

# TRENDS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION (EAEU)

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## ABSTRACT

*The article discusses the problems and development trends, provides an economic assessment of the production and rice sales in the EAEU common economic area, and provides international experience in rice growing. Implementation of substantive consultations by the authorized agencies of the EAEU member states, conduction a comprehensive analysis of particular agricultural crops in the countries-members of the Union, distribution of raw material zones, resource support for the industry, financial and economic indicators, normative-legal regulation, measures of state support, indicators of external and mutual trade, as well as other aspects, allowed solving many agricultural problems, but at the same time they still do not ensure the full implementation of awns of individual countries, and not allowed to give a realistic assessment of the integration processes, as well as the effectiveness of the regional agricultural policy.*

**Keywords:** EAEU, Trends, Development, Trade, Production, Economic Indicators.

## INTRODUCTION

Intensification of integration processes in a particular region is an inevitable process, which is determined by historical roots arising from various conditions, which include the geographical location of the country, socio-political, cultural and linguistic unity. The CIS countries are characterized by severance of economic ties in a single national economic complex in the early 90s of the last century, which intensified even more in the conditions of the global economic crisis. On the other hand, the current stage of globalization of the world economy requires the strengthening of regional integration associations, which, for their part, determine the ongoing political and economic processes, at the same time mobilizing the capabilities of individual regions. Under these conditions, the intensified efforts of the EAEU member countries give a new impetus to the development of integration processes not only within the CIS countries, but allow expanding the integration borders by attracting other countries that have a certain interest in mutually beneficial cooperation within the framework of this economic union.

Based on the ongoing rapid changes in the political and economic situations, the modern world economy has recently given an important role to adapting national economies to the changes that are taking place, as well as solving social problems that the social economy deals with. In this aspect, the EAEU is consistently solving the most important tasks of the agro-industrial sector, which is very important primarily for sensitive agricultural products. The republic's entry into the EAEU opens up great horizons for economic cooperation between member countries of this economic union, and allows to increase production and mutual trade in agricultural and food products. The problems of regional integration were considered by many authors, and they are of a theoretical nature and various research paradigms for the development of the world economy. However, time shows that the rapid growth of scientific and technological progress has a sharp impact on the ongoing process, which, for its part, sometimes does not allow you to quickly adapt to ongoing changes in the economy. The development and expansion of European integration, the formation and strengthening of the European Union has increased the number of works that analyze the specifics of this European integration, revealed the correlation of political, economic and social factors affecting its functioning (Apendiyev et al., 2019; Nassimov et al., 2019; Ospanov et al., 2019).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual basics of the development of the region's foreign economic activity in the conditions of integration and globalization of the world economy are of priority importance for any state, since they are determined by the internal and external conditions of the economic area, on the other hand, despite the dependence of economic relations on the economic environment, at the same time they play a significant role political, legal, social and other aspects of the mechanism of foreign economic relations (Umirzakov et al., 2019). According to many scientists and researchers, integration must be considered from three aspects that have the corresponding constituent factors and conditions. In particular, the first includes economic ones. At the same time, the second has a political aspect, the third combines economic and political aspects. Moreover, the latter approach reveals the completeness of integration processes, as it ensures the implementation of the requirements of foreign economic activity of countries participating in the integration process (Maryshev, 2013). Economic institutions and the adaptability of entrepreneurs have priority at the integration processes in the EAEU conditions. Moreover, despite the presence of both national and interethnic institutions in the EAEU or other economic Union conditions, in almost all countries, inconsistencies in one link can be observed that provoke a tendency to multiply problems along the chain like a chain reaction (Kazhyken, 2018). In the case when the agricultural producer carries out activities in a transparent institutional environment, which is characterized by a fair normative order in which his activity is protected by state voluntarism, he can confidently build his strategy for the development of agribusiness. In this case, the agricultural producer is able to adapt to any changes in market conditions. At the same time, the adaptation of agricultural producers occurs quickly when they make decisions themselves (Belyakov, 2003). At the same time, under the influence of external factors that are characteristic of the economic Union, the internal characteristics of the national economy are also changing. For example, if prices for exported goods fell or new preferences emerged for rice buyers, business activity in the countries of trading partners fell, or strong competitors appeared, structural changes inevitably occur in the national economy, which can sometimes lead to the disappearance of industry segments or even the entire industry. Therefore, entrepreneurship must

