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COORDINATION OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION MEMBER STATES DIPLOMACY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

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This article offers recommendations for optimising the coordination of diplomacy of the Eurasian Economic Union member states within the United Nations system. Significant changes in the modern diplomatic activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus have occurred which caused changes in the forms of diplomatic interaction. Currently, diplomatic interactions acquire a network character. The article also provides examples of new opportunities for negotiations and initiatives considering the networked nature of international relations and shows the forms of network interaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, as well as current examples of network diplomacy. The necessity to complicate the forms of coordination and introduce them into international organisations into the United Nations system is pointed out. Recommendations are given to the EEU member states, as well as to Eurasian integration associations. An analysis of the work shows that for the effective activities of the subjects of international relations it is necessary to integrate into complex network interactions. This can be implemented basing on the existing structure of the Union State, the EEU, the CIS, the CSTO, as well as Eurasian non-profit and commercial organisations.

Keywords: Republic of Belarus; the UN system; foreign policy; diplomacy; Eurasian Economic Union; international networks; networking; network interactions; international relations; negotiations; ministry of foreign affairs.

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КООРДИНАЦИЯ ДИПЛОМАТИИ СТРАН – ЧЛЕНОВ ЕВРАЗИЙСКОГО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СОЮЗА В ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ

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Предлагаются рекомендации по оптимизации координации дипломатии стран – членов Евразийского экономического союза в системе ООН. Основу исследования составили значительные изменения в современной дипломатической деятельности белорусского внешнеполитического ведомства и, как результат, изменение форм дипломатического взаимодействия, приобретающих сетевой характер. Приведены примеры новых возможностей для проведения переговоров и предложения инициатив через призму активизации глобальных процессов с учетом сетевизации международных отношений. Показаны формы сетевого взаимодействия Министерства иностранных дел Республики Беларусь, а также приведены актуальные примеры сетевой дипломатии. Делается вывод о необходимости усложнить формы координации и внедрить их в международные организации, в частности в систему ООН. Даны рекомендации государствам – членам ЕАЭС, а также евразийским интеграционным объединениям. Анализ проведенной работы показывает, что для результативной деятельности субъектов международных отношений необходимо встраиваться в сложные сетевые взаимодействия. Это можно произвести на базе существующей структуры Союзного государства, Евразийской экономической комиссии, Содружества Независимых Государств, Организации Договора о коллективной безопасности, а также евразийских некоммерческих и коммерческих организаций.

Ключевые слова: Республика Беларусь; система ООН; внешняя политика; дипломатия; Евразийский экономический союз; международные сети; сетевизация; сетевые взаимодействия; международные отношения; переговоры; министерство иностранных дел.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to make recommendations on strengthening the coordination of diplomacy of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the United Nations system. The complication of cooperation forms between the EEU states in the UN organisation system has become a research problem. Since these forms acquire a network character, the achievement of the priorities of the EEU member states depends on the diplomatic integration of the states into complex networks of the UN system [1]. Not only absolute indicators such as demography, military power, economic well-being, the presence of the diplomatic corps, etc. should be achieved but also relative indicators of centrality in the communication networks of the UN system (information exchange). Consequently, if access to information determines the competitive advantages of states in international organisations, then in order to obtain this access, it is necessary to be integrated into the complex networks of the UN system [2–4].

The complex networks of the UN system include states, non-profit and profit, governmental and non-governmental organisations, foundations, advisory structures of regional economic integration organisations, international organisations, etc. Accordingly, to be integrated into the complex networks of the UN

system, the diplomatic practices of the states take on complex forms: from holding cultural, academic, and scientific and leisure activities at the UN venues, to economic, political and social network initiatives. The final progress of the global agenda of our countries depends on how coordinated such initiatives of the EEU member states are. The following tasks were solved to achieve the goal.

Firstly, the analysis of the network forms' development of Belarusian diplomatic practices in the UN system has been carried out.

Secondly, Belarusian diplomatic practices of integrating into the complex networks of the UN system have been compared with the Eurasian international processes. The potential of the member states of the Eurasian integration associations, the Union State, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) has been assessed.

Thirdly, based on the results of the study, the recommendations to the EEU member states and to the Eurasian integration associations have been developed in order to strengthen their role in the complex networks of the UN.

The structure of the article includes three main sections corresponding to the objectives of the study.

