

**Рубрика: Региональная политика**

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## **РОССИЙСКИЙ ФАКТОР В XXI ВЕКЕ В АЗИАТСКО-ТИХООКЕАНСКОМ РЕГИОНЕ. ИНТЕГРАЦИОННЫЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ**

**А.В. Трегуб**  
бакалавр, 1 курс

**С.Н. Котенко**  
ст. преп. кафедры межкультурных коммуникаций и переводоведения

*Владивостокский государственный университет экономики и сервиса  
Россия. Владивосток*

## **RUSSIAN FACTOR IN THE XXI CENTURY ASIA-PACIFIC REGION INTEGRATION PROCESSES**

**A.V. Tregub**  
bachelor, 1 year

**S.N. Kotenko**  
Art. Teacher of the Department of Intercultural Communication and Translation Studies

*Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service  
Russia. Vladivostok*

*Russia's integration into the Asia-Pacific region economic processes is always topical because of the unique geographical location and the policy of «turning to the East». The paper considers the main integration associations in the APR and the associated concerns about the Russian Far East economic cooperation.*

**Keywords and phrases:** *Asia-Pacific integration, economy of the Far East, attracted investments, integration associations, Vladivostok, forum.*

The term Asia-Pacific Region stands for a group of countries and territories located on the coast of the Pacific Ocean in Asia comprising the countries of the Pacific coast of America, Australia and Oceania, as well as the Asian coast of the Indian Ocean. The economy of the APR shows a rapid growth from the end of the XX century. The so-called «Asian tigers» (South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan) which are located there, managed to develop their economies to the level of post-industrial countries from the end of the XX century and became world leaders in various sectors of the economy. China shows a rapid growth rate and is the second largest economy in the world by nominal GDP and the first economy in terms of GDP at purchasing power parity. Japan is ranked the third country in the world economy. The Indian economy is aspiring to world leaders. Russia is also included in the TOP20 economies of the world, as well as a lot of «new industrial countries». A plenty of work is being done by countries to attract foreign investment for the development and diversification of the economy. The absolute leader of 2016 for the volume of attracted direct investment is China. TOP5 is as follows:

1. China – 347 bill. doll.
2. USA – 294 bill. doll.
3. Hong Kong – 76 bill. doll.
4. Russia – 70 bill. doll.
5. Canada – 67 bill. doll.[6]

Such results are achieved through the regional and global economic integration. International economic integration in a general sense is a process of economic interaction of countries leading to rapprochement of economic mechanisms, taking the form of interstate agreements and jointly adjustable intergovernmental bodies. Signs of integration processes are the free trade zone, the customs union, the common market, the economic union. There is a tendency for most countries in the region towards integration due to various reasons, such as the size of the territory, the level of economic development, the number of natural and human resources.

In Asia Pacific there are no regional ideas that would help to unite such a heterogeneous region in economic, social, cultural and political respect, as it was with the European Union in Europe or the Organization of American States in the Western Hemisphere. There are many specialized and widely diversified associations.

Perhaps the first one can be called APEC. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration. The absence of pressure, coercion, rigid planning, the established practice of cooperation on the basis of consensus, non-interference in the domestic affairs of the member states of the forum, mutual respect for the sovereignty of the participants made the forum quite popular in the region and the world. The same factors make APEC a forum of low practical efficiency. Russia joined APEC on November 15, 1998. Russia's activities in APEC are prioritized:

1. Ensuring security in the region (at the 2004 Summit in Santiago, the final declaration noted the need to combat terrorism);
2. Cooperation in the field of emergency response;
3. Participation in the Dialogue on Non-Ferrous Metals;
4. Formation of a new scheme for energy cooperation.

Russia sees integration in APEC as the main tool for diversifying the economy of Siberia and the Far East. The Asian financial crisis showed the inability of the forum to solve global economic problems. Also a single economic space has not been formed yet, the course of which was fixed in the 1994 in the Bogor Declaration.