quickly and accurately respond to challenges, as markets for economic factors will rapidly redirect resources and capital to where they will be more efficiently used in a changing market situation. In this process, the role of both internal and external institutions is indispensable. Entrepreneurship, for its part, is interested in institutions that create favorable conditions for economic activity through effective units, norms and rules of foreign economic activity. In this regard, internal and external institutions, the latter directly implementing the effective functioning of the economic Union, are developing an appropriate economic policy (Kaskin, 2015).

The main problems of economic integration in the EAEU conditions are the development of national industries through subsidizing strategically important sectors and public-private partnerships, the development of the logistics sector, the creation of a single supranational bank by the EAEU member countries, overcoming economic problems and preventing a crisis of confidence, which must be considered in relation to the reasons and consequences, as well as the dependence of member states of the union on the Russian currency, the lack of a single financial regulator, unification of legislation, incomplete import substitution at which prices do not decrease, at which various inflation levels in countries of a single economic area should be added (Drobot & Kostyleva, 2016). An important factor is the application of business experience between the member countries, including in the field of state regulation of the economy and the banking sector, as well as diversification of the economy. Moreover, the emergence of new joint projects based on agreements and memoranda in various fields will give impetus to closer integration. Projects may relate to various sectors of the economy and industries, including agriculture and the agro-industrial complex. In addition, the Eurasian Economic Union offers excellent opportunities for citizens of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia to develop education and science and to solve other target tasks (Europe, 2012; Abgaryan, 2012; A new integration project for Eurasia, 2012). Analytical studies of the methodological provisions of regional integration processes and foreign economic activity between the EAEU countries and other integration associations show the need for a new agricultural policy, in which the circle of tasks should solve problematic issues that impede the effective cooperation of Kazakhstani AIC companies with foreign partners in the field of technology and investment transfer. Moreover, the implementation of the new agricultural policy should carry out the diversification processes of agricultural production, in line with which agriculture is developing today, including rice growing (Way, 2019). All sectors and main types of economic activity included in the country's agro-industrial complex can be divided into 4 main areas - resources, equipment and services for agriculture and food industry, agricultural production, agricultural processing sector on the basis of which food production and scientific-educational complex providing the two previous areas with technologies and qualified specialists. Rice growing also has its own sub-sectors, which develop depending on the climatic conditions and raw material base. Due to the homogeneity of the products of this industry and the interdependence of commodity-producing industries, producing agricultural raw materials and food, rice growing belongs to the agricultural production system. In this aspect, the regional integration of the EAEU member countries should include, along with the process of mutual trade, as an element of foreign economic activity, and other parties providing mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Along with this, subjects of foreign economic activity in the field of rice growing should develop marketing, transportation, warehousing and other operations that are carried out in the process of bringing products to the consumer, which are carried out independently, although many related manufacturers create integrated formations for the production and sale of products. Rice growing, with its specific

