

## THE BELARUSIAN AND RUSSIAN INTEGRATION: CUSTOMS COOPERATION

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*Received 19 May, 2005.*

*Submitted to publish 27 September, 2005.*

*Keywords:* Belarus and Russia integration process, customs union.

### Abstract

The Article is devoted to study of customs cooperation in the frameworks of Belarus and Russia integration process leading to formation of common customs and economic environment in perspective. It submits comprehensive analysis of formation of customs union of Belarus and Russia, reflects specifics of its functioning in the context of customs union member states entry to the system of European and World economic relations.

Integrational processes on the territory of the ex-USSR are the natural result of the development of the former Soviet republics. The modern level of economic development and political relations between Belarus and Russia testifies to a steady increase of integrational processes and coordination of the economy and policy of the two states.

### 1. Customs Cooperation as the Most Developed Trend of Economic Integration of Belarus and Russia

The Customs cooperation is one of the most advanced parts of the Belarusian and Russian economic integration. Belarus actively realizes the customs policy aimed at integration and close cooperation in the customs sphere. According to the Customs Code of the Republic of Belarus (further - CCRB) [16] "Belarus is aspiring to active participation in the international cooperation in the customs field. Customs affair in Belarus is developing in a direction of harmonization and unification with the standard international norms and practice" (Clause 2). One of the basic means of realising the customs policy of the Republic of Belarus is to participate in the customs unions and other forms of economic integration with other states. "Entering the international economic relations, the state should aspire to the balance of interests when each side of these relations would receive the maximum benefits, thus, without touching national interests of other countries" [7, p. 10]. Therefore the customs policy is a powerful means of regulating foreign trade activities and maintaining the balance of interests within the world community.

Today integrational processes are the heart of the customs policy of Belarus. That is proved with the numerous normative and legislative acts and agreements concluded by Belarus and Russia, as well as other states, preventing customs law breaking. Customs cooperation is carried out according to the norms established by the international contracts. Belarus has concluded about 150 international Customs contracts. According to Item 16 of Clause 10 of CCRB "Customs bodies of Belarus, provide performance of the international customs obligations of Belarus; participate in working out of the international contracts of Belarus concerning customs relations; carry out

collaboration with customs and other competent bodies of the foreign states and international organizations engaged in customs affair". Thus, Customs bodies of Belarus create favourable conditions for the development of economic cooperation between our republic and other states, and also for boosting of integrational processes on the territory of the ex-USSR.

In view of the global tendencies to economic integration the Customs Union between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation deserves special attention. This article is devoted to the research of the Customs Cooperation within the framework of the Belarusian and Russian integration leading to the further formation of the common customs and economic territory. The article gives a detailed analysis to the formation of the Customs Union between the republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation and reflects the specificity of its functioning at the customs territory of the Union State of Belarus and Russia.

## **2. Basics Forms of Economic Integration**

Various integration associations have appeared in the second half of the XX century. "In order to develop and strengthen international economic relations Belarus creates the customs unions, zones of free trade with other states, participates in various forms of economic integration, concludes agreements on customs according to the norms of the international law" (Clause 4 of CCRB). Economic integration is progressing by means of the following basic stages (see also [4], [19] etc.).

### **2.1. Preferential Trading Agreements**

The first stage is *the conclusion of preferential trading agreements*. Such agreements can be bilateral and concluded between separate states, or between already existing integration grouping and a separate country or a group of countries. According to them the countries favour each other more than the third countries. The preferential agreements providing preservation of the national customs duties are frequently considered as a preparatory stage of the integrational process getting subsequently more advanced forms. No interstate bodies are created in order to control these preferential agreements.

### **2.2. Zone of Free Trade**

The second stage is *the creation of a zone of free trade*, i.e. a preferential zone within the limits of which foreign trade is supported free from customs and quantitative restrictions. A zone of free trade provides a full cancellation of the custom duties in mutual trade. At the same time national tariffs concerning the third countries are reduced. The given conditions don't concern agricultural products. Agreements on zones of free trade give to a trade policy of the member states more stable and predicted character. Functioning of a zone of free trade allows the countries to carry out taken up obligations within the framework of the signed agreements more precisely, to improve all system of foreign trade activities, to adapt to the international practice more flexibly. However the creation of a zone of free trade results in strengthening of a competition on a home market, that frequently affects the quality and technological level of home commodities. Import liberalization threatens national manufacturers: the danger of forcing out home manufacturers of the home market increases, the probability of bankruptcy due to the lack of competitive abilities and low quality of the goods raises.

