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# PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

ILDAR NASYROV. COOPERATION OF RUSSIAN REGIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: FORMATS AND OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN (Part 1)

*Keywords: international relations of regions; regions and foreign policy; international organizations; models of interaction with integration institutions; up-to-date sectors of cooperation; effectiveness of external relations; multipolarity.*

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*Abstract. The article studies the issues of interaction between the constituent entities of Russia and international organizations, the importance of this type of international cooperation for the socio-economic*

*development of the regions and for the implementation of the Russian foreign policy. The possibilities of participation of the constituent entities in the promotion of national interests on the world stage in the context of increasing external pressure on Russia are considered. The analysis of the issues of political and legal regulation of international and foreign economic relations of the constituent entities of Russia is given, including the questions of participation in the activities of international organizations. The article introduces a classification of formats for the interaction of regions with international organizations and characterizes the features of their implementation; the transformation of the international activity of the regions is demonstrated, according to the evolution of the foreign policy priorities of the state.*

*To evaluate the performance of models of cooperation with integration institutions of various types, the experience of Tatarstan is being studied. The importance for socio-economic development and improving the quality of life of the population by participation of the regions in the activities of international organizations as part of the Russian representation in them, or building relationships with international associations at the level of regions and local authorities, as well as holding events under the auspices of international organizations is confirmed. Alternatives for involving the constituent unities in the implementation of essential areas of Russian foreign policy are proposed. The positive role of the regions in maintaining contacts between Russia and a number of leading international organizations is also discovered, along with the search for new low-politicized formats of cooperation, such as partnerships with international associations and structures at the level of local authorities. The potential of the regions appears highly-demanded in the implementation of Russia's consistent policy to form a multipolar world order.*

## **Russian Regions on the Agenda of International Cooperation**

Amidst ongoing anti-Russian sanctions, attempts to internationally isolate Russia and increasing politicization of the

world economy at the expense of market competition [1, p. 834-835], the implementation of foreign policy and the development of trade and economic cooperation of Russia is based on a wide variety of tools and opportunities in the field of foreign relations. In this context, the potential of Russian regions for strengthening cross-border cooperation has become a valuable resource [2, p. 66]. Having been involved in international activities since the mid-1990s, the constituent entities of Russia have laid a good groundwork for the development of economic and humanitarian cooperation with foreign partners, as well as the implementation of certain directions of Russian foreign policy [3].

The growing international integration and globalization have resulted in an increasing role of cross-border structures and organizations. International organizations contribute to the regulation of interstate relations on a multilateral basis; in this area, the influence of international non-governmental organizations is also increasing [4, p. 12].

The obligations of the state as a member of international organizations often affect the interests and powers of the constituent entities of the Federation, which draws their attention to this area. Seeking new opportunities for development, regions show interest in interacting with international organizations. Just like other forms of international relations of regions, this requires constant coordination on the part of federal authorities and strict adherence to the principle of unity of the foreign policy of Russia.

Russia's foreign policy is becoming more pragmatic and focused on national interests. Of course, Russian regions should also organize their work in accordance with the country's position on all issues on the international agenda.

At the present stage, one of the key issues regarding the implementation of international relations of Russian regions is adaptation to the growing sanctions pressure, as well as making necessary adjustments to the directions and forms of work with foreign partners. The article examines possible interactions with international organizations by studying the relevant experience

of the Republic of Tatarstan and identifies promising areas of cooperation (taking into account the current foreign policy situation and the powers of the constituent entities of Russia in the area of international and foreign economic relations).

Today, the “Greater Eurasian Partnership” initiative<sup>1</sup>, proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, is of particular relevance. As direct participants in the implementation of Russia’s foreign policy, subjects of the Federation are naturally involved in these processes, using opportunities within the framework of “institutionalized relationships” [5, p. 70; 6]. At the same time, we should take into account the high conflict potential of competitive initiatives of the leading Eurasian and Asia-Pacific powers [7, p. 85]. Moreover, in the post-Soviet space, there are simultaneously developing divergent trends of integration and disintegration; political and economic initiatives of the leading actors of world politics overlap. This determines the fundamental principles of Russia’s strategy of Eurasian integration, which includes the development and functioning of supranational institutions [8, p. 3-4].

As will be shown below, federal subjects are successfully engaged in the implementation of other important vectors of Russian foreign policy. This determines the relevance of the conducted study, coupled with the need for a systematic approach to the interaction of the constituent entities of Russia with international and integration structures.

### **Political and Legal Regulation of International Cooperation of the Constituent Entities of Russia. Role of International Organizations**

International activities of the constituent entities of Russia took shape gradually. In the early 1990s, the first contacts with foreign partners showed the potential of international cooperation for the social and economic development of regions,

but at the same time identified a number of associated challenges for a unified foreign policy and the territorial integrity of the state. It has been studied by Russian authors [9]. During the development of a system of coordination and support for international and foreign economic relations at the regional level, the activities of federal subjects were coordinated with national interests, and the powers of the regions in this area, which is directly related to the issues of state security, were defined [10]. Initially, due to the lack of appropriate legal regulation at the federal level, regions attempted to secure excessive political power. For example, in the first edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, state sovereignty was proclaimed an integral qualitative state of the republic<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan Mukhammat Sabirov interpreted the invitation of the Government of Türkiye to visit the country as recognition of the sovereignty of Tatarstan [11, p. 7].

