

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA2)

Issue: Great Eurasia Geopolitical project: changing the global powers interrelation.

Student Officer: Anastasios Kakias

Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Tasos (Anastasios) Kakias and I am a 16-year-old student attending 11th grade at Arsakeio School in Psychiko. It is my honour to be serving as a deputy president of the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (GA2) at this year's ATSMUN conference, my first time chairing and eight conference overall.

First of all, I would like to take a moment to welcome you to the committee. The study guide took a lot of effort to compose and I cannot wait to see the interesting debate the topic will spark. Speaking of the study guide, I would advise against it being your only source, and I cannot stress this enough. While it was made to be as objective and as informative as possible, it is still highly helpful to do your own research. Perhaps you would understand the topic better if you read it more times or if the text was worded differently, perhaps you would find further details that were not included in the study guide, or perhaps your delegation has such an intricate stance that it could not be accurately represented in this paper.

I would like to remind you that you can find many relevant articles from academic journals and newspapers under the bibliography section at the end of the study guide. Feel free to have a look at some of them if you feel that is necessary, they can be a good starting point for your research. For any potential questions or help you might need, you can always contact me at the e-mail address written below, I will be more than happy to aid you. I cannot wait to meet you in November and good luck with your studying!

Yours sincerely,

Tasos Kakias

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INTRODUCTION

Greater Eurasia is the idea of a hypothetical and primarily economic union in the continents of Asia and Europe, as formulated by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2016. According to eastern and western sources alike, the concept is often thought to be an attempt by Russia to establish itself as one of the world's great powers once more, after the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1991, by becoming a hub for world trade and transportation. However, several benefits for the potential participating countries can be imagined, which may eventually lead to the realisation of the effort.

While the concept of such a union may not be entirely new, there are still numerous obstacles blocking it and especially in the west. Among other issues, the European Union (EU) has little trust in the Russian government due to the repeated violations of its core values. Not only that, but the tensions between Russia and Ukraine, eventually causing a war in 2022, have led to the gravest rift in EU-Russian relations in decades. It is therefore highly unlikely that an agreement regarding an economic community between the two parties would be made soon. Nevertheless, the concept of Greater Eurasia could be eventually realised in some form, fundamentally changing the modern global power structure.

On the Asian front, the idea has a warmer reception. Most countries are willing to partner with Russia for what they believe is to their mutual benefit. China's own project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has become interlocked with Greater Eurasia due to their significant overlap and the cooperation between the two countries. However, there are some notable obstacles to the realisation of the union. Afghanistan is in an unstable situation following decades of war and the eventual takeover by the Taliban regime. Furthermore, India has conflicting geopolitical and economic interests with large neighbouring countries, including Pakistan and China. The consensus, though, appears to be that the project can provide a lot for the continent.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Eurasia

The term Eurasia refers to the idea of a single united continent between Europe and Asia, as they are both parts of the same landmass. Many transcontinental countries, including Russia, support this notion. In this regard, Greater Eurasia as a concept encompasses nations from both continents and not just from one of the two.

