# Competition and Cooperation Between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's Integration Policy in Central Asia

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are two major infrastructure projects that aim to connect Asia and Europe. The BRI, launched in 2013, is a massive undertaking that involves building roads, railways, ports, and pipelines across 65 countries. The EAEU, established in 2015, is a free trade zone that includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan.



### The Making of Eurasia: Competition and Cooperation Between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia

by Moritz Pieper

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The BRI and the EAEU overlap in several key areas, including Central Asia. China has invested heavily in Central Asia in recent years, and the BRI is seen as a way to further boost economic ties between China and the region. Russia also has close ties to Central Asia, and the EAEU is seen as a way to increase Russian influence in the region. There is both competition and cooperation between the BRI and the EAEU in Central Asia. China and Russia are competing for influence in the region, and they are also cooperating on certain projects. For example, China and Russia are working together to build a railway line that will connect China to Europe through Central Asia.

The competition between the BRI and the EAEU is likely to continue in the years to come. However, there is also potential for cooperation between the two projects. If China and Russia can find a way to work together, the BRI and the EAEU could help to create a more prosperous and stable Central Asia.

#### Competition

There are a number of areas where the BRI and the EAEU compete for influence in Central Asia. These include:

- 1. **Economic investment:** China has invested heavily in Central Asia in recent years, and the BRI is seen as a way to further boost economic ties between China and the region. Russia also has significant economic interests in Central Asia, and the EAEU is seen as a way to increase Russian influence in the region.
- 2. Infrastructure development: The BRI involves building a vast network of roads, railways, ports, and pipelines across Asia and Europe. The EAEU also includes plans for infrastructure development, such as a high-speed rail line between Moscow and Beijing.
- 3. **Political influence:** China and Russia are both vying for greater political influence in Central Asia. The BRI is seen as a way to increase

China's soft power in the region, while the EAEU is seen as a way to increase Russian hard power.

The competition between the BRI and the EAEU is likely to continue in the years to come. However, there is also potential for cooperation between the two projects. If China and Russia can find a way to work together, the BRI and the EAEU could help to create a more prosperous and stable Central Asia.

#### Cooperation

Despite the competition, there is also potential for cooperation between the BRI and the EAEU. These include:

- 1. **Economic cooperation:** The BRI and the EAEU could help to boost economic cooperation between China and Russia. The two projects could be used to create new trade routes and investment opportunities.
- 2. **Infrastructure development:** The BRI and the EAEU could cooperate on infrastructure development projects. For example, China and Russia are working together to build a railway line that will connect China to Europe through Central Asia.
- 3. **Political cooperation:** The BRI and the EAEU could help to promote political cooperation between China and Russia. The two projects could be used to create a more stable and secure Central Asia.

If China and Russia can find a way to cooperate on the BRI and the EAEU, it could have a major impact on the development of Central Asia. The two

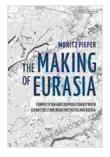
projects could help to create a more prosperous, stable, and connected region.

The BRI and the EAEU are two major infrastructure projects that have the potential to shape the future of Central Asia. There is both competition and cooperation between the two projects, and the outcome of this competition will have a major impact on the region. However, if China and Russia can find a way to work together, the BRI and the EAEU could help to create a more prosperous, stable, and connected Central Asia.





Source MERICS, Marcalite Institute for China Studies, 2018



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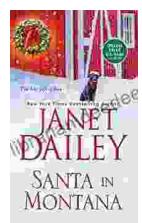
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