

“中国与世界”系列报告之四



# 新冠肺炎疫情下 中国与欧亚地区守望相助

Mutual Assistance Between China and Eurasia  
in the Face of COVID-19

Together We Fight  
against the Virus

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## **Abstract**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Chinese government has paid close attention to epidemic prevention and control. The country has witnessed full-scale national mobilization and a high level of unity. China managed to implement comprehensive, strict and thorough measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, thus effectively having the epidemic under control in a relatively short period of time. Eurasian countries have given credits to China for its infection prevention and control. As President of Kazakhstan Tokayev indicated, the Chinese people have made impressive progress in controlling and preventing the spread of COVID-19, bringing hope and confidence to the rest of the world. In response to the novel coronavirus outbreak, the high-quality health care system of China and the dedication of Chinese medical workers have gradually been recognized globally. China has again demonstrated its efficient governing capabilities to address complex challenges.

In the face of the global spread of COVID-19, China has been working closely with the countries in the Eurasian region. Mutually supporting each other, China and these countries have made various achievements in countering the epidemic.

When COVID-19 first broke out in China, the Eurasian countries provided strong support for China to respond to the epidemic. The federal and local governments of Russia expressed their full support for China’s anti-epidemic efforts, with President Putin reiterating on multiple occasions that Russia will stand with China in response to the outbreak. President Lukashenko of Belarus also indicated that his country is always China’s reliable and loyal friend, and will provide full assistance for the Chinese people in countering COVID-19. Similarly, other leaders from the Eurasian

countries have expressed their solicitude and support. In addition to words, these countries were the first to provide China with material assistance. The Russian government also dispatched a medical team, working with Chinese professionals to develop drugs and vaccines for the novel coronavirus. The support in aid and knowledge from the Eurasian countries has assisted China in controlling the spread of COVID-19.

As the spread of COVID-19 became largely under control in China, the Chinese government immediately shared its experience in epidemic prevention and control, and offered material and technical aid for the countries in need. This response has been given great credits by the World Health Organization and the Eurasian countries. Experts from various countries have claimed that the Chinese experience is helpful for the countries to confidently overcome COVID-19. In addition, China has provided almost all Eurasian countries with aid, including Tajikistan where no case has been reported by the time of writing. That China is now helping the Eurasian countries in return for combating COVID-19 not only contributes to containing the spread of the virus, but also indicates that China is willing to shoulder its responsibility and is always open to cooperation.

In addition to the government level, non-governmental cooperation and mutual support between China and Eurasian countries have also stood out, as demonstrated especially on media platforms. Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and the China Media Group have worked together to produce a variety of news reports and commentaries on China's epidemic prevention and control efforts. In these articles, Russian experts countered critiques from some Western media outlets against the Chinese government's response to the outbreak. They argued that the attacks, stemming from selfish political bias, would be detrimental to global public interests, and the "political virus" would be more damaging than the novel coronavirus. Besides on the traditional

media, people of Eurasian countries have also expressed their kindness via social media and short videos. This again indicates that the virus has no nationality, and neither does love.

The cooperation between China and Eurasian countries in countering COVID-19 has made outstanding progress. As the Eurasian countries have implemented proactive and effective measures in response to the virus, the impacts have been relatively controllable. The course of cooperation between China and Eurasian countries demonstrates fully that China has been transparent and open in sharing its knowledge about the epidemic, and that the outbreak can be put under control as long as a country attaches importance to efficient response.

The spreading epidemic of COVID-19 clearly indicates that the disease has no nationality. Countries are all so interconnected that none of them could sit idly by in a crisis. Therefore, countries must come together to fight against the epidemic, facing the challenge as one. The global spread of COVID-19 has powerfully demonstrated that a community with a shared future for mankind is not a concept built on sand. The effectiveness of multilateral cooperation in combating the coronavirus has also contextualized the substantial need of constructing such a community into reality.

## **Introduction**

Soon after the outbreak of COVID-19, Eurasian countries assisted China with medical supplies in the first place. People from different sectors in these countries spoke highly of and supported the prevention and control measures taken by the Chinese government, and believed that the Chinese government and people would surely win the battle against the epidemic.

With the spread of the epidemic, Eurasian countries have been upgrading their precautionary measures, including suspending international flights, restricting the entry of foreigners, and stopping the issuance of work permits, so as to resolutely prevent further spread of the coronavirus. After taking control of the epidemic, China has in return actively shared its relevant experience, and provided materials and technical support for the Eurasian countries that faced the epidemic challenge. In the face of this major disaster, China and the Eurasian countries have stood shoulder to shoulder, which fully demonstrates the sincerity of mutual ties.

The outbreak of the epidemic has wreaked havoc on the global economy, and Eurasia is no exception. Against this background, cooperation between China and Eurasian countries is facing unprecedented difficulties and challenges. But given China's irreplaceable position in the external cooperation of Eurasian countries, the epidemic will not shake the solid foundation of bilateral economic ties. We have every reason to believe that with the rapid recovery of China's economy, the economic cooperation between China and Eurasian countries will soon turn crisis into opportunity, open up new horizons, and move forward in a healthier and more secure direction.

“Join hands to fight against the epidemic and tide over the difficult times.” In the battle against COVID-19, China and Eurasian countries have

worked together, coordinated closely and cooperated intimately, fully demonstrating the spirit of a community with a shared future for mankind. The friendship growing out of mutual assistance is the most valuable asset for both sides, whether in the fight against the epidemic or in future cooperation.

## I. Eurasian Countries' Responses to COVID-19 Epidemic

After the outbreak of the epidemic, countries in Eurasia have taken preventive measures and achieved certain results. Since March this year, the global epidemic situation has taken on new characteristics. While being effectively controlled in China, the epidemic spreads rapidly in other regions. Eurasian countries have managed to defend their “eastern front” with strict precautions, but have lost on their “western front.” With the rapid increase of imported cases from Europe and Iran, the regional epidemic risk is sharply rising. As of 10 p.m. on April 6, the cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the 12 Eurasian countries had reached 12,112, with 751 having recovered and 143 dead. Governments of regional countries have rapidly stepped up prevention and control measures, shifting from merely preventing imported cases to a new phase of both preventing imported cases and preventing internal proliferation.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1 COVID-19 outbreak in Eurasia (as of 10 p.m. on April 6)**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Total Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>Total Recovered</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b>
Russia	6343	406	47
Belarus	700	28	13
Ukraine	1308	53	37
Moldova	864	37	17
Georgia	188	36	2
Armenia	833	62	8
Azerbaijan	641	44	7
Kazakhstan	629	45	6
Uzbekistan	390	30	2
Kyrgyzstan	216	10	4
Tajikistan	0	0	0
Turkmenistan	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12112</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>143</b>

Source: World COVID-19 Epidemic Map, <https://coronavirus-control.ru/>

<sup>1</sup> “World COVID-19 Epidemic Map (as of 10 p.m., April 6),” <https://coronavirus-control.ru/>.

### **1.1 Epidemic Situation and Measures Taken in Russia**

On January 31, the first two COVID-19 cases were reported in Russia, both of whom were Chinese citizens in Russia. The two patients were isolated and treated promptly and were cured and discharged from the hospital in mid-February without infecting others. On February 5, Russia evacuated 144 Russian citizens from Wuhan by military aircraft, and none were found infected after the quarantine period. On February 29, the first local confirmed case was reported in the city of Moscow, who had traveled to Italy. As of 10 p.m. on April 6, there had been a total of 6,343 confirmed cases in Russia, with 406 having recovered.

At the early stage of the epidemic outbreak, Russia took strict precautions against imported cases. At the end of January, the Russian government set up a COVID-19 prevention and control command led by Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, and members of the command include the heads of the Emergency Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Health Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and airline companies. On February 3, the government held a special meeting in response to the epidemic and issued a national plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19, proposing 22 measures, including immigration registration and home quarantine. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said COVID-19 had been added to the list of particularly dangerous diseases, which would allow deportation of infected foreign citizens.

In order to cut off importation of the epidemic, Russia has taken measures such as closing some ports on its border with China, canceling most of the flights and trains between the two countries, suspending visa-free travel for Chinese tourist groups, extending the holidays for Chinese students, and restricting entry of foreigners from China. On February 18, the Russian government once again upgraded the entry restrictions: starting from

February 20, it temporarily suspended the entry of Chinese citizens with work, study or tourist visas and also restricted Russian citizens' visits to China. Russia stressed that the above measures are for the prevention of the epidemic, and will be adjusted or canceled once the situation improved.