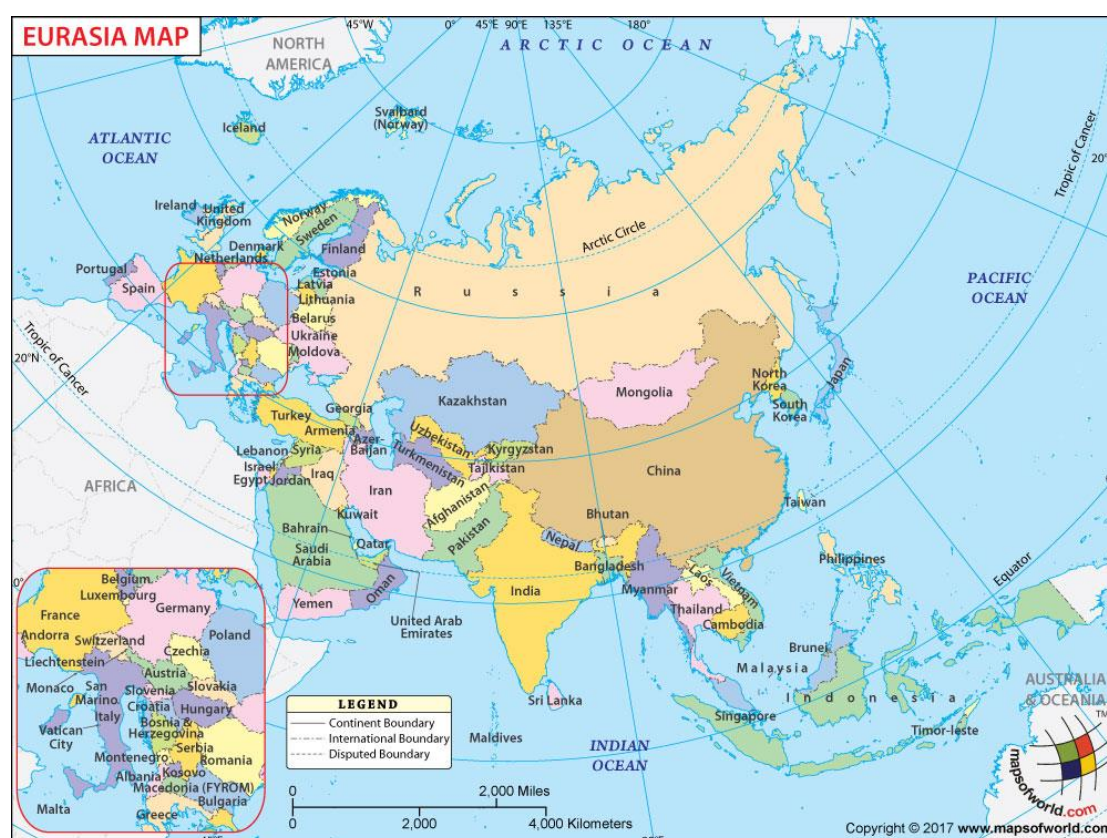


Figure 1: A political map of Eurasia.¹

Imperialism

Imperialism refers to a situation in which one country has significant power or influence over other countries, especially in political or economic matters. In recent years, economic imperialism has been rampant whereas more traditional means of exercising

¹ "Eurasia Map." *Maps of World*, [mapsofworld.com/eurasia-map.html](https://www.mapsofworld.com/eurasia-map.html). Accessed 18 Sept. 2022.

influence are slowly becoming obsolete. Russia and China, among many other large nations, have been accused of economic imperialism by western countries for their projects such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Greater Eurasia has not yet been realised; however, many are sceptical that it may also be attempted economic imperialism.

Integration

Integration is the combination of two or more things into one. Alternatively, it can be used to express the meaning of becoming part of a group or organisation. In politics, integration can be economic, and in that regard it would usually refer to the participation in an economic union and the deep cooperation and policy coordination with its other members. Every association, including the hypothetical Greater Eurasia, seeks the eventual integration of its constituent countries to function effectively.

Multipolarity

Multipolarity is a system in which most of the world's power is distributed nearly equally among a group of more than two different countries. This contrasts with unipolarity and bipolarity, according to which one and two nations respectively are in control of the world's power. Currently, the United States holds significant power over the rest of the globe, but with the rapid rise of China and Russia's ambitions of a Greater Eurasia, the planet may be becoming increasingly multipolar.

Sanction

A sanction is an action, such as the stopping of trade, taken against a country to make it obey international law. Most western countries have imposed sanctions on Russia after its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis and the subsequent war. As such, there are many sceptics to the concept of Greater Eurasia, supporting that it would partially defeat the purpose of the sanctions regime. Other countries are also the recipients of sanctions, including China for numerous human rights violations within its territory. Consequently, agreements that benefit those parties usually become increasingly difficult to negotiate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gorbachev's Common European Home

During the 1980s, a new concept arose in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union (USSR), which is usually attributed to its final leader, Mikhail Gorbachev; the idea of a "Common European Home". It is generally seen as an attempt to prevent the collapse of the USSR by clearing the country of any ideological ties that isolated it from the west and instead embracing its European identity. While a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals"² may not have been innovative as a concept, having been proposed by former French President Charles de Gaulle decades prior, Gorbachev's efforts mark the first time the Soviet government and subsequently Russia tried to move toward the west in recent years.

Despite the specifics of such a union or "home" having never been discussed at length, several views expressed by Gorbachev have since become staples of Russian foreign policy regarding economic and other alliances with European countries. Firstly, he envisioned a "community rooted in law", as was mentioned in a speech in Strasbourg, with an economic space permeating the European continent "where eastern and western parts would be strongly interlocked"³. At the same time, he supported that collective security could only be achieved through disarmament and advocated for the disappearance of alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Under this scheme, the nations of the Eastern Bloc would merge with the rest of Europe as equal partners in a way that would allow them to retain their regimes, norms, and values. The idea, however, contrasted with United States (US) President George H. W. Bush's view of a "Europe whole and free", which sought to eliminate communism and simultaneously promote the expansion of the fundamental two western institutions in the region: the European Union (EU) and NATO. Despite strong opposition from Moscow, once free and fair elections started being held in eastern nations, the communist governments were quickly overturned, and the countries would join NATO in numerous cases. It had become clear that

² Sakwa, Richard. "Sad delusions: The decline and rise of Greater Europe." *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2021, p. 9, [doi:10.1177/1879366521999757](https://doi.org/10.1177/1879366521999757).