Interactions of the member states of a zone of free trade, regulation of their activities occur without creating any permanent supranational control systems or taking special common decisions. A zone of free trade can be coordinated by a small interstate secretariat. However all decisions on political questions are taken, as a rule, by the supreme officials of member states of a zone of free trade, and on economic questions – by the heads of the ministries and departments. Such decisions have a binding character and have priority over internal legislative acts.

### **2.3. Customs Union**

The third stage is *the formation of a customs union*. A customs union assumes the coordinated cancellation of the national customs duties, introduction of the common customs duty, a uniform system of no tariff regulation concerning the third countries.

The basic distinction between a zone of free trade and a customs union is that in a zone of free trade gradual reduction of the customs duties, elimination of tariff barriers, etc are provided. Thus, a zone of free trade is called to provide free trade between the member states. In a customs union there is free trade between the member states and the unified customs duties on the goods from the countries that don't participate in this customs union. Original rules established by members of a zone of free trade concern their own foreign trade policy, and the member states of a customs union coordinate this policy, first of all, relatively to the rules and procedures of customs duties. Within the framework of a customs union there are serious changes in structure of the member states' manufacture and consumption of goods. Regulation of the foreign trade tariff influences development of integrational processes within a customs union. Such regulation has a favourable effect on the development of a home market of goods and services. There is a reduction of prices and decrease of their growth; the competition between commodity producers and suppliers of the imported goods amplifies within the framework of a customs union. The fact when there are one or two large powerful countries in its structure is of a great value for a customs union. It effectively allows the united countries to solve problems of resources and to create more acceptable conditions for attraction of foreign investments etc.

Functioning of a customs union demands changes in approaches to management of integrational processes. It is caused by necessity of creation of the permanent bodies, regulating institutes as transition to the uniform customs duties and joint coordination measures demand the revision of approaches to the development of many branches of national economy. Coordination of the development of separate branches at a macroeconomic level becomes necessary. Negotiations on coordination of a customs duties policy as well as coordination and adaptation of home markets to the common interests are required. A question about creating supranational bodies, which will develop and coordinate the activities of separate branches of foreign trade and manufacture, arises.

A customs union favours preservation and strengthening of economic space between the states, maintenance of free movement of the goods, services and labour, realization of the coordinated policy in customs relations concerning the third countries and unification of the customs legislation and customs procedures in order to protect a home market.

Thus, the formation of the Customs Union of Belarus and Russia will create favourable conditions for priority development of trade between the states, more full maintenance with necessary kinds of energy carriers, raw materials, machine-technical production, foodstuffs and consumer goods, that, finally, will be an essential step towards creation of the common commodity market, services, capitals and labour.

#### **2.4. Common Market**

The fourth stage is *the creation of the common market*. A customs union, abolishing the customs duties between the member states and developing a uniform trade policy concerning the third countries, creates preconditions for transition to a higher level of integration – the common market. Within the limits of the common market the integrated countries fix freedom of movement not only of the goods and services, but also of factors of manufacture that demands a higher level of coordination of economic policy. Such coordination is carried out during the meetings of the heads and the governments of the member states.

#### **2.5. Economic Union**

The fifth stage is *the formation of an economic union*. Alongside with common customs duties and freedom of movement of the goods and factors of manufacture, an economic union also provides coordination of a macroeconomic policy and unification of legislations in such key areas as currency, budgetary, monetary ones. At the given stage there is a need of creation of the bodies not only coordinating and observing economic development, but also making operative decisions. The governments of the member states of an economic union refuse a part of the functions and by that concede a part of the state sovereignty for the benefit of supranational bodies. Such interstate bodies with supranational functions have the right to make decisions on the questions concerning the organization, without the coordination with the governments of member states.