feature, today uses sectoral, territorial and inter-sectoral types of integration formations for the production and sale of manufactured products. At the same time, the engineering planned lands used for crops of rice and rice crop rotation are made up of the number of interest holders, i.e. owners of land shares. Therefore, not all rural producers can ensure competition in the market of the EAEU's common economic area, and the largest forms of rice-growing farms have the greatest advantages, where the production potential and lower costs of rice crop production are used most efficiently. Secondly, in large agro-formations of rice growing the agricultural production system is better observed, there are great opportunities for creating additional branches of animal husbandry, and for resolving legal, organizational, social and moral-psychological relations. Thirdly, the processes of diversification and modernization of rice production in line with the ongoing changes in the field of agricultural production, focused on increasing the country's export potential, require considerable investments, investments in the use of highly productive modern technologies, methods and experience of their implementation. Foreign business, including international financial institutions, for which the Kazakhstani agricultural sector, including the field of rice growing, is attractive from the point of view of the capacity of the EAEU single market and the prospects for expanding the borders of this economic union, has all this (Demchenko & Kaplun, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Despite the sufficient experience in the development of regional integration processes, the availability of relevant industry institutions, tools and mechanisms for mutual trade in agro-industrial complex products, zonal requirements and other measures, in practice there is no single body of veterinary and phytosanitary supervision that should evaluate the negative processes occurring during trade, there is no independent assessment and external audit, to some extent, is affected by the Russian ban on food imports from some countries, which does not ensure the completeness of the principles of the common market and the requirements of the WTO as defined by the EAEU. Today, out of the field of view of most researchers, an assessment of integration processes in the post-Soviet area by Western scientists and researchers remains. Little attention is paid to the interdependence between internal political processes in the newly independent states, the relationship of political forces towards integration between neighboring countries. In addition, the basic factors that should determine the ratio of national and supranational interests of countries belonging to regional unions, as well as the economic and political components in a regional integration association, are not disclosed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rice is one of the oldest agricultural crops, an important structural element of the global food security system. Consumer demand for rice in the world is growing annually, and, according to the FAO forecast, by 2020 it will amount to about 780 million tons (raw in raw form). At the same time, the expected production of raw rice by 2020 is forecasted at 750 million tons, which indicates a continuing deficit in the world market. According to the US Department of Agriculture (FAS USDA) during 2014-2017. Global rice production (in processed form) grew by 2.6% to 494 million tons, including in India - by 7% to 112.9 million tons and China - by 1.5% to 148.9 million tons. These countries account for more than half of the world's rice production (Overview of the rice growing development in the member states of the Eurasian

Economic Union in 2013-2017, 2017; Zelensky, 2016). In the EAEU countries, rice is cultivated in three states: the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation per capita rice consumption varies significantly across countries (Drobot et al., 2017).

EAEU member states	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kazakhstan	90	97,6	98,5	94,7	104,6
Kyrgyzstan	7,9	8,1	8,6	9,9	10,7
Russia	190,2	196,7	202,1	207,6	186,7
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-
Total EAEU	288,1	302,4	309,2	312,2	302,0

Note: Data of statistics agencies of EAEU member states

In 2013-2017, the rice sown areas in all EAEU member states increased annually and reached 302.0 thousand ha. The growth in the EAEU as a whole against the level of 2013 amounted to 4.8%. At the same time, in 2017, there was a decrease in rice crops in the Russian Federation by 1.8% against the level of 2013 and by 10.9% against the level of 2016. The main production of raw rice in Russia is concentrated on the lands of agricultural enterprises (85.6% of the total rice sowing area in 2017), in Kyrgyzstan - the largest share is located on the lands of peasant (farmer) farms (97.1%). In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the sown areas of rice are distributed equally between agricultural enterprises (48.9%) and peasant (farmer) enterprises (51.1%). At the same time, rice, as a wet crop, requires compliance with the agricultural production system and is usually located on engineering-planned lands with a drainage system for water drainage, which requires compliance with regulatory parameters, which is not observed mostly in small and medium-sized farms. As a result of this, today 70-80% in the structure of cultivated areas of rice crop rotation for rice culture accounts for 70-80%. In this aspect, these farms use extensive technology, which leads to a crop by increasing rice crops (Table 1).