As the epidemic spread globally, Russia continued to step up its countermeasures. On February 28, Russia stopped issuing visas to Iranian citizens; restricting flights to and from South Korea and Iran. People from seven countries, including China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, France, Germany, and Spain, will be quarantined at home for 14 days after entering Russia, and those who violate quarantine rules will be severely punished. On the same day, the Moscow city government announced that 88 foreign citizens would be expelled for violating quarantine rules. As the epidemic became severe in Europe, the Russian government announced on March 16 to temporarily restrict the entry of all foreigners from March 18 to May 1, except under specific circumstances.

At the same time, the Russian government has also strengthened domestic control. One measure is to avoid the gathering of crowds. On March 5, the government announced the cancellation of the St. Petersburg International Economic



The Moscow makeshift hospitals under construction.

Forum and placed the city of Moscow on alert, prohibiting large events and gatherings. The second measure is to advance scientific research and guarantee the stock of epidemic prevention materials. On the one hand, Russia has accelerated the production of COVID-19 test kits and the

development of a vaccine. On the other hand, it has prohibited the export of masks and medical protective suits, while strictly controlling the price of masks. Third, in terms of accepting patients, a COVID-19 containment center was set up in the outer suburbs of Moscow, following the example of China’s makeshift hospitals.

### **1.2 Epidemic Situation and Measures Taken in Central Asian Countries**

After the outbreak of COVID-19, all Central Asian countries took timely measures and the epidemic situation was once relatively optimistic. Still, on March 13, a confirmed case was found in Kazakhstan.

**Kazakhstan.** On March 13, the first confirmed case was found imported from Germany. By April 6, there had been 629 confirmed cases. Since February, the Kazakhstan government took its citizens back from China in batches. After the quarantine period, none of them was infected.

Before the emergence of confirmed cases, the Kazakhstan government focused mainly on preventing imported cases. On January 28, Kazakhstan temporarily closed the China-Kazakhstan Horgos International Border Cooperation Center. On January 29, the Kazakhstan government approved a resolution to successively suspend the passenger buses, trains, and flights between China and Kazakhstan; stop the issuance of visas to Chinese citizens; and suspend large international sports events. With the spread of the epidemic outside China, Kazakhstan has strengthened epidemic prevention and control measures for all border ports and divided the countries with epidemic into three risk categories to implement differentiated policies. The classification and corresponding measures would be updated in real time. China, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Iran are listed under Category 1A. From March 8, the entry of citizens from these countries was suspended. From March 10, work permits were not issued for all countries with epidemic. On March 14, due to successful control of the epidemic in China and South Korea,

Kazakhstan moved the two countries from Category 1A to 1B.

On March 15, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a presidential decree, announcing a state of emergency nationwide from the next day to April 15. Except for necessities stores, public places that usually attract crowds are closed; domestic citizens are prohibited from leaving the country, nor shall foreign citizens enter the country; except for freight, all types of transportation tools are restricted from entering and leaving the country; primary schools would have a holiday in advance, and other schools would have online classes. On March 20, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's first president who is revered as a national leader, delivered a speech to the whole country, calling on the people to understand and support the government's actions. On March 22, the two cities of Nur-Sultan and Almaty were locked down with all access closed. In addition, major events such as the celebration of International Women's Day and Navruz, the military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War, and the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO were canceled.

**Uzbekistan.** On March 15, the first case of COVID - 19 was reported in Uzbekistan and was an Uzbekistan citizen returning from France. By April 6, there had been a total of 390 confirmed cases. In early February, Uzbekistan evacuated more than 500 of its citizens from Beijing and Wuhan, none of whom found infected after being quarantined.

On January 29, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree setting up a special national committee headed by Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov. The committee has formulated a comprehensive plan for the prevention and control of COVID-19, including quarantine, mandatory diagnosis of suspected patients, and strengthening prevention on the borders. Flights between Uzbekistan and China have been suspended since February 1. At the end of February, the Chief Sanitary Inspector of Uzbekistan signed new

regulations on epidemic prevention, which divided countries with epidemic into three categories. Citizens from all countries in Category 1A should be quarantined in designated places for 14 days, and those from Category 1B countries should accept home isolation.

On March 16, after the first case was reported in Uzbekistan, the country resolutely adopted a “meltdown” mode, announcing closure of all airlines and road transportation and also closing railway transportation from March 19. The Navruz celebrations are canceled, so as other rallies; the export of medical masks and other epidemic prevention materials is suspended; all schools are closed for three weeks. Domestic citizens are prohibited from leaving country and the entry of foreign citizens is banned. On March 18, President Mirziyoyev delivered a national speech on COVID-19, stressing that the government was fully prepared and had every confidence to overcome the difficulties and the epidemic. On March 22, Tashkent implanted “lockdown” measures, with the exception of freight transportation and some special cases, prohibiting the entry and exit of vehicles from other cities.

**Kyrgyzstan.** On March 18, the first three cases were reported in Kyrgyzstan, all of whom had returned from Saudi Arabia. By April 6, there had been a total of 216 confirmed cases. The 40 Kyrgyzstan students who returned from China were not found infected after the quarantine period.

On January 26, the government established a special command to cope with COVID-19, which consist of border inspection, health, and tourism departments, formulated an action plan for epidemic prevention, and set up health quarantine stations in the border areas. To prevent foreign imported cases, the Kyrgyzstan government has temporarily closed the border with China, suspended all flights between the two countries, as well as the issuance of visas to Chinese citizens since February 1. From March 1, citizens from China, Iran, South Korea, Japan and Italy were restricted from entering

Kyrgyzstan. On March 11, the Health Ministry announced that the epidemic-affected countries and regions would be divided into three categories for further management. China, South Korea, Italy, Iran and Japan are in the same category, and all foreigners who have visited the above countries within the last 30 days are restricted from entering Kyrgyzstan, except for diplomatic purpose and official delegations.

As for domestic prevention, on March 12, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev signed a resolution to temporarily limit mass activities, cancel the Navruz celebrations, suspend the operation of theaters and cinemas, and advise citizens not to pray in mosques at the moment. On March 14, President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov held a security council meeting and declared all schools closed for three weeks. On March 24, Jeenbekov declared a state of emergency in three cities and three regions, including the capital Bishkek. Curfew and special rules for citizens' exit from and entry into the areas are implemented, and mass activities such as performances and sports are banned with severe punishment for offenders. As the closure of border with China has greatly affected the economy and people's livelihood, people from different sectors in Kyrgyzstan hope to resume opening of border ports under certain conditions.

**Tajikistan.** There have been zero confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Tajikistan to date. None of the 46 Tajikistan students evacuated from Wuhan were found infected after quarantine. With more than one million Tajikistan citizens working overseas, the risk of imported cases is relatively high.

During the Chinese Spring Festival, due to the reduction of passenger flow, air connections and land ports between China and Tajikistan were temporarily closed, and remained so with the spread of the epidemic. Tajikistan has set up quarantine zones in border stations to test every person arriving from China. Since February 27, the scope of testing has expanded,

and all citizens from China, South Korea, Italy, Japan, Afghanistan and Iran would be placed under quarantine for 14 days when entering Tajikistan. As of March 23, 1,981 people had been released from isolation, while more than 3,000 were still under quarantine, including 107 foreign citizens.

On March 2, Tajikistan upgraded its preventive measures again and suspended the entry of citizens from 36 countries (including China) with more severe epidemic situation. From March 4, mosque services were suspended. From March 5, the Ministry of Education and Science set up a special group to convey knowledge on correct epidemic prevention methods to the society and students, but not yet announced closure of schools. Since March 11, the Immigration Bureau of Tajikistan stopped the issuance of work permits to citizens of countries affected by the epidemic. On March 20, international and domestic airports were temporarily closed, and land access was restricted.

**Turkmenistan.** No COVID-19 case has been reported in Turkmenistan so far. With many citizens working abroad, such as in Turkey, the risk remains high.