³ Gorbachev, Mikhail. "Address given by Mikhail Gorbachev to the Council of Europe." 6 July 1989. CVCE, 3 July 2015, cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_mikhail_gorbachev_to_the_council_of_europe_6_july_1989-en-4c021687-98f9-4727-9e8b-836e0bc1f6fb.html. Transcript.

the USSR could not possibly integrate with the west on its own terms and especially not as an equal partner without making any significant sacrifices.

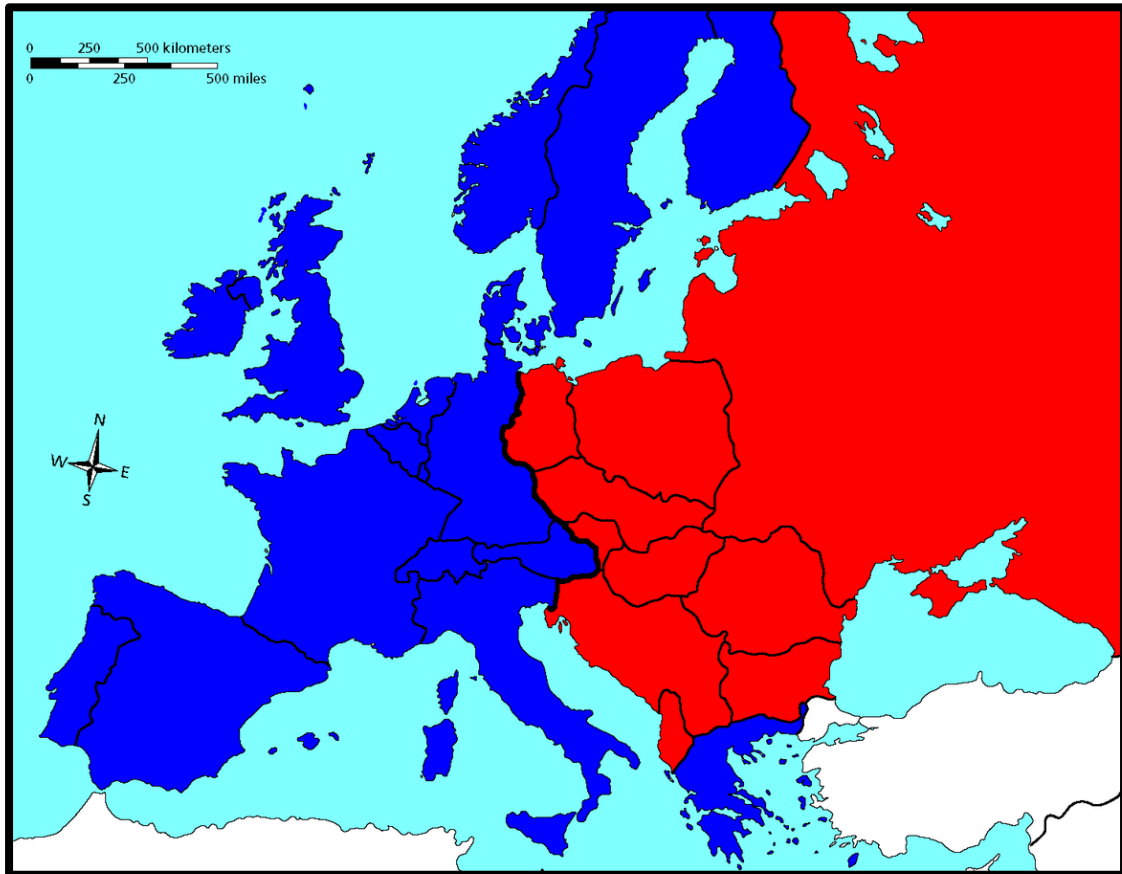


Figure 2: The Eastern (Red) and Western (Blue) Blocs divided by the Iron Curtain (Black), as described by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.⁴