Development of the diplomatic practice of the Republic of Belarus in the UN system

The activities of the BSSR on the international vector were developing within the frameworks of the coordi-

nated foreign policy of the USSR. One of the main directions of the state foreign affairs establishment was



its representation in the United Nations. In June 1945, in San Francisco, the Belarusian delegation together with the delegations of other countries, representing the original members of the organisation, signed the UN Charter. The admission of Belarus, which was not an independent state at that time, to the newly created global organisation was a recognition by the international community of the huge role played by the Belarusian people in the victory over fascism during the World War II¹.

After gaining the status of a sovereign and independent state in 1991, a new stage in the formation of the Belarusian statehood began. At that time, it was strongly important to gain the status of an independent and sovereign state in the world arena, and one of the means of achievement became the implementation of Belarusian policy towards the United Nations. The necessity to work in the UN structures and related specialised agencies (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, etc.) was beyond the shadow of a doubt, since these international organisations were considered to be a universal tool for maintaining a balanced system of international relations and solving priority problems of global development. In addition, Belarus' participation in the United Nations contributed to the formation of a more equitable world order based on the universally recognised principles of the UN Charter and the norms of international law [5].

The UN universal principles became a coordinated priority for the statehood formation [6]. The USSR and the Ukrainian SSR, as separate UN members, took an active part in their development as well. Currently, the principles also play a key role in the balanced UN system. The Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation recognise the preservation of the UN as one of the main priorities; promote the principles of an equitable world order in the UN system through coordination within the framework of the Programme of coordinated actions in the field of the Union State's foreign policy and the annual Plan of consultations.

It is noteworthy that the states approach the implementation of these actions in a comprehensive manner, which suggests that there is a "network" reserve for complicating the organisational forms of multilateral cooperation in the United Nations system. According

to the Priority directions and priorities for the further development of the Union State for 2018–2022, the coordination has a multidisciplinary character, aimed at including non-governmental organisations, businesses and groups of people in international affairs. Thus, the priority of Russian-Belarusian cultural and humanitarian cooperation includes the establishment of network links not only between states, but also between theaters, museums, libraries, circuses and educational institutions².

The official Minsk sees the most important priority of its participation in the United Nations in strengthening the role of the organisation in the world political arena, taking into account the main approaches of the Republic of Belarus to the processes of globalisation that are gaining momentum in recent years, the growth of conflict factors and instability in international relations. In this regard, the diplomatic practice is undergoing significant changes.

Forms of diplomatic interaction acquire the so-called network character. Such networking of international relations, as well as the complication of these forms, opens up new platforms for negotiations for the foreign ministries of various states, including the Republic of Belarus.

This type of networking is most evident in the UN system, a complex system that unites states, non-profit organisations, business communities, representatives of civil society, etc. during the implementation of various initiatives. In particular, the "network" Belarusian initiative was put forward at the first session of the UN General Assembly in 1946. At the suggestion of the BSSR delegation, the General Assembly approved the resolution "On the extradition and punishment of war criminals". The resolution demanded that the UN member states take the most energetic measures to search for war criminals, arrest them and extradite them to the countries in whose territory they committed crimes³.

The Belarusian delegation proposed to continue consideration of this topic in 1968, when approved a resolution by the Belarusian initiative on the non-application of the statute of limitations to war crimes and war criminals at the 23rd session of the UN General Assembly. These initiatives have made a historic contribution to the development of relations between civil society institutions and global actors in world politics. A sensitive attitude to historical memory even then laid the foundation for modern initiatives in the field of the World War II history's preventing falsification⁴.

¹Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter-all-lang.pdf> (date of access: 11.06.2021).

²Постановление Высшего Государственного Совета Союзного государства № 3 от 19 июня 2018 г. «О выполнении Приоритетных направлений и первоочередных задач дальнейшего развития Союзного государства на среднесрочную перспективу (2014–2017 годы) и дальнейшем развитии Союзного государства на 2018–2022 годы [Электронный ресурс]. 2018. URL: <https://www.postkomsg.com/documentation/document/1780/> (дата обращения: 11.06.2021).

³Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 1st session [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/1> (date of access: 11.06.2021).

⁴Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 23rd session [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/23> (date of access: 11.06.2021).



At the 28th session of the UN General Assembly in 1973, a resolution was adopted by the initiative of the BSSR on the use of scientific and technological progress in the interests of peace and social development. The relevant UN declaration and resolutions concerning the prohibition of production of new types of weapons of mass destruction were subsequently worked out on this resolution's basis. In the same year, the BSSR was elected to the seat of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and successfully performed this function in the main body of the UN during the period 1974–1975. This initiative has already emphasised the importance of the right to independent development, which today has become almost the only alternative to the ultra-liberal interpretation of the humanitarian component in world politics⁵.

