

2013, measures announced by Japan which were expected to devalue its currency sparked concern of a possible second 21st century currency war breaking out, this time with the principal source of tension being not China versus the US, but Japan versus the Eurozone. By late February, concerns of a new outbreak of currency war had been mostly allayed, after the G7 and G20 issued statements committing to avoid competitive devaluation.

After the European Central Bank launched a fresh programme of quantitative easing in January 2015, there was once again an intensification of discussion about currency war.

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## INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN THE WORLD ECONOMY

In the context of globalization, the increasing interdependence of national economies and the development of integration processes are the most important features of modernity. International integration is proceeding rapidly as the result of the increased flow of trade, capital, money, direct investment, technology, people, information, and ideas across national boundaries. Integration emerges on the basis of internationalization as its highest form. In the words of American scholar, Patrick M. Morgan, ‘There is no generally accepted definition of integration. Some consider integration to be a condition, but it is equally plausible to think of it as a process.’ For diversity, let us look at some other definitions, like this one given by Robert Grosse and Duane Kujawa: ‘Regional integration is expansion of commercial and financial ties among countries in a regional group, leaving the rest of the world outside of the group.’ From a systematic perspective, economic integration is reached in the process of joining different national economies together in a single economic complex having a specific institutional structure and functioning on the basis of coordinated economic policy.

As one of the main trends in contemporary international processes, regional co-operation offers great opportunities for countries to become involved in these processes, identifying their specific place in the international system and adapting to the dynamic changes which are taking place. The question is how it can influence on the world economy. The truth about economic integration particularly in the context of the 21st century is that, economies that will resist the global drive towards international economic integration will find themselves out of pace with the rest of the world in terms of growth and development. On the other hand, the collective understanding of the advantages and opportunities which the regional integration provides will lead to intensified and more divergent forms of co-operation which will be both deeper and

broader. This is dictated by the logic of international processes which says that in our day only those political actors who are effective collectively will survive. A maximum of cooperation, in other words, is the best security guarantee.

The next important issue is the future of economic integration. For the states with transitive economy, as well as for the Republic of Belarus, participation in integration processes is an objective necessity and the most acceptable way of entering into the world economic system. Future perspectives of the Belarusian economy, taken into account a high scale of its openness and active globalization processes in the world, are directly connected with development of foreign economic activities. Relations with Russia and other countries of the CIS will remain the priority in this sphere. In order to promote stable development, to raise the competitiveness of national economies and the living standards of the nations the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is being created by the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. It is also envisaged to develop foreign trade cooperation with the neighbouring countries – the Baltic States, Poland, and other countries of Central Europe, which are providing Belarus with an exit to the sea, a capability of transit of Belarusian goods. As to countries of the West (and first of all the members of the European Union), it is supposed to develop foreign economic relations with them on the basis of prolongation of the process of Belarus' entrance into the WTO, active participation of our country in the work of international economic and financial organizations.

Obviously, economic integration allows the countries to get the maximum benefit from mutual cooperation. Countries entering economic integration form groups and have greater political influence as compared to influence by a single nation. Economic integration lowers national barriers to trades and investments, so goods, services and money move more freely throughout the world. A positive and very important side effect is therefore also that the firms operating inside the integrated market may become more efficient and thereby be able to compete with larger and more efficient firms emanating from other large countries or other economically integrated areas. Economic interdependence creates prerequisites for the political cooperation between the nearby states, preventing the possibility of military conflicts appearance. Thus, economic integration has become a preferred strategy for most countries of the world.