Ultimately that meant that Gorbachev's Common European Home could never be realised. Not only did the USSR collapse in 1991 shortly after the concept's proposal, but no talks could ever take place about the potential creation of such an organisation apart from the numerous speeches by the Soviet leader himself. On the contrary, it was an opportunity for opposing institutions to prosper, which left Russia highly sceptical of the west. Nonetheless, Russia's view toward Europe had overall changed in a positive light despite the many setbacks. It seemed entirely plausible that given enough time the west could gain a new

⁴ "Iron Curtain as described by Churchill." *Wikimedia Commons*, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iron_Curtain_as_described_by_Churchill.PNG. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.

member, as Russian leadership and its people alike felt like their cultural and geographic roots were in Europe, with which they could eventually unite in a way that would be beneficial to all parties involved.

Attempts at a Greater Europe

It was in 1994 that Russia officially started establishing relations with the west, beginning with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)⁵ signed with the EU. One of the main goals of this agreement was to create the necessary conditions for the future realisation of a free economic zone between its partners, bringing about freedom of establishment of companies and cross-border trade. Furthermore, following the September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001, Russia continuously aimed to move closer to the US through an alliance meant to combat terrorism. In fact, despite opposition from the Russian oligarchy, the regime under President Vladimir Putin even allowed for American military bases to be created in Central Asia. Moscow had generally been welcoming of the west until this point, attempting to strengthen the country by deepening its ties with outside nations. However, it remained important to participate in agreements as an equal partner and not to be overshadowed, as it wished to maintain its hegemony over former Soviet territory.

While this hegemonic view, wherein Russia would remain a regional power, had already been partially challenged by the rapid expansion of NATO, it took until the mid-2000s to truly threaten it in the eyes of Moscow. Numerous “colour revolutions”, as they were called due to the name of each movement, occurred in the former Soviet Union in countries such as Georgia (Rose Revolution), Ukraine (Orange Revolution), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution), leading to the resignation or overthrow of their leaders. It did not take long until Russia developed the notion that they were “deliberately instigated and exploited by the United

⁵ European Community. "Council and Commission Decision of 30 October 1997 on the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part." *Official Journal of the European Communities*, vol. 40, no. L 327, 1997, pp. 1-2, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.1997.327.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A1997%3A327%3ATOC.

States and other Western powers”⁶ which posed a vital threat to their national security. Consequently, all possible means were used to freeze further NATO and EU expansion into the east, including the promotion and direct participation in secessionist movements in surrounding nations to destabilise them, such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia.

The case of Ukraine, in particular, proved to be especially troubling for Moscow, with the former aiming to limit its ties with its eastern brethren in favour of Europe. Following the Ukrainian parliament’s approval of the Association Agreement (AA) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU to open markets and eliminate tariffs⁷, followed by the sudden refusal of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich to sign the said agreements, a wave of protests began in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kyiv that became known as “Euromaidan”. A few months after, the nation experienced its second revolution in just a decade: the “Revolution of Dignity”. Yanukovich was quickly accused of being a Russian puppet, later dubbed the “world’s most corrupt”⁸ by Transparency International, and parliament voted to remove him from office; 328 to 0. Moscow saw this vote as an unconstitutional coup, deciding to intervene militarily in southern and eastern Ukraine to protect its Russian minority. This led to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the declaration of the unrecognised Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics in 2014. Recognising the direct attack on the integrity of its neighbours, the EU and other western countries did not hesitate to impose sanctions on Russia.

⁶ Bolt, Paul J., and Sharyl N. Cross. "Emerging Non-traditional Security Challenges: Color Revolutions, Cyber and Information Security, Terrorism, and Violent Extremism." *China, Russia, and twenty-first century global geopolitics*. Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 218, [doi:10.1093/oso/9780198719519.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198719519.001.0001).

⁷ European Commission. "EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area." *Europa, trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-ukraine-deep-and-comprehensive-free-trade-area*. Accessed 12 Aug. 2022.

⁸ Zhuk, Alyona. "Transparency International names Yanukovich world’s most corrupt." *Kyiv Post*, 11 Feb. 2016, kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/transparency-international-names-yanukovich-worlds-most-corrupt-407875.html.



