution of the USSR and the creation of independent states on its territory. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a commonwealth based on the equality of people and nations, respect for human rights and freedoms, aimed at maintaining mutual and voluntary economic, political, and social development and integration between its members.

On 15 May 1992, several post-Soviet states, including Russia, signed The Collective Security Treaty. The treaty was made to maintain peace in the post-Soviet region, fight against extremist and terrorist threats, forming common combined arms, called the Collective Rapid Reaction Force, and holding common military exercises. Belarus joined this treaty later, on 31 December 1992.

Another important step in the integration of the two states is the creation of the Union State, which was in 2000. The Union State is a supranational union between Russia and Belarus, whose main goals are economic integration, a common taxation system and defense. The Union State has its own governing bodies. The Supreme State Council includes heads of states, governments and parliaments of each state. The Union Parliament consists of the House of the Union with 36 members from each state, and the House of Representatives with 75 members from Russia and 28 from Belarus. The Court of the Union works similarly to the Constitutional courts of each state. The Accounting Chamber's main purpose is to govern the budget of the Union State. The integration of Belarus and Russia in the Union State is close but based on respect for the sovereignty of the states, their culture and national traditions.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC or EurAsEC), later reorganized into The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU or EEU) is a trade union whose members are Belarus and Russia. It was made to enable the free movement of goods and services and common economic policies. The union has free trade agreements not only between its

members but also with Vietnam, China, Iran, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, and Mongolia.

As well as political and economic integration, cultural integration is also important. Belarus and Russia are visa-free travel states for each other's citizens. People from Russia often visit Belarus (more than 355,000 citizens of Russia visited Belarus in 2024). They want to know more about the similarities and differences of our cultures, visit concerts, such as Slavianski Bazar in Vitebsk, and get sanatorium and resort treatment. Belarusian citizens visit Russia as well, visiting different cities and natural climate zones.

As a result of research into the question of integration between Belarus and Russia, we can conclude that the integration is beneficial for these states, giving their citizens wider tourism opportunities and creating conditions for successful economic growth and common defense. The integration in question is a key part and a great example of cooperation between post-Soviet states.

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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNION STATE

Проблемы и перспективы развития Союзного государства

The historical preconditions for the integration of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation are rooted in the profound commonality of cultural, linguistic, and legal traditions dating back to the period of the unified Soviet state. Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, both countries faced the need to rethink their foreign policy orientations. The signing of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State in 1999 was a logical continuation of a series of integration agreements of the 1990s, including the Treaty on the Community of Belarus and Russia (1996) and the Treaty on the Union of Belarus and Russia (1997). These acts reflected the desire to form a supranational space capable of compensating for the geopolitical fragmentation of the post-Soviet region.

The purpose of this work is to identify the main problems in the functioning of the Union State of Russia and Belarus and to analyze the factors that hinder the deepening of integration. At the same time, the goal is to determine promising areas of development, from economic and legal convergence to strengthening political cooperation and social integration.

It should be noted that, as of today, integration within the framework of the Union State demonstrates a contradictory dynamic, combining institutional achievements with systemic constraints. On the one hand, more than 28 union programs are being