In addition, Belarus is the initiator of the Chernobyl direction in the activities of the UN and its organisations. In 1990, the 45th session of the UN General Assembly approved the resolution “On strengthening international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster”, which was put forward by the Republic of Belarus. The UN “Chernobyl” secretariat was created, and the work of the UN inter-agency group was organised. Subsequently, the General Assembly confirmed and developed the provisions of the resolution at its regular sessions, which indicated broad

interregional support. Such support was the result of a complex negotiation process, and participation in the main negotiating coalition of the Commonwealth of Independent States members allowed us to form an interregional group of co-authors⁶.

In connection with the above, it is obvious that the initiatives of the Republic of Belarus in the United Nations system are aimed not only at the goals of an individual state or group of states, or at the interests of individual commercial enterprises, but also at the interests of the population, including the case of combating human trafficking. Due to the fact, that these initiatives are directly related to the interests of people, they affect socio-demographic groups not only in the Republic of Belarus, but also in the Russian Federation and other member states. On the one hand, it contributes to ensuring pluralism in the Eurasian integration associations and demonstrates the priority of equality in the decision-making process in the Eurasian Economic Union. On the other hand, in the absence of a proper level of network coordination, the focus of both Belarus and Russia can lead to excessive rivalry between states on the interests of the region. A high degree of inter-state and network coordination, as well as a timely “division of labour”, will help to mitigate these risks. Let us consider how it has already been done on the example of the network potential of the Eurasian integration processes.

Network capacity of Eurasian international processes

The so-called network foundation was formed within the framework of Minsk negotiations between the leaders of the Normand format talks, offered by the President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko in order to ensure security in Eastern Europe, as well as to provide decent living conditions for the population in the conflict zone. The Normand format initiative of the official Minsk and its relative success was the first example when the representatives of the “non-state participants” of the Lugansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic were present at the negotiating table, which is undoubtedly the result of the efforts and activities of the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. In addition, there were proposals for the introduction of a Belarusian peace-keeping contingent to the conflict region within the framework of the trilateral contact group's work, which is an example of a network form of diplomatic interaction, i. e. networking.

The initiative of the Belarusian leader on the new Helsinki process, announced during the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in the capital of the Republic of Belarus in 2017, deserves attention as the example of networking. The essence of this initiative, called Helsinki-2, is to start a new dialogue of all interested parties, primarily major geopolitical players, similar to the Helsinki process of restructuring the European system of international relations, which ended in 1975⁷.

This initiative was actively discussed by the high-level segment of the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In particular, the session was attended by deputy foreign ministers of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation A. Dapkyunas and S. Vershinin. These initiatives and their broad support demonstrate the leadership of Belarus and Russia in international affairs, which, however, is actively opposed by Western states and global human rights groups⁸.

⁵Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 28th session [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/28> (date of access: 11.06.2021).

⁶Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 45th session [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/45> (date of access: 11.06.2021).

⁷Conference on security and co-operation in Europe. Final act [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true> (date of access: 11.06.2021).

⁸40th session of the Human Rights Council (25 February – 22 March 2019) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Pages/40RegularSession.aspx> (date of access: 11.06.2021).



At the same time, it should be emphasised that much has been done in this direction, but not enough. There are also other forms of network interaction – youth non-profit organisations, Eurasian consultative structures, etc. The inclusion of such formats in regional international processes has already gained momentum, as evidenced, for example, by the Priorities for the development of the Union State until 2022 (networking of the non-governmental sector), the Eurasian technology platforms of the Eurasian Economic Commission (networking of commercial and scientific and technical organisations), the reports of the International Institute for Monitoring Democracy Development of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly (networking of the monitoring institute), as well as the development of youth forums, exercises and interdepartmental coordination of the CSTO⁹.

The Belarusian initiative to combat human trafficking, which is one of the priority areas of our country's activities in the international arena, also deserves attention. In particular, at the 2005 United Nations summit, the President of the Republic of Belarus put forward an initiative to intensify international efforts to combat human trafficking. In addition, Belarus is a party to all UN universal conventions aimed at combating smuggling and trafficking in persons and related crimes, including the United Nations Convention against transnational organised crime and its complementary Protocol on the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. This fact once again underlines our country's commitment to the basic international principles in the field of human rights and freedoms and serves as a convincing example of network diplomacy with the assistance of the United Nations system [1, p. 70].

In general, it is important to note that in view of the changing principles of global development, the question arises of the need to complicate the form of coordination of international cooperation and the introduction of so-called network diplomacy in the activities of international organisations in the UN system. Such cooperation will allow us to optimally solve the problems of the world agenda with the involvement of non-governmental organisations, the commercial sector, as well as representatives of scientific, technical, and other organisations.

