



## **REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA– A PATH TO GEOPOLITICAL AUTONOMY**

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### **Abstract**

The multipolar characteristic of the current system of international relations guarantees an upheaval of the classic spheres of influence which unavoidably will cause power voids at the intersections of interests between major and regional powers. Through an analysis of the various paths towards regional cooperation in Central Asia, this paper determines the possibility of the region to escape the narrow orbit of said powers and enjoy a certain degree of geopolitical autonomy. In order to succeed at fostering regional cooperation, the countries of Central Asia need to act on many levels – economic, politic, social and cultural ones, as to surpass the nationalistic fervor that rose recently as a counter-reaction to the optimistic and triumphalist globalization theory which dominated the first decades after the end of the Cold War. While it is obvious that we are not yet at the end of history, a return to local factionalism will only slow down any form of regional development. The conclusion is that while a narrow path towards Central Asia becoming a significant factor in the geopolitical game exists, the challenges stemming from internal politics, ethnic divisions and external powers meddling in the area will be too difficult to overcome in the near future.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Geopolitics, Regional Integration.

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