

Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI Century

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to speak to you on the topic of the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI Century.

I am sure many of you have heard something about the initiative, but are keen to find out more. I hope you will leave this briefing with more knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Before I turn to a substantive discussion, I would like to provide some background information.

The initiative emerged at the First International Conference on Eurasian Security, held in Minsk in October 2023. Right at the conference the Russian Federation voiced its strong support to the idea. Ever since, Belarus and Russia have worked closely together on advancing the topic.

The expressions of support to the Charter were made in public statements by the Presidents of Belarus and Russia. Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my greatest appreciation to the Russian Federation for its principled position on this issue.

Rather recently, in late October 2024, Minsk hosted the Second International Conference on Eurasian Security, which featured a separate panel discussion on the Eurasian Charter. The presentations and the following interactive dialogue revealed an ever-growing interest in and support to the initiative.

As a result, right after the Second Conference, Belarus and Russia drafted their, I would say, “preliminary views” on the Charter in a document titled “Common Vision of Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI century”. I will say a few words about this document a bit later.

Now, I am going to address two substantive points – the rationale for the Charter and the process we foresee in order to make the idea a reality.

First, the rationale. I will focus on the three key words from the initiative’s title, namely – Eurasia, diversity, and multipolarity, which, I hope, will help me properly present to you our reasoning behind the initiative.

What is Eurasia? It is the largest continent of the world in terms of size, population and resources. Likewise, it is the most dynamic continent in terms of economic development and future growth prospects.

What is more, due to its size and importance, Eurasia exerts profound impact on all other parts of the world. Indeed, what is happening in Eurasia resonates throughout the world.

Non-Eurasians, on their part, want to get involved in Eurasian affairs in order to have a say on its developments and to benefit from involvement and cooperation.

In short, Eurasia is the “heart” of the world that is pumping blood to all other parts of the world’s “body”.

The discourse about Eurasia’s importance came into prominence exactly at a time when all over the world we are talking about the decline of the US-led liberal order with its concomitant globalization and the ascendance of regions.

Indeed, political scientists like the late Henry Kissinger, argue that regions are likely to be the building blocks of a new world order. But first, regions need to establish order within themselves.

And here comes the idea of the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI Century.

Its basic purpose, as we see it, is to help Eurasian states establish order within their own region – Eurasia, and to help relate their Eurasian order to orders in other regions, which is what we often call “integration and integrations”.

Indeed, Eurasia lacks a wholistic and coherent strategy of its long-term evolution in all its dimensions – security, economics, science and technology, culture, civilizational and some other aspects.

We believe that the Eurasia Charter should help us successfully address these shortcomings, especially in realizing the principle of indivisible security.

Let me say just a few words about why the Charter is proposed to be linked to the notions of “diversity” and “multipolarity”.

Simply put, because the two notions are the defining features of our time.

As a matter of fact, diversity has always been present in the world, but today its importance becomes increasingly evident with the rapid spread of ICTs, when people everywhere become aware of their civilizational differences.

As a result, they demand respect for diversity, which has been threatened over the past few decades by policies of diktat, violence, sanctions, color revolutions and similar attempts by Western countries to impose some alien “pseudo-universal” forms of governance on indigenous institutions.

As for multipolarity, there is ever growing consensus around the world that multipolarity is already an objective reality. Indeed, we are past the Unipolar Moment. There are currently multiple power centers – or poles – that define our international life. What is more, we are absolutely convinced of the need to strengthen multipolarity insofar as it is essential to effective multilateralism, whereby all countries engage in win-win cooperation.

With all the above in mind, we see a future Charter as a fundamental strategic document for our continent, whose impact, however, will be felt far beyond Eurasia.

Structurally, it may be based on several sections. In particular, a representative of Belarus speaking at the recent Second Minsk International conference on Eurasian security presented a possible four-tier structure, containing a vision, objectives, principles and actions.

Moreover, some ideas for the Charter's content have been laid out by Belarus and Russia in their "Common Vision of Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the XXI century". In this 21-paragraph long document the two countries outlined, among other points, how they view diversity and multipolarity, what they think about Eurasia's importance and its impact worldwide, and what they commit themselves to do to realize their vision.

Let me now dwell a bit on the process.

First, what kind of a process should it be?

Belarus is of the strong view that the Charter should be a collective effort, that it should be collectively negotiated. Indeed, every state in Eurasia must feel ownership of this document and see its position and preferences reflected in the Charter. If that is the case, every state would then feel committed to uphold the Charter's provisions.

Second, who should participate?

Ideally, all Eurasian states should take part in this effort, because all of them must have a stake in a secure, successful and prosperous continent. A pan-Eurasian inclusive process is also vital to demonstrate that the Charter does not aim against any country or a group of countries in Eurasia.

Third, where to negotiate the Charter?

It is still an open question – whether it should be some Eurasian capital or a regional organization or some other venue. Since the idea was first floated in 2023, Belarus and Russia have discussed all these options. These options all have their own pros and cons. What is more, the issue of a possible platform for the negotiations was discussed during the panel discussion at the Second International Conference on Eurasian Security. With this in mind, we would very much welcome your suggestions as for a possible venue.

Fourth, should there be a timetable for the process?

We do not see such a need. We see it rather as a step-by-step process, in which an increasing number of Eurasian countries come to embrace the idea of the Charter and the logic behind this initiative. What is more, we would like to encourage all of you to voice your own suggestions as to the process, its venue, the document's structure and other elements.

We also see an important role for regional Eurasian organizations, like the SCO, the Commonwealth of Independent States, ASEAN, and others. Some of them have already become involved in relevant discussions. In

particular, Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, today discuss the topic of the Eurasian Charter. Generally, all these regional organizations should contribute to shaping and steering the process.

I would like to say a few words about the relationship between the Eurasian Charter and the United Nations Charter.

The former is certainly not envisaged as a tool against the latter. The UN Charter is a “political Bible” for all UN Member States. It goes without saying that Eurasian states, like all UN Member States, should always adhere to the UN Charter, but they must also think how best to advance their own interests in an era of a crumbling liberal international order, faltering economic globalization, and rising regionalism. We think that they can best realize the above objective by the means of the Eurasian Charter.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Charter presents a unique chance for Eurasian states to project their own path forward tailored to the best interests of their nations.

Eurasian countries can make a change for the better. If they succeed in this effort, they will surely improve the prospects for peace, security and sustainable development on their own continent and given Eurasia’s global impact, in the world as a whole.

Thank you.