On January 31, the Turkmenistan government held a working meeting, requiring citizens who had recently been to 28 epidemic-affected countries to have their temperature taken and be kept under quarantine in infectious disease hospitals for 2-3 days. The Lebap region was appointed as a quarantine zone, and citizens returning from China were temporarily quarantined there, among whom none were found infected.

On February 25, Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow held a meeting on epidemic prevention and announced to control the exit of domestic citizens. Turkmenistan has closed border ports with Uzbekistan and Iran. The airlines canceled flights to Beijing, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Istanbul and Ankara. Air tickets were stopped selling to foreigners from March 12. On March 13, Berdimuhamedow signed a decree allowing the

Ministry of Health and Medical Industry to purchase medical supplies from foreign companies, and stressing the use of traditional medicine in epidemic prevention. So far, all international flights have been suspended in Ashgabat, the capital city.

### **1.3 Epidemic Situation and Measures Taken in Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova**

Confirmed cases have been reported in the above three countries. All countries have taken active countermeasures.

**Belarus.** The first confirmed case, an Iranian student, was reported on February 28. By April 6, a total of 700 cases had been reported, with 53 having been discharged from hospital and 13 dead.

The Belarus government has responded actively to the outbreak. In the early stage of the epidemic, the priority was to strengthen entry quarantine. From February 20, the country's Health Ministry started to test people from China, South Korea, Italy and Iran, and put people from China and northern Italy under medical observation. As the number of confirmed cases increased, the country's epidemic prevention measures have also been upgraded. On March 6, the Health Ministry included COVID-19 in the list of dangerous diseases and established medical detection points on the border and in relevant community hospitals. Returnees from epidemic-affected areas are required to fill in an entry information form, but as of March 24, Belarus had not closed its borders with any country. From March 12, Belarus restricted the holding of large-scale international cultural, sports and academic events.

**Ukraine.** On March 3, the first confirmed case was reported in Ukraine, who had traveled to Italy. By April 6, there had been 1,308 cases, with 28 having recovered and 37 dead. Among those (72 in total, 45 of them Ukrainian citizens) evacuated from China on February 20, none were found infected after quarantine.

The Ukrainian government has attached great importance to epidemic prevention. In early February, the cabinet approved a national plan for prevention and control of the COVID-19 outbreak and set up a special command for coordinated action led by the Prime Minister. Direct flights with China have been suspended since February 3, and all people entering the country had their temperatures taken from February 26.

As the epidemic intensified in Europe and confirmed cases were found in the country, the Ukrainian government further strengthened prevention and control measures, including temporarily closing schools and banning large public events. On March 9, the government held a special meeting and approved an enhanced version of epidemic prevention and control plan. The government allocated special funds to purchase medical protective equipment and banned the export of epidemic prevention materials before June 1. From March 12 to April 3, the entire country was put under lockdown: 170 ports of entry were closed, and 49 remained open; all schools were closed for three weeks; activities of more than 200 people were prohibited nationwide; theaters, cinemas and museums were also temporarily closed. From March 15, the entry of foreigners was restricted; flights with other countries were completely suspended from March 17; and rail, air and road passenger transportation between cities and states were stopped from March 18.

**Moldova.** On March 7, the first case was reported in Moldova, which was imported from Italy. By April 6, there had been a total of 864 cases, with 37 having recovered and 17 dead.

On March 8, President Igor Dodon cut short his visit to Russia and returned to Moldova. The government held a special meeting to discuss epidemic prevention and control, and decided to issue an epidemic amber warning, strengthen inspection of personnel entering Moldova, and require people from epidemic-affected areas to truthfully fill in an epidemiological

questionnaire at points of entry. From March 10, all foreigners from epidemic-affected countries were forbidden to enter the country.

On March 13, the government upgraded its epidemic warning to the highest red alert, and declared a nationwide state of emergency for 60 days from March 15. Measures taken include closing border crossing points with neighboring countries, suspending international land passenger transport, closing public places for entertainment and sports, and restricting entry of foreign citizens. On March 17, it closed its land border to foreigners and suspended flights with all countries.

#### **1.4 Epidemic Situation and Measures Taken in South Caucasus Countries**

Being adjacent to Iran and Europe, the epidemic situation in South Caucasus is quite severe. There are confirmed cases reported in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Among them, local transmission has occurred in Armenia.

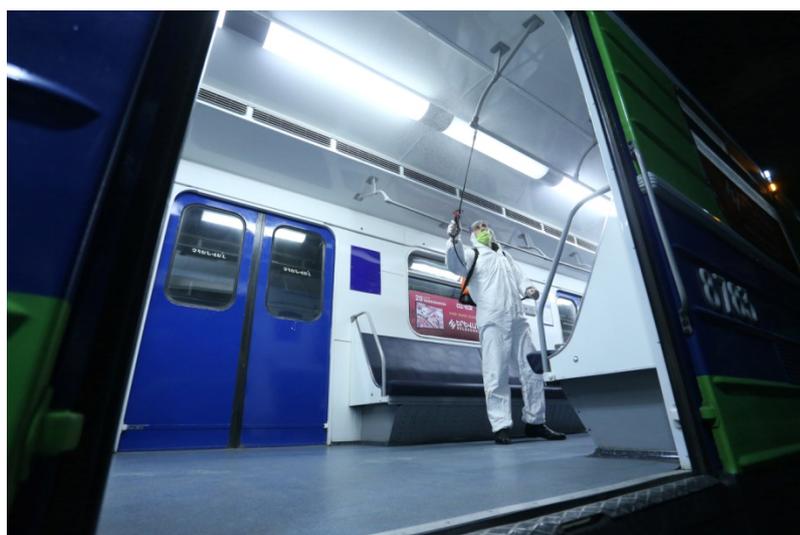
**Georgia.** On February 26, Georgia's first confirmed case was reported, which was imported from Iran. By April 6, there had been 188 cases, with 36 having been discharged from hospital and 2 dead. With most of the cases imported from Iran and Italy, the epidemic situation of Georgia is relatively serious.

On February 23, the Georgian government decided to suspend flights with Iran and called on its citizens to stop going to Iran. On March 6, it decided to suspend flights to and from Italy, restrict its citizens from traveling to high-risk countries, and require those returning from high-risk countries to take strict medical examination and be quarantined for 14 days. From March 14 to 24, the borders with Armenia and with Azerbaijan were closed. All foreign citizens were denied entry for two weeks from March 17. On March 19, the government announced the closure of all commercial outlets except food stores, drug stores, banks, gas stations, and post offices.

**Azerbaijan.** On February 28, a confirmed case was reported in Azerbaijan, which was imported from Iran. By April 6, there had been 641 cases, with 7 dead and 44 having recovered.

In response to the epidemic threat, Azerbaijan has formed a special command, deployed mobile tent hospitals, focused on inspection of people entering from Iran, and reminded its citizens not to go to Iran as far as possible. On February 14, the Azerbaijan government decided to restrict export of some medical supplies and medicines temporarily. The government also announced the closure of all educational institutions from March 3 to 9. On March 11, the Health Ministry required all inbound people to be quarantined at home for 14 days. On March 23, the Azerbaijan epidemic prevention command declared a one-month nationwide lockdown from 0 o'clock of March 24, under which the elderly are forbidden to go out, vehicles are restricted in and out of Baku and other major cities, non-essential shopping places are closed, and gathering of more than 10 people is prohibited.

**Armenia.** On March 1, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in Armenia. By April 6, there had been 833 cases, with 62 having recovered and 8 dead.



Staff sterilizes the subways in Yerevan, Armenia.

At the end of January, Armenia began taking temperature on all inbound personnel and required them to fill out residence cards. The visa-free entry policy for

Chinese citizens holding ordinary passports was suspended from February 1 to March 31. After the outbreak in Iran, border control with Iran was strengthened in Armenia. On February 24, border crossing between the two countries was closed, flights to Iran were reduced, and planes were sent to pick up Armenian citizens in Iran. It has also sent medical teams to Iran to carry out pre-departure health checks on passengers of flights from Tehran to Yerevan. Personal leave and family visits for soldiers have been banned since February 25 to prevent the coronavirus from spreading to the military. On March 16, the cabinet of Armenia held a special meeting, declaring a nationwide state of emergency, under which all assemblies and strikes are banned, all schools are closed, and only the government can release information about the epidemic.

