The EDB Centre for Integration Studies presents the first *EDB Integration Barometer* evaluating the attitude of the CIS-region population to the Eurasian integration process.

The research has shown that the majority of the CIS-region population supports the establishment of the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space. Only in Azerbaijan and Georgia less than half of respondents have the same attitude.

**Moscow, September 13, 2012.** - The Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) Centre for Integration Studies in cooperation with the Eurasian Monitor International Research Agency examined the population integrating orientations in post-Soviet states on different aspects of Eurasian integration. The project is based on a nationwide survey of over 13,000 respondents in 10 CIS countries and Georgia - from 950 to 2,000 respondents in each country.

The purpose of the research is to identify the dynamics and fundamental regularities of the integration processes developed at the level of public consciousness and behavior in the CIS-region states, based on the popular assessment of the level of integration in economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the Eurasian countries.

During the project implementation, some regularities of the post-Soviet states' attraction to major geopolitical clusters (Post-Soviet States, EU Countries, Other Countries) have been revealed.

Politically, almost all countries involved in the *EDB Integration Barometer* refer to the post-Soviet space as their priority direction of integration. In 80% of the responses devoted to determination of the most friendly countries, the major priority are "countries of the former USSR" and, mostly, Russia in favor of which respondents give 55% in Ukraine, 68% in Moldova, more than 73% in Belarus, more than 82% in the Central Asian countries, and 90% in Armenia. The rates on providing and receiving military support are about the same. The only country focused on political support from outside the CIS is Georgia.

In economics, the integration orientations are subdivided: in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine orientation towards the European Union prevails; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are more attracted to the post-Soviet states, and
“Other Countries” are the priority for Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. Geopolitical vector “Other Countries” is found to be prior in questions devoted to identifying the preferences of respondents with regard to the desirable sources of capital, investment and business inflow (49% of responses with a focus on China, the U.S., Japan and Turkey), and with regard to the most attractive “collective” partner in scientific and technical cooperation (56% of responses with a focus on Japan (in average 40% of responses in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia) and Germany). At the same time, regarding the country of temporary work, the most CIS-oriented (especially towards Russia) are Tajikistan (45%), Kyrgyzstan (42%) and Moldova (37%). But on average, none of the general vectors dominates: each of the three major temporary employment destinations (CIS / EU / Other Countries) is referred to by 24% - 25% of respondents.

“One of the key results of the research is a high public support for the establishment of the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, identified not only in the three member-countries, but also throughout the region, which have common border with the CU and the SES and which do not have it”, - Director of the EDB Centre for Integration Studies Evgeny Vinokurov claims. The highest level of public support for the Customs Union (CU) and the Single Economic Space (SES) is typical for its member states: 80% in Kazakhstan, 72% in Russia and 60% in Belarus. Percentage of positive responses to this question by the respondents in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Armenia is 60% or more. In Ukraine the popular support for CU-SES is more than 55%. Only in two countries - Azerbaijan and Georgia - the proportion of positive assessments of CU-SES establishment does not exceed 50%.

**Socio-cultural** attraction of the CIS countries is characterized by high rates in real practical interests, for example, in active communication with family members, relatives and colleagues residing in other countries. On average, in nine countries where the question about the presence of close correspondents was posed, 57% of respondents indicated that they have such ties in the post-Soviet states. Thus, in five countries (Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Moldova) more than half of the adult population has such ties and this is expected to be a significant integrating factor. At the same time, as the results of the research show, the post-Soviet space does not have any special competitive advantage of the EU or most frequently mentioned world countries in respect of getting education abroad.

Given the importance of the long-term forecasting regarding public perception of integration processes in the region in question, the EDB Integration Barometer project is
supposed to conduct annual research. In future, the project can also be supplemented with the study of integration preferences of the business elite.

The full version of the research is available on the EDB website here

Reference

“Eurasian Monitor” International Research Agency is a research organization which specializes in implementation of regular interstate polls and regular (monitoring) measurements of main social moods of the citizens of the CIS countries’ and, first of all, the four of Single Economic Space-4 (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine). The members of “Eurasian Monitor” are 9 research companies from 7 CIS countries. Additional 7 companies from 7 ex-USSR countries take part in various projects of “Eurasian Monitor”, thus all CIS-countries (except Turkmenistan) and Baltic states are represented. The more detailed information about the “Eurasian Monitor” is available at http://www.eurasiamonitor.org

Eurasian Development Bank (“EDB” or the “Bank”) is an international financial organization established under the initiative of the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan to promote the economic growth of its member-states, the expansion of trade and economic ties between such members and the development of integration in Eurasia. The Bank’s charter capital exceeds US$ 1.5 billion. The members of the Bank (in 2012) are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan. The more detailed information about the Bank is available at http://www.eabr.org

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