## 2.6. Political Union

The sixth stage is *the formation of a political union*. A political union provides for that the national governments transfer the most of their functions concerning the relations with the third countries to supranational bodies. The given stage is the highest, however any integration grouping has not reached it yet.

As a whole it is difficult enough to define what stage of development this or that integration association has reached, due to both absence of the sufficient information and strong distinctions arising between the proclaimed purposes and real achievements.

## 3. Customs Policy of Belarus

According to Clause 2 of CCRB "in Belarus the uniform customs policy being a component of internal and foreign policy of Belarus is carried out". "The internationalisation of customs relations expressed in creation of unions and conclusion of multilateral agreements and working out common tariffs, coordinated systems of the description and coding of goods as well as simplifications and harmonisations of customs procedures, in creation of a common security system and international trade and customs organizations establishing the rules and standards of foreign trade activities, is an important prove of the fact that the customs policy reflects foreign interests of the state " [7, p. 10].

Strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the countries of the CIS is an important part of foreign policy and foreign trade activities of Belarus. A rather high level of integration is characteristic for the member states of the CIS: the states and subjects of managing cooperate on the wide range of questions, including harmonisation of the bank legislation, a tax, customs and financial and credit policy. On a background of the integration processes taking place within the framework of the CIS, the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation have achieved the highest level of cooperation in many branches and therefore they occupy an advantageous position.

Agreements on Principles of Customs Policy dated on 13 March 1992, began the process of uniting the customs systems of the members of the CIS [12]. The purposes of the given Agreement were strengthening of a uniform economic space, unification of the customs legislation as well as realisation of the coordinated customs policy concerning the third countries. Thus, the member states of the CIS intended to create favourable conditions in customs sphere as a whole on the basis of the unity of principles of customs policy. The existing historical preconditions and former economic relations facilitated the coordination of actions of the customs policies conducted by the member states of the CIS.

## 4. Customs Union between Belarus and Russia

The basic interstate document of the Belarusian and Russian customs cooperation is the Agreement on the Customs Union between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation [11] signed by the governments of the two countries on 6 January 1995, that came into force on 30 December 1995. The Republic of Kazakhstan joined the Customs Union between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation on 10 January 1995; Kirghizstan – on 29 March 1996; and Tajikistan – on 28 March 1998. "The creation of the Customs Union of five states is a first step to the international integration in the field of customs affair within the framework of the CIS. There has appeared an essentially new type of mutual relations on the former Soviet territory, adequate to the world norms and requirements" [7, p. 14]. Signing of such agreements reflects aspiration of the sides to development of the balanced and mutually advantageous relations, recognition of the international standard norms in the economic relations focused on the rules of GATT/WTO, and to creation of favourable conditions for the member states of the Customs Union's entering the world market.

The Customs Union became the first form of integrational cooperation in the history of the interstate unions of the two states. According to Item 2 of Clause 1 of the Agreement on the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia, "the contracting sides define the Customs Union as an economic association of the two states based on the following principles:

a) existence of common customs territory of the member states of the Customs Union. The formation of a common customs territory is carried out through:

- cancelling identical customs duties, taxes, and tax collections, and also quantitative restrictions in trade from their territories between the contracting states;

- establishing and applying an identical trading mode, the common customs duties and measures of no tariff regulation of foreign trade concerning the relations with the third countries;
  - forming the mechanism of the Customs Union's relations with the third states and the international organizations on the basis of the Agreement between the Government of Belarus and the Government of the Russian Federation on the uniform order of regulation of foreign trade activities of 12 April 1994;
- b) existence of a unified mechanism of regulating the economy based on the market principles of managing and the unified legislation".

The given Agreement also adjusts questions of distribution of the equal customs duties, taxes and tax collections and regulates conditions of introduction of time restrictions on mutual trade by means of tariff, quantitative or other equivalent measures of the customs control on the basis of maintenance of unity of managing customs services.

According to the researchers V. Kuharenko and A. Pyzhik, "the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia is one of corner stones on which all system of economic integration of Belarus and Russia is formed. It follows from its definition as the economic association based on existence of common customs territory and the unified mechanism of economy regulation" [3, p. 407].