EAEU member states	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kazakhstan	344,3	377,0	422,2	447,8	489,5
Kyrgyzstan	27,2	28,2	30,2	34,8	38,2
Russia	934,9	1048,6	1109,8	1080,9	986,6
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-
Total EAEU	1306,4	1453,8	1562,2	1563,5	1514,3

Note: Data from the statistical authorities of the member states and ECE

The average annual production of raw rice in the EAEU member states for 2013-2017 amounted to 1,480 thousand tons, which is 0.2% of global production. The largest gross production of raw rice is observed in the Russian Federation (986.6 tons) and the Republic of Kazakhstan (489 tons), the share of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan - 38.2 tons. In 2017, compared with 2013, the gross production of raw rice in Kazakhstan increased by 42.2%, in Kyrgyzstan by 40.4% and in the Russian Federation by 5.5%. Despite the presence of the necessary production and scientific potential, favorable climatic and other conditions for the cultivation of rice, in the Russian Federation this crop is unstable, which leads to import from other countries. In the

Republic of Kazakhstan, the main rice-growing region is Kyzylorda region, which accounts for almost 90% of the gross harvest of raw rice in the country (Table 2). Rice is also cultivated in Almaty and Turkestan (South Kazakhstan) regions, which account for almost 8% and 3% of the gross rice harvest, respectively. In the rice trade between the EAEU countries, processed rice, which undergoes full dry or wet processing at processing plants, is of great importance (Yevniev, 2018a).

**Table 3**  
**PRODUCTION OF POLISHED RICE IN THE EAEU MEMBER STATES (THOUSAND TONS)**

EAEU member states	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kazakhstan	144,1	150,5	150,6	173,9	148,5
Kyrgyzstan	10,9	11,6	12,5	14,7	16,2
Russia	376,7	365,2	360,3	422,5	427,9
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-
Total EAEU	531,7	527,3	523,4	611,1	592,6

Note: IGC data

Rice processing in the EAEU is characterized by stable growth dynamics, in which the production of processed rice has grown by 11.5% over the past five years, including in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia this indicator was 3.1%, 48.6% and 13.6% respectively. In the EAEU as a whole, the production of processed rice in 2017 increases compared to 2013 by 11.5%. Along with this, the growth of rice cereal production in the EAEU countries may be due to several aspects, such as a decrease in gross harvest in the Russian Federation (which accounts for 65.2% and 72.2% of the total production of raw rice and processed rice in the EAEU respectively), increasing the yield of cereals from raw, as well as the possible unreliable accounting of prepackaged and packaged rice in the countries of this union, supplies from third countries, as rice of domestic production. In addition, the signing of a contract on a free trade zone between the EAEU and Vietnam allows increasing rice sales volumes, as well as buying Vietnamese rice on the EAEU market. A mutual agreement with the Republic of Iran serves as great prospects for Kazakhstan, in particular, the Kyzylorda region. Regarding rice imports (EAEU Customs commodity code 1006), the EAEU countries have established a customs duty rate of 10% of the customs value, but not less than 0.03 euros per 1 kg, except for unshelled other (not steamed) medium-grain rice, the import of which applies a rate of 30% (Tables 3 and 4).

**Table 4**  
**THE VOLUME OF RICE IMPORTS FOR SOWING IN THE EAEU MEMBER STATES (TONS)**

EAEU member states	2014	2015	2016	2017	Rates of growth, %
Kazakhstan	0.3	0.16	6.7	13.2	4363.0
Kyrgyzstan	0	12	0	0	0.0
Russia	0.1	0.1	0.8	10.0	13.0
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-
Total EAEU	380	292	7532	23220	6110.5

Note: ECE data

In 2013-2017 there is an increase in deliveries from third countries of rice for sowing to Kazakhstan and Russia up to 23.2 tons in the amount of 18.4 thousand dollars in the whole

EAEU. Amid increasing supplies of rice for sowing, rice imports decreased by 35.3% to 203.9 thousand tons in the amount of \$ 96.1 million. The main suppliers of rice are India (31% of imports), Thailand (28%), Pakistan (16%) and Vietnam (17%) (Artemov, 1999).