Figure 3: Map of Ukraine and its disputed territories after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity.⁹

However, there was still support from both sides for further European cooperation and integration. The ideals of Charles de Gaulle and later Mikhail Gorbachev had evolved into a concept known as "Greater Europe". In 2015, the Lisbon-Vladivostok Initiative was launched, aiming to form a common economic space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific by promoting the cooperation of the EU with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU); the latter being an economic union established that same year composed of some formerly Soviet states in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Generally, the differences in social and economic developments between the two are considered a significant obstacle to the implementation of the project. Furthermore, following the sanctions regime, the EU is reluctant to cooperate with the EAEU until the conflict in Ukraine is resolved. A resolution, though, is unlikely in the foreseeable future due to the gravest rift in Moscow's relations with the west in recent history: the launch of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, a full-scale war in Europe rather than a peaceful agreement between the countries.

⁹ "Map of Ukraine with Cities." *Wikimedia Commons*, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Ukraine_with_Cities.png. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.



Figure 4: Greater Europe stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok.¹⁰

Greater Eurasia

With its dwindling connections to Europe, Russia eventually opted to expand its ties eastward. It would be an opportunity to cooperate with China and the surrounding countries to a significant degree while slowly limiting its dependence on occidental industry. As such, at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in 2016, President Putin outlined his plans for a “Greater Eurasia”. Similar to past efforts at Russian partnerships, the details remained vague, but the fundamental message that Russia would encourage the “integration of integrations”¹¹ across a vast range of institutions throughout Eurasia was clear.

Aid from other regional powers would be necessary for the funding of such an ambitious project; hence the partnership with China was inevitable, and Moscow sought to formalise relations between the EAEU and the Chinese “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI). The latter envisages five zones of cooperation throughout the world, primarily connected by land but also by sea in certain cases, with a plethora of goals such as infrastructure projects and unimpeded trade. On par with Russia’s past efforts in Europe, all partners under this initiative would be treated equally, with none exerting more power over the rest. However, EAEU integration did not occur as anticipated, as each country decided to join the project independently, despite Moscow’s encouragement to utilise the union. Other similar actors to

¹⁰ “Eur lisbon vladivostok.” *Wikimedia Commons*, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eur_lisbon_vladivostok.PNG. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.

¹¹ Sakwa, Richard. “Sad delusions: The decline and rise of Greater Europe.” *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2021, p. 15, [doi:10.1177/1879366521999757](https://doi.org/10.1177/1879366521999757).

facilitate the realisation of the project include the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a political and economic organisation covering most of Asia and a few parts of Europe.

Nonetheless, some fundamental aspects of Greater Eurasia, including its geographical borders, remain unclear. Some definitions include only the former Soviet Union and China, whereas others include the entire Eurasian continent from Western Europe to Southeast Asia. From the occidental perspective, the difficulty in communication is only one of the issues. The west is majorly reluctant, suspecting that the project is an attempt at Russian economic imperialism that would threaten the independence of its neighbouring countries in the long term. There is also the concern that Europe would not be but a mere peninsula at the edge of Greater Eurasia while China and Russia would become the new poles of the world economy, toppling the US. Furthermore, the promotion of undemocratic or only partially democratic regimes that disrespect human rights and personal liberties, such as multiple countries prominent in the region, is unfavourable for Europe and the world community even if there is economic benefit.

Lastly, there are various issues regarding the partnership within Asia. Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, the region is both highly dangerous and oftentimes uncooperative regarding potential projects, whether they be for infrastructure, economic prosperity, or otherwise. Further east, Pakistan's admission into the BRI is problematic due to current works by the initiative in the region of Kashmir, contested between India, Pakistan, and even China. If India does not participate in Greater Eurasia, it could form its own economic pole at the expense of the project's development. Not to mention that the BRI is regarded by many economists, orient and occidental alike, to be unrealistically ambitious.

Overall, the idea of an eventual Greater Eurasia remains possible, despite the vast issues that would have to be dealt with. In a future where the project is realised in some form and with all the rapidly growing markets in the region, it is plausible that the world economy would shift to the east, and certain countries within the area would emerge as new great powers. Russia, in particular, plans to utilise the opportunity to regain its spot after three decades of failed European integration. China, on the other hand, is trying to spread outward with the help of the BRI to extend its influence further. The only thing certain in such a future is that it would be highly multipolar, unlike today's world centred around the west: Europe and the Americas. Moscow aims to become one of those multiple poles, as do Beijing, Delhi, and many other significant places throughout the globe.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

China is the founder of the Belt and Road Initiative. Recognising the potential economic benefit and the similar scope of the two projects, it is greatly in favour of Russia's Greater Eurasia partnership. It aims to expand its influence on global affairs by becoming one of the many poles of the upcoming multipolar world, should both projects be a success. The general plan for China is to "improve road connectivity" while promoting "unimpeded trade" and enhancing "monetary circulation"¹². It is also a founding member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, whose goals are to deepen economic and political cooperation in Eurasia. China is the recipient of sanctions from multiple western countries following accusations of human rights abuses, and many view its proposed initiatives as attempts at economic imperialism.