The first principle of the Customs Union fixed in the Agreement is "the cancellation of the customs duties, taxes and tax collections, and also quantitative restrictions in mutual trade". It states the creation of a zone of free trade between the two countries. According to the Agreement on free trade of 13 November 1992 the given principle earlier operated with the certain restrictions (in particular, the Russian side kept the customs charges on imported raw material), which were cancelled by the Agreement on the Customs Union.

The second principle of the Customs Union is the establishment and application of an identical trading mode, common customs duties and measures of no tariff regulation of foreign trade concerning the relations with the third countries, i.e. creation of completely identical systems of regulation of external economic relations. This is the point that distinguishes the Customs Union from a zone of free trade.

The third principle of the Customs Union is the unification of the customs and other legislations on foreign trade activities of the states.

Final stage of the formation of the Customs Union is the creation of a common customs territory and a coordinated control system of customs bodies by granting the main powers to the governing body of the Union. In opinion of A. Ignatjuk, "there must be a common system of customs regulation with uniform management which will include supranational acts, obligatorily executed on the whole territory of the member states" [15, p. 380].

Thus, the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia creates favourable conditions for trade and manufacture development, promotes strengthening not only economic, but also political relations of the two states incorporated by the common economic interests.

## **5. Customs Cooperation Results**

The following parameters testify to a mutually advantageous Belarusian and Russian cooperation within the framework of the Customs Union. According to the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation, commodity circulation between Russia and Belarus has grown by 4,2% for 11 months in 2002 that means that the two countries had become more open. Belarus is one of the basic trading partners of Russia, taking the second position in the foreign trade turnover of Russia after Germany. Belarus took 6,5% of the general commodity circulation in Russia in January - November 2002 (135,9 billion dollars). The Russian export to Belarus for the examined period has increased by 7,1% up to 5,225 billion dollars, and import was practically kept at a level of the 11 months in 2001 (3,625 billion) [see 14, p. 1].

So, the Customs Union of Belarus and Russia is a basis on which the system of the Belarusian and Russian economic integration is formed.

The customs policy conducted within the framework of the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia, is aimed at close interaction of the two states concerning the most effective usage of means of the customs control and regulation of barter on the territory of the Customs Union, participation in the carrying out trading and political objectives on protection of the Customs Union, stimulation of national economies during the period of their structural reorganization, maintenance of

equal conditions to commodity manufacturers, creation of the uniform mechanism of organizational and legislative development of economic cooperation within the framework of the Customs Union.

However the policy of the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia should correspond to the national economic policies of the two states and thus be their equivalent. In spite of the fact that the economic policy of the union considers some problems, which go out of the control of the national governments, the national economic policy should regulate such relations and supervise their performance.

The process of customs cooperation of Belarus and Russia, alongside with the positive results achieved within the framework of the Customs Union (cancellation of the customs control on the common border, non-use of customs and tariff means of regulation in mutual trade in the home goods etc.), is accompanied by the certain problems (creation of the customs union is executed only in part, there is no complete mode of free trade, the foreign trade regulation is not completely unified, the common customs duties are not created, a number of tariffs are not coordinated, measures of a tariff and no tariff policy are developed unilaterally without the preliminary coordination of interests, etc.). The given problems are directly connected to the difficult economic situation in both countries, poor quality of legal regulation of economic cooperation within the framework of the made agreements, absence of the settled common mechanism of realisation of the achieved arrangements and their insufficiently complete and consecutive realisation. The scientist A. V. Sotnikov says that "the inner obstacles complicating development of integration processes in the Union State of Belarus and Russia are incorporated in discrepancy of the proclaimed achievements and the real results of unifying processes" [13, p. 140]. Breaking of the earlier arrangements and their unilateral performance prevents the state from development of foreign economic relations.

In connection with the above-stated problems some Belarusian and Russian researchers deny real existence of the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia. In opinion of researchers V. Jurik and S. Nasuta, "the Union of Belarus and Russia was created by the leaders of the two countries in April 1995 de jure as the integration union with the economic name "customs". Then, under pressure of a reality and economic feasibility of transformations of the transition period, the given union was transformed de facto to a zone of free trade which now functions on the economic territory of the two member states" [4, p. 39]. The researcher T. Tsehanovich says that "in conditions of dynamic transformation of economies of the two countries when Belarus in comparison with Russia practically doesn't move to the market the so-called customs union becomes valueless and gets real features of the agreement on free trade" [see 18, p. 166].

