

# **Comparative Analysis of the EAEU and EU Humanitarian Policies: tools, challenges, opportunities**

**Anna Bakirova,**

School of Governance and Politics, MGIMO University

## **Abstract**

Nowadays humanitarian policy is often viewed as a lucrative political asset, which in the pandemic-reality may become an efficient tool for determining the regional order during global humanitarian crises. However, it also may also serve as a trigger for the resumption of integration processes. First and foremost, the efficiency and quality of integration is determined by «the soft component» of humanitarian policy: namely, by the promotion of social, cultural and educational humanitarian assistance on a long-term basis.

*Key words:* humanitarian policy, integration, non-governmental organizations, «hard» assistance, «soft» assistance.

## **Main body**

Humanitarian policy in the modern world and in the new pandemic-reality is becoming not only an element of humanity`s emancipation, but also a serious political asset. As the lessons of the pandemic have shown, states with the elaborated humanitarian asset will be, if not contenders for the status of a great power, but at least ad hoc able to determine the regional order during global humanitarian crises, the frequency of which in the future, unfortunately, is hardly to doubt. [1] This is due to the fact that during the awaited splashes of pandemics and aggravated implications of global climate change, the main criterion of political strength will be not nuclear weapon or military force, but the ability to rapidly and efficiently provide humanitarian assistance and ensure societal security.

This political tool generates also other advantages for the powers-to-be: it establishes outstanding opportunities for deepening and expanding integration processes, helping to avoid the "feudal-vassal" model, when accession countries usually turn into economic puppets of the integration project leaders and get trapped into an infinite dependence between the center and the periphery in this integration model.

The purpose of this article is to study this distinctively new opportunity for integration growth, which may help avoid a situation when «hard» humanitarian assistance becomes a simple disservice, letting the members of the union or accession countries become eternal supplicants and recipients of aid while giving them no

impetus for economic growth and competitiveness. [2] The main thesis of the article is as follows: The opportunities for integration growth lie namely within cultural and institutional humanitarian assistance.

At the same time, when analyzing humanitarian policy, it is important to understand what aspects of it we must take into account. In the Russian and Western political science literature, the concept of humanitarian policy is given different emphasis. In Western discourse, a greater emphasis is placed, first of all, on the elements of «hard» security of the humanitarian dimension: the provision of humanitarian assistance in conflict regions, enforcement of human rights, insurance of human security and delivering aid to those in need. Other aspects of humanitarian policy, be it social, cultural, educational one, do not refer to the term «humanitarian policy», in the western political science they are neutrally named as social cooperation or cultural diplomacy. The Russian concept of humanitarian policy has a broader meaning, and among other things, pays quiet more attention to cooperation in the cultural and educational dimensions, as well as the civil dialogue. [3] For description convenience, it would be logical to define the Western and Russian interpretations of the term «humanitarian policy» as «hard» and «soft» assistance correspondingly. This conditional division, however, does not neglect the humanitarian interaction of Western countries in the field of culture and education. The presented comparison of policies pursued both by the EU and the EAEU will be guided, first of all, by a broader interpretation of this concept, including cultural, educational and societal dimensions.

How the EU and the EAEU build up their humanitarian policies. The humanitarian policy in the hands of both integration groups is a useful tool for strengthening integration processes, which only underpins its political significance. The sad fact is that neither the EU nor the EAEU implement a single humanitarian policy in its broad interpretation within their blocs. Although the EU, for example, commits to the Good Humanitarian Donorship, most of its countries are members of OECD's Development Assistance Committee, and the European Commission has a special department responsible for civil protection and humanitarian aid operations, there is still a strict division within the EU between humanitarian aid (hard assistance) and cultural diplomacy (soft assistance) as a part of humanitarian cooperation. The last is implemented first and foremost by a wide range of NGOs, funds and regional organizations. [4] The EAEU humanitarian policy is also allocated to different institutions which do not make up a single coherent political instrument. It is necessary to explain why we are still comparing the policies of the two integration unions. We do study them because the leading countries of both blocs, be that Russia, Germany, France, Norway, are the world's largest humanitarian donors, which

at the same time stay at the head of a common policy within each integration union, thus possessing a great opportunity to make good use of humanitarian assistance for attracting new countries to their side. [5] Therefore, the opportunities proposed by humanitarian policy of one or another leader of the bloc can be roughly equated with the opportunities of the entire union.

For example, Germany is represented by many non-profit foundations in the post-soviet space that carry out humanitarian activities to support their civil societies.[6] The Funds of Böll, Konrad Adenauer, Rosa Luxemburg, Naumann and Seidel are aimed inter alia at supporting those parties in these countries that advocate for the western development model and thus can prepare soft ground for their possible entry into the EU. These funds are registered in Germany's legislation as organizations «close to the parties».[7] It is generally assumed that they fall under the definition of non-profit organizations and act on their own behalf. However, their foreign policy strategy coincides with that of the government in most cases. This is an example of how humanitarian policy is divided in the EU: the «hard» assistance is carried out by the EU institutions, while the «soft» part falls on the shoulders of NGOs. This confirms the above-mentioned thesis: the humanitarian policy of the union's leading country, in this case Germany, can work for the entire integration bloc.