Russia

Russia is the country that first proposed the concept of Greater Eurasia in 2016. It has attempted and failed to create a free economic zone with European countries on multiple occasions over the past few decades. However, it has been more successful in the former Soviet Union, establishing the Eurasian Economic Union between itself and four other nations. Ukraine's unwillingness to participate in such efforts has been especially troubling, and eventually, Russia found it more beneficial to invade the country. In the past, it has invaded other neighbouring countries supporting local secessionist movements, such as the internationally unrecognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. Concerning the realisation of a potential Greater Eurasia, it aims to find an agreement to form an economic community on the continent to create a more multipolar world, one of whose poles it strives to be. Many are sceptical about the sincerity of these goals, accusing Russia of economic imperialism.

¹² Xi Jinping. "Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future." 7 Sept. 2013. *Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Belgium*, 8 Sept. 2013, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cebel/eng/zxxx/t1078088.htm>. Transcript.

Ukraine

Ukraine is a country located between Russia and the European Union. For most of its recent history, since it became independent after the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1991, it has been trying to deepen its ties with the latter. However, widespread corruption and political instability, including two revolutions in just a decade, have been significant obstacles to the achievement of its goals. Russia, supporting that the country belongs in its sphere of influence, has interfered with its internal matters on multiple occasions, from installing pro-Russian political leaders to occupying parts of the country militarily. The most recent example is the war in 2022, where Russia invaded with the “demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine”¹³ as its goal. These tensions have caused western countries to impose sanctions on Russia, and they are generally the obstacle to talks about Greater Eurasia with the European Union.

United States of America (USA)

The United States of America is a country located in North America and as such, it is usually not included in formal talks about neither the Belt and Road Initiative nor Greater Eurasia. However, as it is currently the world’s sole superpower by most metrics, it is significantly affected by any large-scale efforts for economic prosperity. Supporting Ukraine in its conflict, the US has imposed sanctions on Russia, whom it believes to be one of its main antagonists, along with China. It also imposed sanctions on the latter on multiple occasions under President Donald Trump for a plethora of reasons, including human rights violations against the Uyghur community in Xinjiang¹⁴ and the people of Hong Kong¹⁵. It opposes the

¹³ Putin, Vladimir. "Обращение Президента Российской Федерации" [Message from the President of the Russian Federation]. 24 Feb. 2022. *Kremlin*, kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843.

¹⁴ Madhani, Aamer. "U.S. imposes sanctions on China over human rights abuses of Uighurs." *PBS*, 16 Dec. 2021, [pbs.org/newshour/world/u-s-imposes-sanctions-on-china-over-human-rights-abuses-of-uighurs](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/u-s-imposes-sanctions-on-china-over-human-rights-abuses-of-uighurs).

¹⁵ Martina, Michael, and David Brunnstrom. "U.S. sanctions Chinese officials over Hong Kong democracy crackdown." *Reuters*, 16 July 2021, [reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-sanctions-seven-chinese-individuals-over-hong-kong-crackdown-2021-07-16/](https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-sanctions-seven-chinese-individuals-over-hong-kong-crackdown-2021-07-16/).

creation of a multipolar world since that would challenge its influence and current state as the world's economic hegemon.

European Union (EU)

The European Union is a political and economic alliance in Europe founded after the end of World War II. It signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia in 1994 and attempted to sign an Association Agreement with Ukraine in 2014. The latter failed following Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's sudden refusal to sign the agreement, despite strong support from parliament. This event was the cause of the Revolution of Dignity which led to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and the declaration of the unrecognised Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. Later on, these secessionist movements became an excuse for the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. The European Union has imposed sanctions on Russia since 2014 and it refuses to have any talks with the Eurasian Economic Union until the crisis is resolved. However, most member states are participants in the Belt and Road Initiative.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is a military alliance founded after the end of World War II. During the Cold War, its goal was to balance the potential threat posed by the Soviet Union and its own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact. Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had expressed his support for the disbandment of such organisations, claiming it was the only method to ensure peace in Europe. Since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the alliance has expanded to include multiple nations from the Eastern Bloc. This has led to tensions with Russia, which sees the rapid expansion as a threat to its desired position as a local hegemon. Consequently, Russia ensured the political destabilisation of numerous neighbouring countries, from actively supporting secessionist movements to interfering militarily¹⁶.