The networking of international relations implies the complication of forms of multilateral cooperation. The analysis of the diplomatic practice of the Republic of Belarus has shown that if in the 20th century the forms of multilateral cooperation were mainly of interstate nature; at the present stage, these forms include both interstate cooperation and cooperation through

non-governmental organisations, international organisations, the business community, parliaments, and other entities.

Thus, the state occupies a central role in these networks, since due to the state the functioning of these networks is maintained, but at the same time, the competitive advantages of states in these complex forms depend on how central the position of a particular state will be built in the complex networks. This centrality will be determined by the extent to which states can ensure participation in international networks of non-governmental organisations, regional structures, businesses, parliaments, and communities.

The example of the Republic of Belarus and the cooperation of the member countries of the Eurasian region shows a significant potential for strengthening the centrality of the Eurasian countries and associations in the complex networks of international relations. The realisation of this potential is often seriously opposed: the lack of negotiations on the EU–EEU line, on the line of the Office for democratic institutions and human rights – International Institute for Monitoring Democracy Development of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, through the interaction of the Eurasian youth associations with the youth associations of the EU.

In the case of Eurasian regional integration associations, the network coordination potential is not fully utilised, especially in international intergovernmental organisations. Thus, the Eurasian Union has an international legal personality, which has allowed it to strengthen its position in the UN system. This platform of the United Nations Conference on trade and development is successfully used by the Eurasian Economic Commission in order to be included in the UN complex networks through regional integration associations. However, it has not yet received observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.

The Union State, as an integration association, does not have an international legal personality, although its potential is huge. The statutes of the Union State show the urgency of complicating the international cooperation's forms, since there is a Commission of the Union State on Human Rights and the Public Chamber of the Union State, as well as a number of advisory structures. There are similar advisory structures in the CIS and the CSTO. On the one hand, it seems that joint activities will duplicate their functions, but on the other hand, with proper organisation of the process, their functioning will allow the countries of the Eurasian region to increase their centrality in complex forms of international relations, to improve communication in international complex networks and contribute to the overall democratisation of international relations and the formation of the Eurasian region as one of the attractive centres of international cooperation and investments in the world.

⁹Union State [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.postkomsg.com/documentation/?withSearch=Y> (date of access: 11.06.2021).



Considering the abovementioned, one should make recommendations to the EU member states and Eurasian integration associations. Proper coordination of consular officials in key cities of multilateral cooperation will allow establishing interaction with citizens of the EEU member states working in international organisations. Obtaining the EEU observer status at the UN General Assembly will strengthen the coordination and representation capabilities of the EEU member states. The inclusion of a full range of actors and participants of international relations in the activities of the Standing Committee of the Union State will increase the competitive advantages of domestic commercial and non-commercial structures, which will increase the level of their expertise in international affairs. The coordination of parliaments together with youth associations in the Interparliamentary union will be able to bring cultural and humanitarian priorities to the normative level of international organisations, expand the circle of allies and partners through “informal” thematic groups in the UN.

Thus, it is necessary to provide the following recommendations to the EEU member states, as well as to the Eurasian integration associations:

- main consular offices of the foreign ministries of the CIS countries should ensure the interaction of consular officials in the main “points” of multilateral cooperation (New York, Brussels, Geneva, Paris, Vienna) in organising work with citizens abroad by creating so-called consular clubs to provide legal and other assistance to compatriots;

- Eurasian Economic Commission is to consider the possibility to receive the status of an observer at the UN General Assembly;

- for the Permanent Committee of the Union State, it would be desirable to develop an analytical report on the advantages and disadvantages of giving the status of international legal entity to the Union State. One more suggestion is to develop recommendations on the establishment of the Union State Commission on Human Rights, as well as the Public Chamber of the Union State;

- such institutions as CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, parliaments of the EEU member states, Youth Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the CIS, youth unions and historical associations should address the Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union in Geneva with a joint statement on the inadmissibility of revising the results of the World War II;

- International Institute for Monitoring Democracy Development of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly should prepare an analytical report on the monitoring methods of international organisations and present this report to the attention of the academic community and non-profit organisations;

- the Centre for international studies of the faculty of international relations of the Belarusian State University is to develop a roadmap for network-based external actions of the EEU member states, Eurasian economic entities, and non-profit organisations. It is necessary to establish non-governmental structures at key points of multilateral cooperation (Brussels, Geneva).

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