<b>EAEU member states</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Rates of growth, %</b>
Kazakhstan	2716,0	4161,9	688,5	2239,5	82.5
Kyrgyzstan	3776,7	2154,5	170,8	421,1	11.1
Russia	281726,2	210571,5	47458,7	192663,0	68.4
Belarus	26542,2	24549,4	5484,9	744,0	2.8
Armenia	104,0	9209,7	2949,3	7805,3	7505.1
Total EAEU	314865,1	250647,0	56752,2	203872,8	64.7

Note: ECE data

The growth rate of rice imports to the EAEU member states for 2014-2017 in the EAEU as a whole is 64.7%, including 82.5% in Kazakhstan, 68.4% in the Russian Federation and the growth rate in Armenia is high - 75 times (Table 5). The structure of imports is dominated by fully collapsed long-grain rice. Moreover, in the structure of imports in physical terms, short-grain rice is 1%, medium-grain - 3% and long-grain - 96%. Completely peeled rice is 97%, and other rice is 3% (Mukanova, 2019).

<b>EAEU member states</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Rates of growth, %</b>
Kazakhstan	20985,0	35472,7	11146,7	49905,6	237.8
Kyrgyzstan	0	3888,4	27,4	39,2	-
Russia	182379,0	147777,3	72834,7	168736,1	92.5
Belarus	10,3	41350,1	0	0	-
Armenia	0	0,1	0	0	-
Total EAEU	203374,3	228488,6	84008,8	218680,8	107.5

Note: ECE data

The growth rate of rice exports to third countries in 2014-2017 in Kazakhstan is 237.8% and in the Russian Federation - 92.5%. On average, the EAEU export growth rate is 107.5%. The geography of deliveries includes Turkey (19.9%), Mongolia (8.8%), Belgium (13.9), Ukraine, and Tajikistan (Table 6). The main share in rice export to third countries (in kind) is medium-grain rice. In the case of mutual trade in rice between the EAEU member countries, the bulk of the trade falls on crushed long-grain and short-grain rice, at the same time, 92% falls on crushed rice, completely peeled - 6% and others - 2%. At the same time, short-grain rice accounts for 51%, long-grain - 41% and medium-grain rice - 8%. In 2014-2017, the volume of mutual trade in rice decreased by 24% to 54.9 thousand tons to \$ 10.6 million, which is only 10% of the volume of imports of such agricultural products from third countries. More than 87% of the volume of mutual trade in rice falls on supplies from Kazakhstan, while more than half of the volume of mutual trade in rice is directed to the Russian market. The production of processed rice within the EAEU provides almost 97% of the consumption of this product in the member states. It should be noted that over 96% of the import volume is long-grain rice, which is not produced in the EAEU member states. International practice of state regulation and financial support for the field of rice growing shows that most rice producing countries assist farmers by implementing a