## **II. China and Eurasian Countries Joining Hands to Combat COVID-19 Outbreak**

Ever since the outbreak of the epidemic, as close neighbors, countries in the Eurasian region have not only given China strong political support, but also provided material support within their capacity. After its epidemic was put under control, China began to actively share experience with its Eurasian partners and repay them with medical material support. The two sides have been supporting each other in fighting the epidemic and handling the public health crisis.

### **2.1 Strong Support and Praises for Anti-Epidemic Efforts of China**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, leaders of Eurasian countries have expressed their empathy to China and offered to give necessary help, demonstrating their profound friendship of mutual assistance and good neighborly relations with China.

Russia, from central to local governments, has fully supported China's battle against the epidemic. On January 31, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent condolence to Chinese President Xi Jinping, declaring that Russia would support China in fighting the epidemic and is willing to provide necessary medical supplies. Meanwhile, it sent a delegation of epidemic prevention experts to China to jointly develop vaccines and anti-epidemic drugs with Chinese counterparts. After that, President Putin also stressed many times that Russia would try its best to support China in fighting the epidemic. For example, at a ceremony when envoys from many countries presented their credentials on February 5, Putin said that China was taking decisive and effective measures to fight the disease and that “we are ready to provide all assistance to the Chinese friends.” On March 19, President Xi Jinping spoke with President Putin by phone. Putin reaffirmed China's effective measures to combat the epidemic and spoke highly of China's assistance to other

epidemic-affected countries, saying that China has set an excellent example for the international community.

On February 1, Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China, talked with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov by phone. Lavrov said that Russia fully recognizes and appreciates the active measures taken by China to fight the epidemic and believes that the threat of the epidemic will be relieved soon. During a meeting between the two foreign ministers during the Munich Security Conference, Lavrov once again expressed his appreciation for China's considerable efforts and stated that Russia would fully support China in the battle. On February 10, Denisov, Russian Ambassador to China Andrey Denisov sent a video to cheer China on, saying, "I believe we will surely usher in a warm spring together." On February 12, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in Chinese at a press conference, "in this difficult moment, Russia will stand together with China and wish the Chinese people final victory."

After the outbreak of the epidemic, Governor of St. Petersburg Alexander Beglov and Governor of Leningrad Oblast Aleksandr Drozdenko sent condolences to the Chinese Consulate General in St. Petersburg. On February 28, Natalya Komarova, Governor of the Khanty–Mansi Autonomous Okrug, led a delegation to the Chinese embassy in Russia to express support for China's anti-epidemic campaign and highly appraise the achievements made by China. In short, Russia has given full support to China's anti-epidemic efforts from the central government to local governments, which represents a model of strategic partnership of coordination in the new era.

The heads of state of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Moldova and Armenia have also expressed sympathy and support for China's anti-epidemic battle in various ways, publicly affirmed China's efforts and achievements, and believed that China would defeat the epidemic soon.

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said: “The efficient response of Chinese leaders and the heroic spirit of the Chinese people are so admirable. Belarus will always be a reliable and loyal friend of China. We will provide China with medical materials to help the Chinese people fight against the epidemic.” Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said: “The world has witnessed the excellence of China’s medical system and the high professionalism of Chinese medical staff, and China has once again demonstrated its efficient governance capability to cope with complex and difficult challenges. Kazakhstan hopes to strengthen cooperation with China to overcome the epidemic as soon as possible.” Kyrgyzstan’s President Sooronbay Jeenbekov said: “I would like to thank China for its care for our citizens in China. I believe that China can overcome the epidemic before long.” Tajikistan’s President Emomali Rahmon said: “The Chinese leader and the Chinese government are actively controlling the situation and preventing the spread of the epidemic, and we believe the expected results will be achieved.” Uzbekistan’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said: “The Uzbek government will stand close with China in dealing with the epidemic.” Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said: “The Azerbaijani people are sharing the same heart with the Chinese people. And we would like to provide all necessary assistance to China.” Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow said: “If it is needed, Turkmenistan is always ready to give firm support and help to Chinese friends.” Armenian President Armen Sarkissian said: “Armenia highly appreciates the effective measures taken by China to deal with the epidemic and the positive results achieved. Armenia is willing to cooperate with China to fight the epidemic. As a friendly partner of China, Armenia is ready to provide support and assistance to China in combating the epidemic.” In a meeting with the Chinese ambassador on March 23, Sarkissian further said: “The Chinese people are united as one and achieving great victory in a short period by tough struggles. This fully demonstrates the outstanding leadership

of the Chinese government, the great cohesion of the Chinese society and the valuable collective spirit of the Chinese people, which also provides important experience for global governance in the 21st century.”

During his visit to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in early March, Yang Jiechi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Committee and Director of the Office of China’s Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, reported to presidents of the three countries on the positive achievements China has made in fighting the epidemic and thanked all parties for their support and medical assistance to China. The presidents of the three countries spoke highly of China’s anti-epidemic efforts and firmly believed that China would overcome the epidemic.

In addition, Chairman of the Prosperous Armenia Party Gagik Tsarukyan, Secretary-General of Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia Kakha Kaladze, Deputy Chairman and Executive Secretary of the New Azerbaijan Party Ali Ahmadov, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus called or sent messages to China, appreciating the important progress China has achieved in fighting the epidemic, and expressing willingness to work with China in combating the coronavirus.

China’s anti-epidemic efforts have also received strong support and recognition from international organizations in the Eurasian region. On January 30, Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), highly appreciated the decisive measures taken by the Chinese government to fight against the epidemic and the openness and transparency it has shown during the process. “This is not only a reflection of the sense of responsibility and the importance the government has attached to the lives and health of the Chinese people, but also a major contribution to the development of public health in the region and the world at large.” On February 14, the SCO issued a statement, saying that the SCO member states all support China’s efforts to fight against COVID-19 and are ready to provide

necessary assistance and carry out close cooperation with China. On February 8, Sergei Glazyev, Minister in charge of Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, wrote an article in the Chinese newspaper *Global Times* with the title “Unhesitatingly Support China’s Fight against Epidemic.” On February 11, on behalf of the BRICS countries, Russia issued a BRICS chairmanship statement expressing support for China’s efforts in fighting against the epidemic. The statement pointed out that “The BRICS countries call for the international community to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the World Health Organization, in order to prevent, protect and control regional and global public health safety, providing a coordinated public health response to the epidemic outbreak ... (The BRICS countries) underline the importance of avoiding discrimination, stigma and overreaction while responding to the outbreak.”

### **2.2 Timely Material and Technical Assistance to China**

At the beginning of the outbreak, the Eurasian countries took action quickly and provided China with material and technical assistance within their capacity.



Medical supplies from Belarus arrived in China.

Belarus provided about 40 tons of humanitarian aid to China in two batches, including surgical and medical coats, masks, gloves, iodine, protective suits, and disinfectant. On January 30, the first 20 tons of aid arrived in China, becoming one of the first

aids to reach China. On February 6, the Belarusian government sent a special plane to deliver the second batch of aid to Beijing.

Russia provided China with anti-epidemic materials such as surgical masks, medical gloves, protective suits, goggles, disposable medical coats and shoe covers, which were delivered to China in batches. On the afternoon of January 31, 35,000 surgical masks donated by Amur Oblast and the city of Blagoveshchensk arrived in Heihe. On February 5, the Russian delegation of epidemic prevention experts arrived in Beijing together with a batch of medical equipment. This is also the first foreign expert delegation to China for the cooperation in epidemic prevention and control. On February 9, Russia sent a special plane to Wuhan with 23 tons of medical aid supplies, including 2 million surgical masks and medicine.

On February 1, the Kazakhstan government provided China with 13.6 tons of humanitarian aid, including 1 million pairs of medical gloves and 500,000 surgical masks. The Kazakhstan-China Trade Promotion Association also launched a fund-raising, collecting more than 3 million KZT in donation from 35 Kazakhstan enterprises.