Despite the fact that the EAEU also lacks a unified implementation of humanitarian policy, its soft part is represented either by the state institutions or by a very limited number of NGOs. In this regard, the solution to this problem is seen as follows: either increasing the number and funding of the pro-Eurasian NGOs according to the EU model, or combining the hard and soft components of humanitarian cooperation and incorporating them into the EAEU, thus creating its own model of improving humanitarian efficiency.

How can a humanitarian policy in its broad sense guarantee the integration union a long-term presence in the target countries and win the «minds and hearts» of their citizens? This is done through institutions contributing to the international dialogue. DAAD, Ebert Foundation or, for example, Adenauer foundation announce grants for education in Germany (it may be whichever country instead of Germany), finance certain types of events, conferences, thematic trips of state employees to the European countries, launch campaigns in support of certain ideas or events that young people can particularly be interested in. [8] Over some time, young people grow up, become the main engines of society, and some of them take over serious places in making managerial decisions. With the change of a generation of managers, the country's foreign policy strategy is also starting to change. Therefore, the seed planted 15-20 years ago gradually begins to bear its fruits.

The implementation of humanitarian policy for political purposes is effective on a long-term basis only with the application of its "soft component". Limitless supply of energy resources at reduced prices or technological assistance and expert support in the building of large infrastructure projects create opportunities for the country to establish its presence in a particular region, but this very presence will be as long-term as the assistance provided. With the end of economic patronage, the target country will in the long run start to look for the new patrons, without developing inner incentives for economic competitiveness.

In order to create a single integration space, it is necessary not to confine oneself to humanitarian assistance for evening out the countries' levels of economic development, but to create working institutions within the countries which will reproduce a single identity, contributing to the formation of a single political, economic, and educational culture. [9]

## **Conclusion**

When accelerating and enhancing integration processes, the main attention should be paid, first of all, to the humanitarian policy, which for description convenience was conditionally divided into its hard and soft components, equated respectively to the Western and Russian interpretations of this term. The EU and the EAEU do not implement a common humanitarian policy in its broad sense. In the EU the «hard part» of the humanitarian policy is implemented mainly by the union's official structures, and the «soft part» is mostly assigned to the NGOs. As for the EAEU, both the hard and soft parts are mainly subordinated to the state structures. Given the effectiveness of the humanitarian policy as a tool for deepening and expanding integration processes, the primary role should be given to the institutions engaged in cultural and social cooperation. There are two ways the EAEU can develop its humanitarian strategy: copying the EU model and thus keeping the hard and soft assistance separated from one another, or building its own model, which will be based on the incorporation of both parts of humanitarian policy into the union's inner structure.

## **References**

- [1] *Dilshad Jaff* (2020) Financing and resolving the ever-increasing humanitarian crises, *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, DOI: 10.1080/13623699.2020.1761057
- [2] *Yannis Dafermos & Christos Papatheodorou* (2013) What drives inequality and poverty in the EU? Exploring the impact of macroeconomic and institutional factors, *International Review of Applied Economics*, 27:1, 1-22, DOI: 10.1080/02692171.2012.696590

- [3] Zonova T. Humanitarian Cooperation between Russia and the European Union as a Soft Power Instrument. RIAC. June 4, 2013. URL: <http://russian-council.ru/en/ analytics-and-comments/ analytics/humanitarian-cooperation-between-russia-and-the-european-uni/>.
- [4] Bogatyreva Olga Nikolaevna, Kozykina Natalia Vladimirovna, Tabarintseva-Romanova Ksenia Mikhailovna Humanitarian policy of the European Union in the XXI century // Scientific dialogue. 2018. # 4. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/gumanitarnaya-diplomatiya-evropeyskogo-soyuza-v-xxi-veke> (accessed: 17.05.2020).
- [5] Largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide in 2019 (in million U.S. dollars), by country. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/275597/largers-donor-countries-of-aid-worldwide/>
- [6] Pogorelskaya Svetlana Vadimovna "Soft" power of Germany: political funds // APE. 2014. №3. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/myagkaya-sila-germanii-politicheskie-fondy>
- [7] Sebastian Bartsch: Politische Stiftungen: Grenzgänger zwischen Gesellschafts- und Staatenwelt. München 1998.
- [8] Salikhodzhaeva Saidjon Envirogen. On cooperation of Tajikistan with the European Union // Scientific notes of Khujand state University. academician B. Gafurov. Humanities. 2014. # 2 (39). URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/o-so-trudnichestve-tadzhikistana-s-evropeyskim-soyuzom>
- [9] Ileana Nicoleta Sălcudean. Outrunning the Past: European Influences in Building Cultural Policies in Romania and the Role of the Romanian Cultural Institute, The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society, 46:5, 255-273, DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2016.1225616