¹⁶ Krickovic, Andrej, and Igor Pellicciari. "From "Greater Europe" to "Greater Eurasia": Status concerns and the evolution of Russia's approach to alignment and regional integration." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* vol. 12, no. 1, 2021, pp. 86-99, [doi:10.1177/1879366521998808](https://doi.org/10.1177/1879366521998808).

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
July 6 th 1989	Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, outlined his idea of a Common European Home.
December 26 th 1991	The Soviet Union was officially dissolved following a vote in the upper chamber of the most authoritative legislative body in the country, the Supreme Soviet.
June 24 th 1994	Russia signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union.
November 22 nd 2004	The second round of the Ukrainian presidential election, generally said to have been rigged, sparked peaceful protests that became known as the Orange Revolution.
September 7 th 2013	Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Belt and Road Initiative, at the time called an economic belt along the Silk Road, for the first time in a visit to Kazakhstan.
November 21 st 2013	Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union, causing the Revolution of Dignity.
January 1 st 2015	The Eurasian Economic Union was founded between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia.
June 17 th 2016	Russian President Vladimir Putin announced his view of a Greater Eurasia at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.
February 24 th 2022	A “special military operation” in Ukraine was announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin, marking the beginning of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Europe and Central Asia

The UNDP aims to eradicate poverty and inequality in all forms. Furthermore, it supports the acceleration of the transition to green and sustainable development in the region to make sure the populace and their countries are resilient to any future crises. It has adopted a “Strategic Plan” for the period from 2022 to 2025 to achieve these goals, among many others such as digitalisation and development financing.

UN calls for greater Eurasia and Asia-Pacific integration at Russian Economic Forum

At the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Dr. Shamshad Akhtar noted the economic opportunities of the region. ESCAP is working to support these processes to enhance trade through the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross Border Paperless Trade and by developing the infrastructure of the region. Furthermore, it supports the connectivity of the road, rail, and maritime corridors between the countries in Eurasia to better link their markets.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The Belt and Road Initiative, initially known as “One Belt One Road” (OBOR), is a global infrastructure development project founded by China. It was first proposed in 2013 during a visit to Kazakhstan by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The initiative aims to invest in a grand number of countries and international organisations to boost economic growth and facilitate trade. Should it be realised, the project would consist of five zones of cooperation, including the historical Silk Road, and all member states would have an equal status within the partnership. The main body responsible for the initiative would be the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which already encompasses the majority of Eurasia.