Uzbekistan provided anti-epidemic supplies to China twice, on February 12 and March 3, including sterile disposable gloves, medical protective suits, filtering masks, and gauze. Kyrgyzstan donated about 7 tons of disinfectant and medical protective equipment to China. Tajikistan has also sent a batch of surgical masks to China. The Sumqayit City of Azerbaijan organized the emergency dispatch of anti-epidemic supplies, including 330,000 medical protective hats, masks and gloves, as well as four tons of medical alcohol, which were donated to China's Xi'an and Mianyang to alleviate the shortage of medical supplies in the two cities. In addition to official aid, China has also received care from the people of these countries. For example, the Petro Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine has donated more than 10,000 masks, protective suits, and goggles to China. The Russian news agency TASS donated 24,000 masks and 877 protective suits to its Chinese peers. Armenian friends bought thousands of surgical masks and transferred

them to Hubei Province through the Chinese embassy in Armenia. A kindhearted citizen of the Russian city of Nakhodka spent two days running through every pharmacy, bought 400 masks, and donated them to the Chinese city of Suifenhe. Every share of help, no matter small or big, conveys friendship and is worth remembering.

### **2.3 China Repaying the Aids and Helping Eurasian Countries Cope with Epidemic**

At present, initial achievement has been made in China’s epidemic prevention and control, but the epidemic continues to spread globally. To help the international community overcome the epidemic as soon as possible, China has actively shared its experience in fighting COVID-19 and provided material and technical assistance to countries in need, demonstrating its sense of responsibility as a major country and its spirit of openness, sharing and collaboration, which has been highly recognized and widely appraised by the WHO and the international community.

**Sharing experience and fight the epidemic together.** On March 3, the Chinese Foreign Ministry and the National Health Commission jointly



China holds a video conference on COVID-19 containment with Eurasian countries.

held a video meeting with experts from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Turkmenistan and the SCO Secretariat on the COVID-19 epidemic. The Chinese experts briefed on the epidemic trend in China and their experience in

prevention, control and treatment. All parties had in-depth exchanges on

prevention and control measures, diagnostic screening and laboratory testing, and stated that they would further enhance information exchange and coordinated actions to jointly maintain regional and global health security. On March 16, during the meeting with the Chinese ambassador Zhang Xiao, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Askar Mamin said that he would like to learn from China's experience and work together with China to overcome the epidemic. As of March 20, China had held online video conferences with all Eurasian countries to share experience in epidemic prevention and control as well as diagnosis and treatment plans. On March 24, President Lukashenko of Belarus thanked Chinese experts for answering all questions asked and generously sharing their experience in fighting the epidemic with Belarusian counterparts.

**Repaying the aids and helping each other.** After the domestic outbreak was under control, China began to provide anti-epidemic materials such as test kits to some Eurasian countries in return. On March 2, Azerbaijan's special command for epidemic prevention said that the country would accept equipment and medicines from China and Germany to fight against COVID-19. On March 6, in a meeting with Armenian Health Minister Arsen Torosyan, Chinese Ambassador to Armenia Tian Erlong said that China would provide Armenia with 1,000 test kits as well as certain financial assistance for free. On March 12, the West China Hospital of Sichuan University donated a batch of nucleic acid test kits to Georgia. On March 13, in order to treat patients collectively, Russia referred to China's experience and built the first makeshift hospital in the outer suburbs of Moscow. Uzbekistan has also learned from Wuhan's experience and planned to build three hospitals on the outskirts of Tashkent for COVID-19 patients. On March 17, Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Abylgaziev, in a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Du Dewen, said that the Chinese government's provision of anti-epidemic materials to Kyrgyzstan, when the country is under

critical epidemic risk, once again shows the preciousness of the bilateral relations, which the Kyrgyz government and people will remember forever. On March 20, the first batch of Chinese non-governmental humanitarian aid was handed over in Kazakhstan’s capital Nur-Sultan from the Astana branch of the China Construction Bank.

**Scientific research cooperation to overcome difficulties.** China and Russia have designated the years of 2020 and 2021 “Year of Scientific and Technological Innovation” in each other’s country. Under the special background of the epidemic, the importance of scientific and technological cooperation between the two sides, especially in the medical field, has been highlighted. After the outbreak, Russia sent a team of experts to China for the joint development of drugs and vaccines of COVID-19 and has made initial progress. The antiviral drug Arbidol, developed by scientists in the former Soviet Union, has been verified to be effective against the novel coronavirus. In addition, Russia’s State Research Center of Virology and Biotechnology, also known as the Vector Institute, has actively cooperated with China in vaccine and drug research and development. It is learned that the center has developed five prototype vaccines against the novel coronavirus. China and Russia have combined their strengths and are complementing each other’s advantages to overcome the epidemic as soon as possible.

#### **2.4 Enhancing Communication and Coordination to Minimize Epidemic Losses**

Under the special background of the epidemic, China has actively coordinated and cooperated with relevant departments of Eurasian countries in preventing and controlling the epidemic, assisting the evacuation of personnel and maintaining normal exchanges to the maximum extent.

**Protecting the benefit of foreign nationals and assist in the evacuation of foreign personnel.** With China’s cooperation, countries in the Eurasian region have evacuated their nationals in order from places with

high epidemic incidence in China. From February 2 to 12, Kazakhstan evacuated 455 nationals in China in three batches. On February 5, Russia evacuated 144 people from Hubei Province. In February, Uzbekistan withdrew more than 500 people from China in batches. On February 20, 45 Ukrainian citizens and 27 citizens from eight other countries were evacuated from Wuhan on a chartered flight of the Ukrainian government. All evacuees of Eurasia have been uninfected, and all parties are fully satisfied with China's cooperation and efficiency.

**Special treatment for special affairs with humanitarian care.**

On February 3, the suspension of direct flights between China and Kazakhstan caused 43 Chinese citizens to be stranded in Kazakhstan, and a batch of medical materials raised by Chinese enterprises in Kazakhstan could not be transported back. After coordination between the two sides, the Kazakh government decided to resume flight KC227 from Nur-Sultan to Beijing on February 10 and 12 and deliver the stranded Chinese citizens and medical materials to China for free. After the closure of border ports between China and Russia, a temporary passenger passage was opened at the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk inspection port to facilitate the evacuation of the stranded personnel from both sides. On January 30, in order to ensure timely delivery of medical materials to China, the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk port temporarily launched a green channel for medical and epidemic prevention materials.

### **III. Response to China’s Anti-Epidemic Efforts from the Eurasian Society**

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the issue, made concerted efforts, and taken comprehensive, strict and thorough prevention and control measures. The spread of the epidemic is quickly curbed, marking an important achievement in this stage. As of March 24, the number of active cases in China had dropped to less than 5,000, the death rate remained low, and the recovery rate exceeded 85 percent. While strengthening epidemic prevention and control, the Chinese government has also launched a series of financial, banking, tax and industrial support policies to accelerate the recovery of economic and social order. Active efforts by enterprises to return to normal work and production have kept the national economy on track. China’s successful measures, and its transparency and openness in sharing information have been recognized by Eurasian countries, and also bring confidence for them in overcoming the epidemic.

#### **3.1 Mainstream Media Objectively Reporting on China’s Anti-Epidemic Efforts**

In addition to the governments, media outlets of Eurasian countries have also paid close attention to the epidemic situation, and expressed their support for China’s anti-epidemic efforts, saying that China’s rapid and effective measures have made significant contributions to the global battle against the outbreak.

**Praising China’s effective epidemic control plan.** Since late January in 2020, major media outlets in Eurasian countries, including TV stations, newspapers and websites, have set up columns to report the latest information and relevant commentaries on China’s epidemic situation. Among them, Russia’s *Trud* and *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, Belarus’s *Republika*, Georgia’s “Sinomedia” and “4U” have published several articles introducing

China's prevention and control of the epidemic, believing that the reason for the positive results of China's anti-epidemic efforts lies in the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the advantages of China's political system. In the process of fighting the epidemic, they have been impressed by the high sense of responsibility and solidarity in the Chinese people. For example, on March 6 and 8, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* reported in detail about China's anti-epidemic efforts under the titles "China protects overseas students like its own children during the epidemic," "China's 'anti-epidemic war' is ushering in spring."

Kazakhstan's *Delovoy Kazakhstan* and Uzbekistan's *Narodnoye Slovo* commented that China has not only taken effective measures to control the spread of the epidemic, but has also strengthened cooperation with the WHO to share information on COVID-19 research with the world, making a huge contribution to the prevention and diagnosis of COVID-19. China has also sent medical experts and supplies to countries with serious epidemic situation and backward medical conditions, reflecting its sense of responsibility as a major country.