However in the region today there are real economic unions, such as the ASEAN. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN. Russia's active cooperation with ASEAN began in 2001, when there was created Russia – ASEAN joint planning and administrative committee. On December 10, 2005, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Russia and the ASEAN countries signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Economy and Development. One of the main concerns of Russia in relation to the countries of the association is the formation of a regional system of collective security, the fight against terrorism. Russia is also interested in supplying defense products, since long-term programs for the modernization of the armed forces have been developed in the participating countries. The ASEAN countries see Russia as a valuable partner with extensive experience in dealing with the emergency consequences and natural disasters. However, many projects have remained on paper, since ASEAN's main trade partners are China, the Republic of Korea and Japan, which give a vector of development in the partnership.

There are also various associations in the region, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and projects of associations for which Russia's attitude has not been fully formed.

As it has been mentioned above, the main reason for the Russian Federation integration in economic processes in the Asia Pacific region is to diversify the economy of Siberia and the Far East, as well as improving the living conditions of the people residing in the area.

The hosting of the APEC-2012 summit in Vladivostok gave a chance to show Eastern Russia and its opportunities, as well as guarantees that the state can provide potential investors to the whole world. The Russian Far East has a unique geographical position, among the richest countries in the region, but does not have a significant benefit from this. For today, Russia can't supply competitive products to the APR markets, with the exception of raw materials (oil, gas, mining or timber industries). It is necessary to diversify the region's economy, which can't be done without foreign investment; for this, we need to create favorable conditions for potential investors, because there are certain risks and apprehensions to the investments.

*Table 1*

**The main fears of investors when investing in the economy of Russia**

What are potential investors afraid of?	
Political risks	38
Geopolitical tension	35
Law supremacy	27
Economic problems	23
Sanctions	19
The price of oil	15
Corruption	15
Other	12
Corporate Governance	8
Rights of minority shareholders	8
Currency risks	8
Negative Opinion on Russia	8

It should be noted that in Primorye earlier there was an attempt to create a favorable climate for the investor – the first is Free Economic Zone «Nakhodka». From 1991 to 1997 more than 460 million rubles were allocated and about 220 million rubles of foreign investments were raised, and projects of technology parks were developed. But the preferential tax regime was never introduced and the development stopped and after the default of 1998, the state stopped funding and supporting these projects. The Tumen River Area Development Program developed by the United Nations Development Program in 1990, can also be cited as an example. This project included the territories of the Russian Federation, the DPRK, the PRC, the Republic of Korea and Mongolia. Expectation from this project also did not materialize, both the development and investments in infrastructure were implemented only by the Chinese part. Duty-free trade zone «Pogranichny-Suyfenhe» shared the same destiny.

After the hosting of the APEC-2012 summit in Vladivostok the Russian government became aware of need to come up with a practical solution to the problem. The state claimed that it has the opportunity to create a comfortable business regime, with the willingness of foreign business sponsors to invest in the Russian economy. The east economic forum was established to promote accelerated development of the economy of the Far East and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, by the decree of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin on 19 may 2015. The campus of the Far Eastern Federal University on the Russky Island, Vladivostok, was chosen as the venue. The WEF has already begun to show its effectiveness. According to the Rossijskaja Gazeta, if the first forum 2015 was attended by official delegations from 32 countries, agreements that were worth about 1.3 trillion rubles have been signed. The second forum held in 2016 was attended by official delegations from 56 countries, and the total amount of agreements is more than 1.8 trillion rubles. And also the talks were held at the highest level of heads of Russia and South Korea.[5] Thus regarding these figures, we see that Russia provides the territories of rapid socio-economic development and the free port of Vladivostok with preferential economic regimes. The country simplifies the registration process and becomes a real tool for more active inclusion in the integration processes in the Asia – Pacific region, which in future can become not only an economic forum, but also a political Union.

## CONCLUSION

It is obvious that Russia has formed its own way into integration processes in the Asia Pacific region. Based on the numbers of agreements signed in the course of the Eastern economic forums, there is an increasing attention to the global economic community to this event and APEC presidency in 2012. Today we see the trend to growing investment interest in the Russian Far East especially from East Asian countries. And the main challenge for the government is to improve our investment attractiveness to prospective business partners.

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