Signing of the Agreement on the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia is only a first step on the way to a stage-by-stage creation of the Belarusian and Russian Customs Union providing realisation of the whole complex of interconnected actions. A customs union assumes a rather high level of integration and a coordination of actions in economic and political spheres of the states, which should have similar structures of the economy, the coordinated purposes and the synchronised economic policy providing stability of development. Economic integration as a whole assumes the mutual complementation, rapprochement and the mutual adaptation of national economies.

Now development of the Belarusian and Russian integration at political and economic levels is carried out on the basis of the Contract on creation of the Union State of Belarus and Russia [2], that was signed by the presidents of the two states on 8 December 1999 and came into force on 26 January 2000. One of the purposes of the Union State of Belarus and Russia is formation of a common economic territory for maintenance of social and economic development on the basis of unification of material and intellectual potentials of the member states, use of market mechanisms of economy functioning. The Union State is based on differentiation of subjects and limits of competence between the Union State and the member states. The exclusive competence of the Union state consists of creation of a common economic territory and legal bases of the common market providing free moving of the goods, services, capitals and labour within the limits of territories of the member states, equal conditions and guarantees for activities of managing subjects, a uniform trading and customs and tariff policy concerning the third countries, international organizations and associations. The member states apply uniform rates of import and export duties, uniform customs modes and the uniform order of customs registration and control.

Thus, in the Contract on creation of the Union State of Belarus and Russia the big attention is given to the further development of a customs affair on the territory of the Union State.

The program of actions of the Russian Federation and Belarus on carrying out of the Contract on Creation of the Union State of Belarus and Russia [6] provides realisation of a uniform trading and

customs and tariff policy concerning the third countries, the international organisations and associations. In order to achieve the given purpose the customs bodies are given the task put to have finished the formation of a common customs territory and to unify the customs duties, measures of no tariff regulation, customs modes, the order of customs registration and the customs control till 2002; to have unified the customs legislation, the national normative and legislative acts on foreign trade till 2004; to have formed the regulating bodies of the Union State of Belarus and Russia in the field of a trading and customs policy and to have completed unification of customs methods and means till 2005.

The further productivity of the Belarusian and Russian customs integration depends on efficiency of measures on transformation of the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia into a common customs territory. The agreement on the Customs Union between Belarus and Russia creates a legal basis for elimination of some contradictions in the formation of a common customs territory of the two countries. The Customs Union is focused, first of all, on creation of conditions for realisation of a uniform foreign trade policy, which acts as one of the elements of unification of the economic policies of the states.

Thus, today the questions directly connected to the formation of a common customs territory of Russia and Belarus are in the centre of attention of a customs policy of the two countries. A common customs territory assumes not only a simple mechanical unification of duties and tariffs, but is based on creation of equal conditions for subjects of managing of the two countries. The Agreement between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation on creation of equal conditions to subjects of managing [9] was signed on 25 December 1998. According to Clause 2 of the given Agreement "the sides have undertaken to take necessary legislative and other measures on maintenance of equal rights, duties and guarantees to subjects of managing and also to provide unification of the legislations, including customs ones according to the Report to the Agreement" in which actions for introduction of the uniform customs modes and the uniform order of customs registration and the control in customs territories of Belarus and Russia are analysed. Despite it there still are different approaches to taxes collection, tariffs on rail transportation, there is a difference of the prices on energy carriers etc.

## **6. Interaction of Belarus and Russia Customs Institutions**

The solution of the problem related to the formation of a common customs territory of Belarus and Russia demands the consolidated actions of customs services and other ministries and departments of the two states. On the Agreement on Unity of Management of Customs Services concluded on 21 February 1995 [10] the Representation of Customs Service of the Russian Federation was founded at customs service of Belarus and the Representation of Customs Service of Belarus at Customs Service of the Russian Federation was founded at customs service of Russia.