**Launching special coverage with Chinese media to truly introduce China's anti-epidemic efforts.** Up to now, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* has cooperated with the China Media Group in more than 40 reports and commentaries on China's epidemic prevention and control, introducing China's latest situation and effective measures to the Russian people. Among them, there are articles such as "Public oversight contributes to epidemic prevention and control," "People have access to information on national epidemic prevention and control," "Chinese government releases timely and transparent epidemic information" and "Epidemic generates new opportunities for Russia-China economic and trade cooperation," which are widely recognized and discussed by the public. *60 Minutes*, a current affairs



Rossiyskaya Gazeta, a leading Russian newspaper, released a full-page color poster expressing strong support for China's fight against the epidemic.

TV show on Russia's state television, invited reporters from the China Central Television (CCTV) to introduce on live broadcast China's nationwide efforts to treat patients and curb the epidemic. A special TV program "Interview Moment," launched jointly by the China News Agency and Russia's

Channel 8, invited experts from Russia to discuss China's anti-epidemic efforts.

**Firmly supporting China's fight against the epidemic.** On February 10, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* published an editorial "Russia and China share weal and woe" on its sixth page, and launched a full-page color poster "Cheer up, China! We are together" on the seventh page, to express its support for China's anti-epidemic efforts. The editorial pointed out that COVID-19 will not affect the steady and stable development of China-Russia relations. Russian President Vladimir Putin, the government and the Russian people are all taking active actions to support China in fighting the epidemic. Russia believes that China will certainly be able to overcome the epidemic. The website "New Observations of the Silk Road" launched a video "Angel in White" in both Chinese and Kazakh to show respect for Chinese medical workers. Turkmenistan's media "Orient" recorded a video in four languages (Chinese, Turkmen, English and Russian) to express support for China.

**Refuting Western media's stigmatization on China's epidemic prevention and control.** On February 20, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* published a

critique, “The United States endlessly blames China for all its mistakes.” According to the commentary, the Western media has turned a deaf ear to China’s effective and timely anti-epidemic response, and continued to blame China out of political prejudice, damaging the global public interests. “No one in the world where our future is closely connected should stand by while an epidemic is rife.” In addition, the Russian, Belarussian, and Kazakh federations of journalists all sent letters to the All-China Journalists Association, opposing negative comments and fake news about the Chinese people, expressing their willingness to provide China as much help as possible, and believing that the Chinese people will defeat the epidemic soon under the leadership of the Chinese government.

### **3.2 Academia Firmly Supporting China’s Anti-Epidemic Efforts**

Scholars in Eurasian countries have focused more on the possible economic impact of the epidemic while expressing their support for China’s fight against the coronavirus.

**Speaking highly of China’s multiple measures in combating the epidemic.** According to Victor Pirozhenko from Russia’s Strategic Culture Foundation, China’s anti-epidemic efforts show that the Chinese government and the society have a strong ability of coordination in response to emergencies. Andrei Ostrovsky, Deputy Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said that with the epidemic situation in China moving in a positive direction, President Xi Jinping’s visit to Wuhan will encourage the Chinese people to fight more confidently against the epidemic and eventually win the victory against the coronavirus. “It’s no exaggeration to say that the whole world is looking at China with respect and great expectation, and China has made a rapid response to this threat and taken all possible measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic,” said Gulnar Shaimergernova, Director of Kazakhstan’s China

Research Center. Iryna Nykorak, Head of the Ukrainian Silk Road Association, said that the Chinese government has generously shared the experience of preventing and controlling COVID-19 with countries around the world, and has done its best to curb the spread of COVID-19 worldwide, playing an important role in the global fight against the epidemic.

**Inviting Chinese scholars to interpret China’s anti-epidemic policies and measures.** The Russian International Affairs Council is a long-term partner of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on think tank coordination between the two countries. It has taken the initiative to invite experts from the platform to introduce and analyze China’s anti-epidemic efforts to the Russian society. Since February 14, the website of the Council has published for three consecutive days Chinese scholars’ analytical articles on China’s epidemic situation, and the impact on China’s economic development in the near-to-medium term and its practical cooperation with Russia, which have responded to many questions and doubts from the Russian people.

**Being optimistic about China’s economic development.** As a whole, Eurasian scholars hold an optimistic opinion on China’s economic development and believe that the epidemic will not cause great impacts on China’s practical cooperation with Eurasian countries. Alexander Lomanov, Deputy Director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said that although the epidemic prevention measures will result in a short-term decline in China’s economy, it will hardly affect the overall economic performance of China and its investment in high-tech industries abroad. China’s economic momentum will not change. Sergei Glazyev, Minister in charge of Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, said that the epidemic would not hinder the economic and trade ties between China and

Russia, but would provide new opportunities for bilateral economic and technological cooperation. In the long term, cooperation between the two sides in the fields of bioengineering technology, pharmacy and instrument manufacturing will be enhanced. Aidar Amrebayev, a well-known expert from Kazakhstan, said that as the second-largest economy in the world, China has great economic resilience and potential. The fundamentals of China's long-term sound economic growth remain unchanged, and China's efforts to resume production and work have brought hope and momentum to the global economy. Professor Hassan Abkasmov of the National University of Uzbekistan is also very confident in China's economy and market. According to him, China's economy will continue to grow in the long run despite temporary impact from the epidemic, and the Uzbekistan-China cooperation will not be seriously affected. Baktgulov, an independent scholar of Kyrgyzstan, stressed that the Chinese government has taken multiple measures to prevent and control the epidemic while resuming work and production. As economic activities have been gradually restored, the fundamentals and long-term trend of China's economy will not be changed by the epidemic.

**Criticizing “double standards” of the West on epidemic prevention and control.** Professor Yuri Tavrovsky at the People's Friendship University of Russia said that the “political virus” caused by ideological prejudice and double standards is even more harmful than the novel coronavirus. He took the lagging response of the United States to H1N1 influenza in 2009 as an example, saying that although the lack of any restrictions on travel and crowd activities led to the infection of tens of millions of people worldwide, Western countries did not blame the US at all. However, at present, China's effective control against the virus has been criticized in multiple ways by Western countries. The root cause is that their

bias against the socialist system and their policy of containing China.

**Thinking deeply about the epidemic.** Scholars in Eurasia, especially in Russia, believe that the outbreak of COVID-19 has worsened the uncertainty and instability of the international situation. According to an article published on a Russian political commentary website, in the era of globalization, the negative impact of the epidemic on global economic development is inevitable. Director-General of the Russian International Affairs Council Andrey Kortunov said that in view of responses of different countries affected by the epidemic, the urgently needed social cohesion is desperately lacking. The outbreak has become a flashpoint for extreme ideological trends. For instance, the Europe’s right-wing forces have become more active, demanding the closure of all borders and suspension of all international migration; Russia has also fallen into isolationism, preaching the irreversible decline of the Western world.

### **3.3 Citizens Looking forward to Overcoming the Epidemic Together**

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, people across the Eurasian region have encouraged China to fight the epidemic through new media, poetry, paintings and donations.