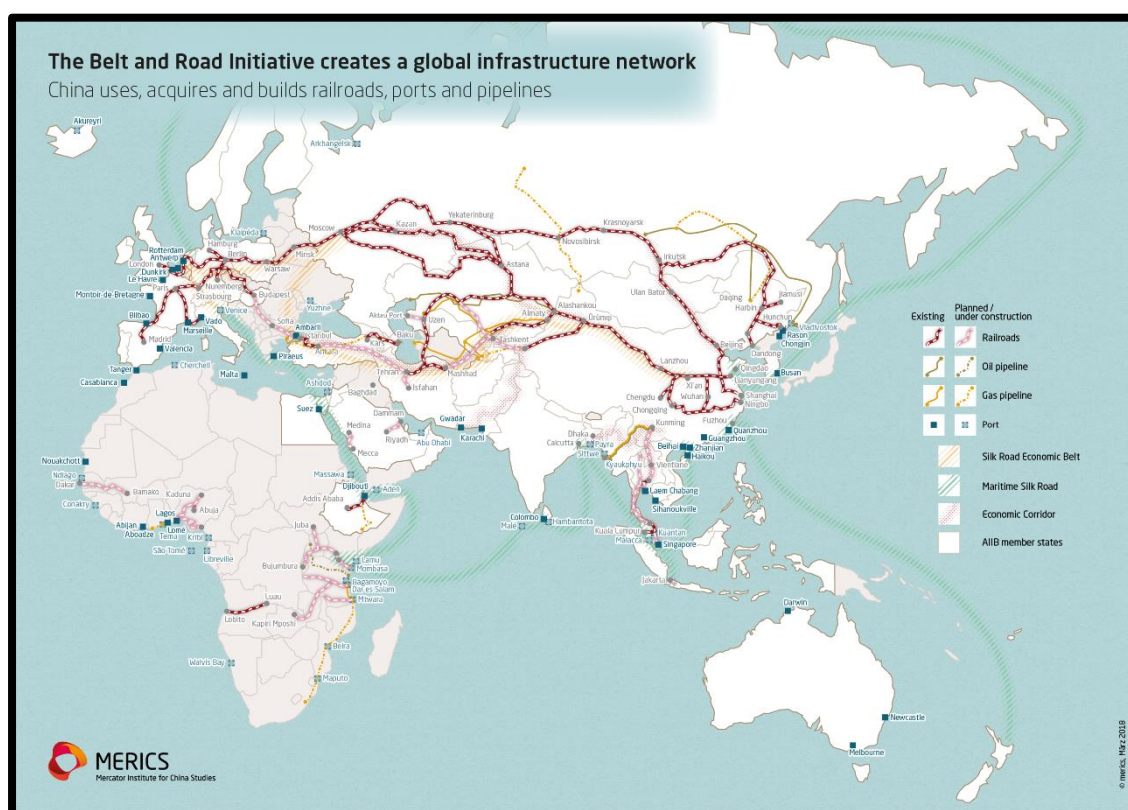


Figure 5: Map of the Belt and Road Initiative.¹⁷

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

The Eurasian Economic Union was founded in 2015 in Eurasia between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. It is the successor of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), and its current members include Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, in addition to the prior three. Its goals are to encourage the free trade of goods and to provide common economic policies for its members. Furthermore, it is the primary body for talks regarding European and Eurasian integration. However, the European Union refuses to cooperate with it until the crisis in Ukraine is resolved, hence the limited size of the union. When the five member states decided to join the Belt and Road Initiative, they did so independently rather than by utilising the union.

¹⁷ "Silkroad Projekt." *Wikimedia Commons*, [merics.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Silkroad-Projekt_EN_2020_150dpi.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silkroad-Projekt_EN_2020_150dpi.png). Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Improving infrastructure

One possible solution to aid the creation of Greater Eurasia is the connectivity of all trade routes, whether it be by road, rail, sea, or otherwise. Although land trade routes are generally more expensive to maintain than maritime routes, the delivery of goods is significantly faster using the former. It would also be helpful to have alternative methods of reaching areas relying on trade by sea, that way the world economy does not freeze when a critical position such as the Suez Canal gets blocked, as was the case in 2021¹⁸. Concerning the Belt and Road Initiative, it considers connectivity one of its fundamental goals to eliminate trade barriers. As such, the infrastructure and general development of each country are both sectors on which to work.

Coordinating economic policies

Smaller-scale regional economic integration could also be promoted. Eurasian nations would be encouraged to coordinate their economic policies to facilitate the effort of Greater Eurasia, as has been supported by China and many other countries. Financial institutions could be set up to allow for regular discussions between the member states, like how the European Monetary Union (EMU) functions¹⁹. That way, markets would run more smoothly, and trade disruptions would be minimised or at least become infrequent. Since nations with contradicting economic interests cannot cooperate effectively, the coordination of their policies to their mutual benefit is of great of significance.

¹⁸ Petras, George, et al. "How did Evergreen's ship get stuck in the Suez Canal and create the world's heaviest traffic jam?." *USA Today*, 29 March 2021, eu.usatoday.com/in-depth/graphics/2021/03/26/how-evergreens-ship-got-stuck-in-the-suez-canal/7010375002/.

¹⁹ European Commission. "How the Economic and Monetary Union works." *Europa, economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-monetary-union/how-economic-and-monetary-union-works_en*. Accessed 18 Aug. 2022.

Creation of a free economic zone

Moreover, nations could seek to minimise the legal procedures blocking trade. The creation of a free economic zone, as envisioned by Gorbachev, would be ideal. Resembling the Association Agreements signed by the European Union, one potential solution would be the minimisation or elimination of tariffs. The goal of such a movement would be to promote trade and encourage foreign investment. One other possibility could be the eventual creation of a single united market in Eurasia. That solution may be unrealistically optimistic for the immediate future; however, it would be a desirable goal for Greater Eurasia in the long term.

Creation of an anti-Greater Eurasia framework

Certain countries inevitably would be opposed to the concept of Greater Eurasia due to fear of becoming overly dependent on larger powers in the East, concerns over human right and international law violations, or other reasons. As such, they would cooperate extensively to ensure the project does not become a reality. These nations are not necessarily opposed to development and improving people's living standards, but rather they aim to achieve those results in a more cautious manner. Consequently, in voicing their concerns, they would propose alternative solutions to ameliorate life and the economic situation in Eurasia in a way that would allow countries to be less interdependent comparatively.

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