The peculiarity of teamwork of customs services of the Union State of Belarus and Russia consists in focusing on generating a uniform normative base of the Union State on customs affair as one of the major conditions of the formation of a common customs territory. "Only the high level of legislative supply on the basis of the development of legislation system precisely determines, on the one hand, the limits of customs houses' actions as an executive structure and, on the other hand, the rights and duties of subjects in the sphere of foreign trade activities and necessary predictability, publicity (an openness and stability of a legislative, economic and administrative regulation in the sphere of customs activity...)" [3, p. 408]. The Customs Committee of the Union State of Belarus and Russia is called to coordinate actions of national customs bodies of Belarus and Russia concerning performance of the functions assigned to them. However some decisions of Customs Committee of the Union State still remain non-realised. The main reason is that these decisions are not the norms of direct action and must be transformed into norms of the national legislation. Besides, unification of the national legislations regulating questions of foreign trade activities is not carried out completely.

The basic directions of work of customs services are development and realisation of complex measures in order to maintain the unity of management of customs services, unification of customs legislations and procedures of customs registration, organization of the reliable customs control on external borders and struggle against customs law-breaking. On 15 June 1999 the heads of customs bodies of the two states authorised Regulations on Interaction of Customs Bodies of Belarus and Russia against customs law-breaking. Bilateral cooperation and interaction of customs bodies of the two countries against customs law-breaking is carried out in the following directions: creation and

perfection of a normative base of bilateral cooperation against breaking the customs legislation; realisation of joint organising and practical actions; information and scientific maintenance of law-enforcement activity; personnel maintenance; material and financial maintenance. In order to increase the efficiency of cooperation of customs services of the two states special operations "Border", "Channel", "Excise" etc will annually be carried out.

Thus, interaction of customs bodies in law-enforcement promotes maintenance of economic security of the two countries, counteraction to criminal encroachments in the field of foreign trade activities.

Customs bodies of Belarus and Russia will carry out the customs policy according to the basic purpose of the customs system that consists in construction of a strong economic base of the Union State of Belarus and Russia. Customs services of the Union State develop the unified customs rules of the goods transportation by people through external borders of the Union State. Rules of delivery of the goods imported by people in the member states of the Union State are being coordinated now.

However the existing divergences in the field of tariff (divergences in rates of the import and export customs of Belarus and Russia, a divergence in application of special, time and seasonal duties), no tariff (distinctions in application of measures of no tariff regulation), tax (divergences under rates of excises, under the tax on the added cost) and currency regulation in the legislations of Belarus and Russia become an obstacle to work of the two states' customs services. Maintenance of a coordination of tariff regulation of external trading activity remains the major problem, which demands a complete unification of methodology of indirect taxes collection and the customs and trading modes unification. Without a common customs territory the customs control and customs registration of the goods produced in the third countries and transported from Belarus to Russia are impossible. Normal development of integrational processes is interfered by the lack of unified methods and taxation rates as well as the lack of a technique of rating national currency. In order to create of a uniform system of tariff and no tariff regulation and completely unify the legislations of the Union State the Decision on Completing Unification and Creation of a Uniform System of Tariff and No Tariff Regulation in the Union State of Belarus and Russia [5] was signed on 29 January 2001. The agreement on unification of customs rules and creation of the uniform customs system, made on 30 January 2001, became a serious step towards the economic integration of the two countries.

## **7. Perspectives of Belarus and Russian Customs Cooperation**

The bases of the normative and legislative base necessary for the formation of a common customs territory are incorporated now. The most of national acts are unified. First of all, it concerns customs codes of Belarus and Russia regulating legal aspects of moving the goods and vehicles.

"Further work on the formation of a common customs territory should be conducted in the seven key directions: in the field of customs duties measures, in the field of a trading tariff mode with the third countries, in the field of no tariff regulation of foreign trade activities, in the field of the indirect taxation, in the field of payments in foreign trade, in the field of the currency control, in the field of the organization of a customs affair", by means of complex necessary interconnected and mutually coordinated measures [8, p. 90–91].

## **Conclusions**

Unifications of legislative bases of a common customs territory is carried out through adopting the appropriate acts by the Union Parliament as well as perfecting and unifying national sub-law acts. Creation of a uniform control system with allied bodies in customs area will mean completing of all complex measures on the formation of a common customs territory and on the uniting the customs territories of the two states.

