I have the pleasure of welcoming you to the third issue of our Eurasian Integration Yearbook. Since 2008 this yearbook has familiarised the international audience with the studies of the most urgent issues in regional post-Soviet integration.

There are several noteworthy positive developments. The protectionist policies that had emerged in response to the crisis did not further alienate post-Soviet countries from each other, nor did they aggravate the existing fragmentation of the post-Soviet space. On the contrary, the search for ways to overcome the crisis facilitated cooperation between these countries in both existing and new regional formats such as the EurAsEC Anti-crisis Fund. The results of the last year convince us that integration is gaining pace. We now can confidently talk about a transition from low-level integration to truly comprehensive coordination and jointly formulated policies on priority common interests of the member countries. The largest initiatives are the launch of the Customs Union and the efforts to establish a Single Economic Space. We welcome the plans to expand the membership of the Customs Union.

The crisis urged our countries to adopt a more pragmatic approach towards building external relationships. Taking this into account, studying the benefits of regional integration, the specific features this process may have in the post-Soviet space, and the prospective directions for its future development is clearly warranted. The EDB is carrying out systematic work in this area, cooperating with leading specialists and institutions, and developing its own expertise in regional economic integration. In particularly, 2010 saw the successful launch of our major project to evaluate integration levels and dynamics in Eurasia entitled The System of Indicators of Eurasian Integration. We believe that our comprehensive analytical support will enable informed decision-making, and wide publication of the results of our studies will win support for integration initiatives from business circles and the general public.