More and more Russians are posting their wishes or making videos on social media such as Weibo and WeChat to support China. Russian artist Yana Germann donated a triptych painting “Line of Fate” to the Chinese embassy in Russia, to express concern and support on behalf of the Russian art community to the Chinese people who are combating the epidemic. The medical center of Russia’s Far Eastern Federal University organized a children’s painting activity in support of China’s fight against the epidemic, to express the Russian people’s good wishes for an early victory in China. The first batch of more than 300 children’s paintings have been sent to China and delivered to frontline medical workers in Wuhan. Young people in Central

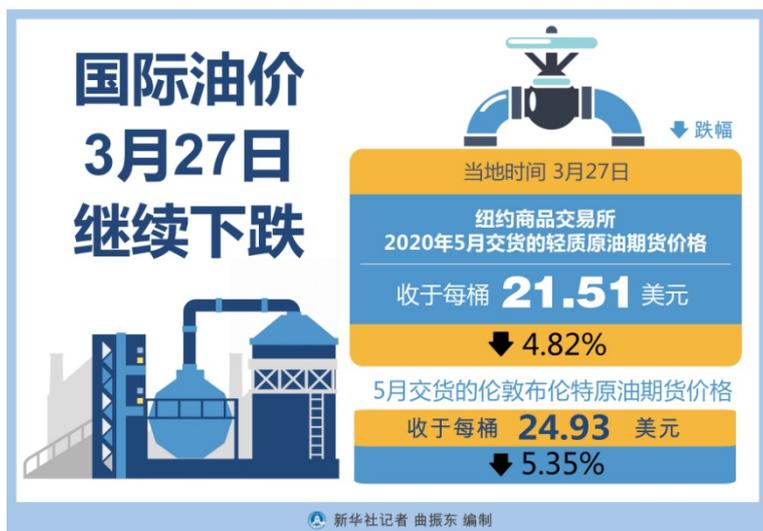
Asia have actively made videos of cheering for China and Wuhan, praying for China's peace and an early victory over the epidemic. Kyrgyz writer Abibilla Pazylov wrote a poem, Wuhan, to cheer China on. Turkmenistan's public organization "Yenme" sent a letter to the Chinese embassy in Ashgabat to support the Chinese people in fighting against the epidemic. Representatives of Belarusian universities and social organizations made videos to express their support for China's anti-epidemic efforts. On the evening of February 20, the landmark building of the National Library of Belarus in Minsk was lighted up with the words "Go China, Go Wuhan, Belarus Stands with China" in Belarusian and Chinese. The well-known Belarusian poet Nikolai Metlitsky wrote a poem Greetings from Belarus for China's battle against the coronavirus. In addition, students from Minsk's No.212 School in Belarus drew paintings to support China, sending sincere wishes from afar. In Azerbaijan, the Nizami Ganjavi International Center specifically produced a promotion video "Cheer for Wuhan, Cheer for China" to show support for China's anti-epidemic efforts. The Armenian people have expressed condolences in various forms to the Chinese embassy in Armenia, to show support for the Chinese people. Teachers and students from several schools in Armenia recorded videos conveying their support and blessings, with words like: "We must help our friend in this difficult time. Virus has no nationality or race. Guard against the virus, but do not isolate love!"

## IV. Prospects for Cooperation between China and Eurasian Countries

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has become the biggest enemy of the international community. Eurasia is China’s close and friendly neighbor. In the face of this rare and fierce epidemic, on the one hand, the two sides have worked closely to support each other, showing sincere friendship out of the adversity; on the other hand, all countries have levelled up their quarantine measures for self-protection, and regional cooperation is facing new situation and challenges.

### 4.1 Impact of the Epidemic on China-Eurasia Cooperation

The impact of COVID-19 on China’s cooperation with Eurasian countries should not be underestimated and the practical cooperation between the two sides is facing severe challenges.



International oil prices continue to fall.

The global economy has been dragged down by the epidemic, which also strikes heavily on the Eurasian region. According to predictions of many authoritative economic institutions around the world, the epidemic is causing a shock to the global economy, which may incur more damage than

the financial crisis in 2008. Recently, stock markets of many countries have experienced plunges not seen for many years, triggering the meltdown mechanism many times. Affected by the epidemic and other factors, the international oil price has plummeted, resulting in depreciation of the Russian ruble, and the market value of Russia’s major oil and gas companies has

dropped by one-fifth. Alexei Kudrin, Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of Russia, predicted that Russia might not achieve a 1.9 percent growth this year. If the oil remains at US\$35 a barrel, Russia's economy will see zero or negative growth. This outbreak has placed the Eurasian economy on the brink of a new crisis.

The economic and trade ties between China and Eurasian countries have deepened in the past two decades. The Belt and Road Initiative, in particular, has pushed the cooperation to an unprecedented level. China is a major economic and trade partner and source of investment for countries in the Eurasian region, and is the largest trading partner of Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Russia's trade volume with China accounts for 16.6 percent of Russia's total foreign trade in 2019. China is the biggest buyer of Russian oil, accounting for 15.47 percent of Russia's crude oil exports. China is also the largest source of investment for Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Due to the high level of economic dependence and the broad cooperation between the two sides, the impact of the epidemic is also unprecedented. With the closure of ports with China, the Central Asian region has experienced shortages of daily necessities and rising prices, which to some extent will strike social stability.

To prevent the spread of the epidemic, countries in the Eurasian region have taken strict precautions. In particular, since mid-March, due to the severe international situation of the epidemic, all countries have continued to upgrade their preventive measures, including suspending international flights, restricting entry of foreigners, and stopping the issuance of labor permits. These countries have actually entered a period of "self-isolation." In this case, international cooperation in economy, trade, and investment have given way to epidemic prevention and control.

The first to suffer is the tourism industry. According to the Economist

Intelligence Unit, it will be not until the second quarter of 2021 that the number of Chinese outbound tourists could return to pre-outbreak levels, which might cost the global tourism industry about \$80 billion. If this prediction comes true, it will undoubtedly cast shadow on tourism cooperation between China and Eurasian countries. According to statistics, in 2019, the number of Chinese tourists to Russia reached 2 million, making China the largest source of tourists in Russia. Second, the economic, trade and investment cooperation will slow down. At the beginning of the outbreak, countries in the Eurasian region cut off almost all transportation links with China, restricted personnel flow and trade, and seven countries have imposed trade control of goods on China. As the epidemic spread and restrictions upgraded, major cooperative projects between the two sides have been suspended. At the same time, their demands for imports from China have also decreased in the short term, particularly for commodities such as energy and minerals. In the first half of this year, China’s trade with Eurasian countries is predicted to fall sharply.

#### **4.2 China-Eurasia Cooperation still Enjoys More Opportunities than Challenges**

Because of the epidemic, cooperation between China and Eurasian countries is facing unprecedented difficulties and greater challenges. But at the same time, it should also be noted that with the epidemic levels off in China, the accelerated resumption of work and production, and policy support for the economy, China’s economy will soon recover from the crisis, and its cooperation with Eurasian countries is expected to gradually get out of the predicament. The adverse impact of the epidemic on bilateral cooperation is temporary. In the medium and long term, opportunities still far outweigh challenges.

**First, the impact of the epidemic on China’s economy is periodic and temporary.** China’s economy is expected to maintain its

positive trend in the long run, which provides a fundamental guarantee for its cooperation with Eurasian countries. China's economy is remarkably resilient. Although the epidemic has caused no small impact on it, the fundamentals of stability and development have not changed. After 40 years of reform and opening-up, China's GDP reaches almost one hundred trillion yuan, with per capita GDP exceeding \$10,000; its foreign exchange reserve exceeds \$3.1 trillion; the output of more than 220 kinds of industrial products ranks first in the world, and China is the only country with all the industrial categories listed in the UN industrial classification; its fiscal revenue reached 19 trillion yuan in 2019. This is not only a solid backing for China to overcome the epidemic, but also a strong support for its economic recovery.

China is the largest developing country and is still in the process of urbanization. In the future, about 100 million people from rural areas will settle in cities, and the "rigid demand" for development will not disappear due to the epidemic. China has a population of 1.4 billion, and the middle-income group of over 400 million people is still expanding steadily. The domestic market has great potential, and the domestic demand has become the main driving force for economic growth. The impact of the outbreak on China's economic momentum is quite limited. The outbreak has spawned many new ways of living and production, such as the intelligent diagnosis that helps doctors analyze the lung imaging of patients, big data technology that helps government departments to manage the flow of personnel, online education that makes internet classroom possible, intelligent manufacturing that helps enterprises deliver orders, and so on. While the traditional economy is affected by the epidemic, the new economic momentum is also emerging.

China's epidemic prevention and control has fully demonstrated its economic resilience. Relying on its institutional advantages of mobilizing resources for major undertakings, China's economy will soon come out of the

dark. The recovery of China’s economy will drive the growth of demand, which in turn will contribute to the economic recovery of the Eurasian region. China’s a trade and investment cooperation with Eurasian countries will user in a “retaliatory” growth when the epidemic ends.

