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 **BRIDGING THE DIVIDING LINES IN GREATER EURASIA**

**ABSTRACT**

Instead of convergence towards a Greater Europe « from Lisbon to Vladivostok », we have recently noted increased competition and divergence between European and Eurasian forms of regional integration.

The Clingendael report proposes the option of tentative compatibility between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, working towards greater approximation of technical norms and standards and preventing a further widening of the gap between two « competing unions ». Some form of (informal) relationship between the EU and the EEU should therefore be established.

For the « shared neighbourhood » this would imply an option of “no choosing, no losing”, giving countries the opportunity to have good relations with both sides. As long as the option of a wider Free Trade Union between the EU and the EEU is not a realistic perspective, because of the present geopolitical conflicts, the EU could diversify the relations with individual Eastern Partnership countries, taking their other obligations towards third parties/other unions into account and assisting all sides to modernise their economies to increase competitiveness in a wider Eurasian context. This also presupposes that a « Fortress Eurasia » is not a feasible long-term option and that proximity and complementarity stimulates the EU to search for new opportunities in Greater Eurasia.

The recent Chinese plans for a New Silk Road, connecting China with broader Eurasian and European markets, could offer additional opportunities for a broader Eurasian integration and should be taken seriously not only by the EEU, but also by the EU.

Greater connectivity and convergence of economic systems could lead to more prosperity and peaceful development in a Greater Eurasia from « Lisbon to Shanghai ».

**KEYWORDS: EU, Russia, EEU, Eurasian integration, Eastern Partnership, China**