At the turn of the 2000s, a regulatory framework for international and foreign economic relations of the subjects of the Russian Federation was formed as a result of collecting and analyzing the experience of federal executive authorities in coordinating international contacts of the subjects of the Federation, as well as maintaining a consistent course towards strengthening Russian statehood. Federal legislators have adapted it to modern realities by now, taking into account the real-life implementation of legislation; its effectiveness has been confirmed. This is indirectly confirmed by the recently adopted federal law N 414-FZ "On the General Principles of the Organization of Public Power in the Subjects of the Russian Federation" (clause 90, article 44), which refers to the current legislation on issues related to the regulation of international cooperation between regions<sup>3</sup>.

The fact that there are domestic and foreign practices of conducting external relations of regions (consistent with the foreign policy of the state) confirms that they are important for promotion of national interests in the world and dynamic

regional development in an open economy. There are many examples of successful involvement of Russian regions in the implementation of certain foreign policy objectives; they include the creation of 'soft power' instruments, promotion of a positive image of our state and strengthening multi-vector cooperation with friendly countries [12]. The regions proved themselves in the course of development of the situation with Ukraine. For example, during the unification of Crimea with Russia, Tatarstan became involved in the work with the Crimean Tatar population of the peninsula, explaining Russian national policy and supporting the establishment of public institutions in the region. At the present stage, the subjects of the Federation are actively helping the population and authorities of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. In all these cases, the coherence between the regions and federal authorities is of fundamental importance. Currently, international and foreign economic relations of Russian regions are carried out within the limits of authorities granted by federal legislation, and in conformity with the state foreign policy under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

As for external relations of Tatarstan, in the mid-2010s, the Republic ceased to be heavily involved in the integration of the Türkiye world initiated by Türkiye – in the form of international cultural and humanitarian organizations, educational and Islamic projects. This demonstrated the coordinating role of federal institutions ensuring a unified Russian foreign policy.

The State provides its regions (administrative and territorial units within the country) with an opportunity to participate in international relations and become subjects of international law by giving them the respective rights and obligations. It is with the permission of the state that regions can take part in the activities of international organizations. At the same time, the constituent entities of the Russian Federation have sufficient powers to build relations with international organizations [13, p. 1226]. Coordination of interaction between subjects of the Russian

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Federation and international organizations is entrusted to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>4</sup>.

Federal Law of January 4, 1999 N 4-FZ "On the Coordinating Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Pursuing a Unified Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" is fundamental in this area; it allows the constituent entities of Russia to participate in the activities of international organizations within the framework of specially created bodies. An example of such a body is the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, where the Russian delegation has been working since 1995<sup>5</sup>. At the level of local authorities, representatives of Russian regions are part of United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA). There are also specially created international organizations both at the regional level (Assembly of European Regions) and at the level of local authorities (World organization United Cities and Local Governments). Also, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is a project aimed at local authorities.

International organizations contribute to resolving issues regarding political and legal regulation of the activities of regions in the international arena. For example, there is the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities<sup>6</sup>, which was launched in May 1980 in the format of a document open for signature. Russia signed it in 1999 and ratified it in 2002. Additional Protocols to the Convention determined the procedure for creating institutional mechanisms for cross-border cooperation and their shape, and also extended the provisions of the Convention to cooperation between administrative and territorial units that do not share a border. Thus, a legal framework for international interaction between territorial communities or authorities was established<sup>7</sup>.

In 2008, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States signed the Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation of Member States of the Commonwealth of

Independent States<sup>8</sup>, which regulates cross-border cooperation and defines its principles and main directions. Signed in 2016, the Convention on Interregional Cooperation of the CIS Members States emphasizes the importance of the contractual framework for interregional cooperation, sets out the obligations of the parties that contribute to its development, and determines the areas of interregional cooperation agreed upon by the parties.

In the context of cooperation between Tatarstan and Eurasian interstate structures, it is necessary to note that a number of events at the interstate level have been held in Kazan: the summit of the Heads of State of the CIS in 2005, the meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments of the CIS in 2017, and sessions of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in 2017 and 2021.

The integration process is progressing dynamically. In June 2021, at the plenary session of the Kazan International Congress of Eurasian Integration, Farit Mukhametshin, Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan, took the initiative to create a Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the EAEU. The participants of the plenary meeting supported this proposal, and it was included in the final resolution [14, p. 227].

In light of the additional restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, increasing attention has been paid to the possibility of international organizations supporting foreign economic activities by simplifying trade procedures. In this regard, it is essential to develop international standards for harmonization of cross-border trade, facilitate the widespread introduction of information technology and reduce administrative barriers [15, p. 565].

There are variety of forms and areas of participation of regions in the work of international organizations, which sets the stage for the further development of this area of cooperation, thus contributing to the evolution and international legal regulation of the entire complex of cross-border relations at the regional (subnational) level.

*To be continued.*

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## KANYBEK KUDAYAROV. ACTIVITIES OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

*Keywords: NPO; non-governmental organizations; Kyrgyz Republic; donors; think tanks; financing; program.*

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*Abstract. The article is devoted to a brief overview of NPOs in Kyrgyzstan. The term "non-profit organization" is defined, the forms of NPOs are indicated, the history of the development of this type of organization in Kyrgyzstan and the evolution of their legal status are*