**Second, although the epidemic will affect China’s cooperation projects in Eurasia to some extent, it will not shake the solid foundation of cooperation between two sides.** China is irreplaceable in



The 50th “Qilu” China-Europe freight train after the Spring Festival started its journey on February 21.

the international cooperation of Eurasian countries. China is one of major energy buyers in the region, the largest importer of Russian oil and Turkmen gas, and one of major importers of energy and minerals from Kazakhstan. This economic complementarity will not be changed by the epidemic. At present, all Eurasian countries

are actively adjusting their economic strategies and taking economic diversification as a main direction. China enjoys the most complete range of industries in the world, with strong investment capacity and willingness. It is an irreplaceable partner for the economic diversification in all Eurasian countries. For example, China’s investment in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan has accounted for more than 40 percent of the two countries’ respective total foreign investment. China and Kazakhstan signed a capacity cooperation document with a total investment of US\$27 billion, which will play a vital role in Kazakhstan’s economic diversification strategy. In terms of new economic formats favored by all countries, China’s e-commerce and digital economy are

far ahead of and are very attractive to Eurasian countries. These countries are quite clear that in the vast Eurasian region, China is willing and able to provide timely and effective help and support for regional economic revitalization, and its role is irreplaceable.

Third, although COVID-19 has cast a negative impact on the cooperation between China and Eurasia, the epidemic itself also contains new opportunities for cooperation. For example, health care and digital economy are expected to become new growth points of bilateral cooperation. The spread of this outbreak shows that the virus sees no borders and has no nationality. Countries should strengthen cooperation and work together. At the early stage of the outbreak, Russia sent a delegation of medical experts to China for cooperation on scientific research. The Chinese Foreign Ministry and the National Health Commission held COVID-19 epidemic video meetings with experts of Eurasian countries to share China's experience in epidemic prevention and treatment. Exchanges and collaboration on epidemic prevention and control have become a new highlight of cooperation between China and Eurasian countries. The epidemic also indicates that the "soft" non-traditional security issues such as pandemic control, climate change and environmental protection impose a growing threat to the stability and development of all countries, and the willingness and need for relevant international cooperation are increasingly urgent. As close neighbors, China and Eurasian countries are complementary to each other and enjoy promising prospects for cooperation. This COVID-19 outbreak is likely to become an accelerator for cooperation between China and Eurasian countries and open up new areas of cooperation.

### **4.3 Direction of Future Cooperation between China and Eurasia**

The COVID-19 epidemic is a real test of cooperation between China and Eurasian countries. Looking back, there are still many problems in the

cooperation in response to a public health crisis like this. It is urgent to make up for shortcomings, implement corresponding measures, find the right position, and take targeted actions to ensure that the cooperation between the two sides is always forging ahead on a healthy and stable track.

It is urgent to establish a sense of community with a shared future. The spread of the epidemic clearly shows that the epidemic has no borders, the future of all countries is closely linked, and no one can be detached from it. Only by mutual assistance and cooperation can we finally overcome the epidemic and the difficulties together. The fact that all countries are cooperating to fight against the epidemic has proved eloquently that the building of the community with a shared future for mankind is by no means an empty concept, but of practical needs, which are not only necessary but urgent. China and Eurasian countries are geographically, historically and culturally connected, and are all developing countries or emerging economies sharing the same or similar positions on many international and regional issues. They also all face the common task of developing and revitalizing their respective economies. All these are the natural advantages of establishing a community with a shared future. In recent years, China has been actively advocating the building of a community with a shared future in the Eurasian region. China and Eurasian countries should take this joint fight against the epidemic as an opportunity to effectively advance the sense of community, build a community of interests, responsibility and shared future, and strive to make their cooperation a model of partnership of mutual assistance and shared weal and woe. The two sides should improve strategic communication and policy coordination, widely gather consensus, and effectively enhance mutual trust; strengthen non-governmental exchanges, and effectively enhance people’s mutual understanding and friendship; enhance media exchanges and cooperation between countries, and encourage the media to

provide more positive energy for bilateral cooperation, constantly increase trust and dispel doubts, and guard against blind xenophobia. Only in this way can we jointly and effectively fight against and defeat similar global disasters in the future, so as to achieve win-win cooperation and common development.

It is imperative to improve the institutionalization level of bilateral cooperation. Although China and Eurasian countries have carried out active cooperation and interaction in response to the epidemic, due to the lack of effective and legally binding institutional arrangements and guarantees, there are still unsatisfactory aspects during the cooperation, which fails to match the level of bilateral relations. Therefore, both sides should actively explore and establish institutional arrangements that are in line with the trend of the times and the region's real situation, so as to provide a solid legal guarantee for effective cooperation between the two sides. Taking the epidemic prevention and control as an opportunity, China and Eurasian countries could start from the building of a public health cooperation mechanism, and then gradually make up for institutional shortcomings of their cooperation. The SCO could serve as a platform to kick start the efforts. As early as 2011, the SCO members signed an agreement on cooperation in health, and

心潜力、开展联合科学研究、研发新的传染病诊断和预防药物等领域广泛采取措施,对提高流行病防治水平十分有效。

我们强调, 传染性疾病扩散具有跨越国境的特点, 相信统筹和协调各国应对卫生和流行病学领域突发情况的措施, 制定降低传染性疾病发病率的管理决策, 是巩固各国应对传染性疾

我们重申将借助双边和多边平台发展相互协作, 共同应对上海合作组织地区的流行病威胁。

2018年6月10日于青岛

#### 上海合作组织成员国元首关于在上海合作组织地区共同应对流行病威胁的声明

作为上海合作组织成员国元首, 我们注意到, 随着日益增长的区域和全球一体化进程以及跨境人员往来和贸易自由化, 在上海合作组织地区爆发流行性、传染性疾病的现实威胁与日俱增, 我们对此深感忧虑。

我们确认, 在上海合作组织地区存在爆发包括流行性感冒、鼠疫、严重急性呼吸道综合征 (SARS)、出血热、霍乱及其他严重传染性疾病的

我们坚定支持进一步完善各项多边合作机制, 采取综合性措施预防传染性疾病的传播, 保障各国做好应对传染病威胁的各项准备, 及时查明和应对卫生和流行病学领域突发情况, 以降低传染性疾

我们认为, 有必要建立各国之间有关在上海合作组织地区的传染性疾

我们重申, 为采取现代化、有效的措施应对大规模爆发的传染性疾

我们认为, 各国在调动机动部队、开发国家实验室和科研中

approved the Statement on Joint Efforts Against the Threat of Epidemics in the SCO Space in 2018. However, the documents mentioned above are not legally binding, thus did not play their due role in response to the epidemic. To this end, at this year’s SCO summit, efforts should be made for a legally binding and operable health cooperation document for all parties, which shall clarify the rights and obligations of all parties, and effectively improve the capability to respond to similar public health crises. At the same time, cooperation mechanisms among member states in the areas of consular protection, customs and quarantine, aviation control, travel safety and disaster relief should be improved and duly implemented. On this basis, the SCO should comprehensively strengthen institutionalization in various fields, so as to drive the SCO cooperation onto a rapid, orderly and benign development track, and set an example for the whole Eurasian region to promote the cooperation to a new level of institutional synergy.

It is necessary to adopt differentiated policies. The countries in the Eurasian region have taken different measures in response to the epidemic, which indicates that diversification and difference are the distinct characteristics of the countries in Eurasia. Different countries have different national, political, social and civil conditions, which determines that the cooperation between China and Eurasia shall be realized through differentiated policies and cannot be one-size-fits-all. Targeted and refined cooperation should be carried out in different regions, countries and fields, so as to achieve the organic unity of commonness and individuality, and ensure the efficiency of cooperation.

## Conclusion

Human beings live in the same global village. All countries are increasingly interdependent with a shared future. No country can be immune to the epidemic, and only with a sense of responsibility to share the weal and woe and work altogether, can all countries finally win the battle against the epidemic. Each country going its own way will not help resolve the crisis. Only by continually enhancing the awareness of mankind community with a shared future can we confront more unknown risks and challenges.

“A man of virtue can never be isolated.” Eurasian countries have given strong support to and highly praised China’s anti-epidemic efforts, which is the direct result of China’s long-time pursuit of neighborhood diplomacy featuring amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. China has also provided material and technical support back to its partners in the Eurasian region, which embodies the spirit of mutual assistance. It is believed that after this trial of epidemic, there is an even brighter future for building a community with a shared future between China and Eurasian countries.

*(Written by Li Ziguo, Deng Hao, Han Lu and Li Yan)*

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