Thus, "a number of effective measures on the formation of a common customs territory of Belarus and Russia is taken by the Government of Belarus. However it is necessary to note, that these measures aren't sufficient for the formation of a common customs territory of the two states in view of documents GATT/WTO" [17, p. 212].

At the present stage the major task of foreign trade activities of the Republic of Belarus is its joining the system of the European and world economic relations and integration processes that will create conditions for the stable economic growth of the republic. The question is, first of all, about the

joining by Belarus the World Trading Organization that is the leading international organization in the field of regulation of the world trade. The fulfilment of the given task should be promoted by interaction of Belarus with the regional unions of other states, and also participation in the international economic and financial organizations. In opinion of the Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Belarus in the Russian Federation V. Grygoriev, "While taking decisions on questions of bilateral cooperation Russia and Belarus should take into account the interests of the trading partners in the countries of the CIS, the European Union and other states, and also individual obligations to the international organizations. Only by negotiations, meetings and compromises it is possible to reach the balance of interests and to construct a reliable economic basis of the Union State of Belarus and Russia" [1, p. 156].



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## ***Baltarusijos ir Rusijos integracija: muitinių bendradarbiavimas***

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### **SANTRAUKA**

Šiuo metu muitinių bendradarbiavimas yra viena iš labiausiai išplėtotų Baltarusijos ir Rusijos ekonominės integracijos krypčių. Baltarusijos Respublika aktyviai įgyvendina muitinės politiką, nukreiptą į integraciją ir glaudų abiejų šalių muitinių bendradarbiavimą.

Pasaulinių ekonominės integracijos tendencijų kontekste ypač daug dėmesio nusipelno Baltarusijos ir Rusijos muitų sąjungos analizė. Šis straipsnis skirtas muitinių bendradarbiavimui, kaip Baltarusijos – Rusijos integracijos proceso daliai tirti, kuris ateityje gali tapti bendra muitų ir ekonomikos sąjunga. Straipsnio tikslas – atlikti visapusišką Baltarusijos ir Rusijos muitų sąjungos kūrimo proceso analizę ir parodyti šio proceso specifiką Europos ir pasaulio ekonominių ryšių plėtros kontekste.

Pagrindinis tarpvalstybinis Baltarusijos ir Rusijos muitinių bendradarbiavimo dokumentas yra Susitarimas dėl Baltarusijos Respublikos ir Rusijos Federacijos muitų sąjungos. Šis dokumentas pasirašytas abiejų valstybių vyriausybių 1995 m. sausio 6 d., įsigaliojo 1995 m. gruodžio 30 d.

Tokių susitarimų pasirašymas rodo abiejų šalių siekį plėtoti darnius ir abipusiai naudingus santykius, tarptautinių normų, tokių kaip GATT/PPO, pripažinimą ekonominiuose santykiuose ir siekį sudaryti palankias sąlygas muitų sąjungos valstybėms narėms veikti pasaulio rinkoje.

Dabartiniame raidos etape svarbiausias Baltarusijos Respublikos tarptautinių ekonominių santykių uždavinys yra įsitraukti į Europos ir tarptautinių ekonominių santykių ir integracinių procesų sistemą. Tai lemtų stabilų šalies ekonominį augimą. Pirmiausia kalbama apie Baltarusijos įstojimą į Pasaulio prekybos organizaciją, kuri yra pagrindinė tarptautinės prekybos reguliavimo organizacija. Šio uždavinio įgyvendinimas padėtų Baltarusijos Respublikai bendradarbiauti su kitomis regioninėmis šalių sąjungomis, taip pat dalyvauti tarptautinėse ekonominėse ir finansinėse organizacijose. Spręsdamos dvišalio bendradarbiavimo klausimus, Baltarusija ir Rusija turi atsižvelgti į savo prekybinių partnerių interesus NVS, Europos Sąjungos ir kitose šalyse, taip pat į individualius išpareigojimus tarptautinėms organizacijoms. Tik derybomis ir darant kompromisus galima pasiekti interesų suderinimo ir sukurti patikimą ekonominį Baltarusijos ir Rusijos integracijos pagrindą.