mechanism for state regulation of commodity prices. State support for rice production in China includes measures to guarantee the government minimum purchase prices, improve varieties of crops and seeds, and subsidize the cost of transporting rice to northeast China. In Indonesia, government support for rice was previously provided through «Rice for the Poor» Food Security Program (RASCIN). This program was first implemented in 2002 and represents Indonesia's largest social protection program. In 2017, the government allocated about \$ 1.4 billion for this subvention and distributed 2.7 million tons of rice to 15.5 million poor households. However, starting in 2017, the Indonesian government launched the cashless food cards for the poor households (BPNT) project, which replaced the RASCIN program. Food cards allow you to purchase rice at subsidized prices. In the United States, rice producer support measures include concessional lending, as well as through programs of subsidizing the premium under crop insurance contracts. The system of state assistance to rice production in Vietnam provides for soft loans for the temporary storage of grain (during the harvest season, when the grain price is low), support for rice fields, and government regulation of market prices. Since 2014, the Thai government has been providing interest-free loans to farmers to curb rice sales during the harvest season. As a result, prices for Thai rice fell by almost 40% for the period 2014-2016 and increased by only 8% in 2016 to \$ 377.5 per ton (FOB). In 2016, the State Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives of Thailand approved short-term loans for up to 4 months in the amount of up to \$ 8,415 to farmers who store rice in order to reduce rice supply on the market until the end of the harvest season. The same system of supporting market prices for rice is widely used in India and the Philippines, as well as in the countries of the European Union and Bangladesh. In Kazakhstan today, state aid is provided to rice producers with direct and indirect assistance to rice growers in the form of covering half of the cost of buying fuel, mineral fertilizers and plant protection products, as well as preferential terms for the purchase of agricultural machinery, as well as subsidizing irrigation water delivery services. In the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, only indirect support measures aimed at compensating the interest rate on loans to farmers can be distinguished. So, in the framework of the “Financing of Agriculture” projects, agricultural producers are granted preferential loans for the purpose of growing grain crops at a rate of 10% for a period of up to 3 years with full exemption from payment of contributions on the principal amount of the debt up to 6 months. Within the framework of the project “Financing of export-oriented and import-substituting enterprises - 1”, preferential lending to producers of the milling industry is carried out on similar conditions. In Russia, rice production is subsidized in the following directions:

Reimbursement of part of the costs of water supply and drainage services for rice crops is applied at the regional level. The rate of such a subsidy per 1 hectare of sown area of rice in the Krasnodar Territory of the Russian Federation in 2017 amounted to 1 309 rubles. (\$ 22.44), and in 2018 - 3,880 rubles. (\$ 10.9) (Yevniev, 2018b).

At the same time, the practice of some developed market countries shows that large agricultural enterprises operate most efficiently as a result of great opportunities for rational use of resource potential. In order to develop the export potential of Kazakhstan to facilitate access to the markets of China, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, it is planned to invite inspection commissions from these countries, as well as invited foreign buyers from Metro (China, the Russian Federation, the Middle East), «Auchan» (EU, RF), Migros (Turkey) for meetings with Kazakhstan producers. As a result of these meetings, contracts were signed for the supply of Kazakh rice to Iran, China. To facilitate access to foreign markets, it is planned to translate foreign technical regulations into the state and Russian languages. Digitalization of customs



clearance, integration with leading marketplaces, dispatchers of logistics services allow us to develop foreign economic relations with all interested countries, strengthening the country's export potential (Blyakhman, 2009 & 2010).

## CONCLUSION

The small forms of farms operating in the field of rice growing, both in size and in income, do not create opportunities for the development of foreign economic activity in rice production, and do not allow the development of additional livestock industries due to the lack of material and financial resources. Along with this, such farms have not developed scientifically based farming systems, which leads to the irrational and inefficient use of land and water resources, not to mention the low quality of the produced raw rice. Therefore, in rice growing, state support in the form of subsidies should be provided only to large rice-growing farms that have a good material and technical base and successfully solve social problems in rural areas. It is worth noting the application of the experience of Moldova in subsidizing the cost of water spent on irrigation, provided that the yield on such lands is increased, which contributes to the rational use of water resources and increase production efficiency. Along with this, annual monitoring and assessment of the state of land and water resources should be carried out in order to ensure the strategic objectives of the agrarian policy of the EAEU countries. Of great importance in rice farming is ensuring the interconnection between production and sales systems. In particular, this system is absent in many small forms of farms that are forced to use the services of third-party processing industries. Moreover, insignificant volumes of raw rice produced sometimes cover the costs incurred due to subsidies received by the state and do not create opportunities for solving social problems of workers. The prerequisites for interaction of the sales system with the production system are the development of international trade, which determines the growth of demand for grain, which is the main export crop, and the growth of living standards of the population and, as a consequence, the demand for food within the country, and the intensification of interregional exchange.

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