



“Union of Informed Citizens” consulting NGO

[UICArmenia.org](http://UICArmenia.org)

[uicarmenia@gmail.com](mailto:uicarmenia@gmail.com)

+374 (0) 41355042

## **Eurasian Economic Union: Public Attitude and Awareness**

Christine Goroyan

Yerevan 2015

## ABSTRACT

Armenia started the process of Eurasian integration in 2013. Since then, several survey studies have been carried out to reveal the attitude of the public towards the integration. However, the results of the studies have been mutually exclusive. Besides, these studies haven't focused on revealing people's awareness of EEU and consequences of Armenia's membership in it. This study was aimed at contributing to filling the gap and exploring not only people's attitude towards EEU, but also its relationship with people's awareness about details and consequences of EEU membership. 1000 people from major cities of Armenia participated in the survey study. According to the survey results, the number of respondents who are against EEU membership exceeded those who favor it. As findings suggest, there is a consistently observed connection between respondents' attitude towards EEU and their knowledge about EEU membership details. However, in some cases, respondents expressed a positive attitude towards EEU membership despite reported recognition of some of its negative consequences. Further investigation is needed to reveal the factors contributing to this phenomenon that were possibly not covered by this study.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Armenia negotiated with European Union on the Association Agreement since 2010. The negotiations ended in 2013 and the agreement was ready for pre-signing. However, in September 2013, Armenia unexpectedly changed its foreign policy course and started the Eurasian integration process. Armenia became member of the Eurasian Economic Union in January 2015. Since the start of the Eurasian integration process, several survey studies have been carried out targeting public opinion regarding EEU membership. They have yielded different results. However, they haven't addressed the important issue of public awareness of what EEU is and what consequences membership in it will bring to. Besides, several months have passed since the studies were carried out. Hence, it would be useful to see whether a shift in public opinion regarding EEU membership has occurred.

### **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the survey study was to reveal people's awareness about the Eurasian Economic Union and their attitude towards Armenia's membership in EEU. The study was also aimed at finding out people's factual knowledge and expectations regarding change of prices for various products and services as a result of joining EEU, as well as their perception of Armenia's current trade relations with Russia and Europe and the economic situation in Russia. Another key aim of the study was to compare respondents' attitude towards EEU membership with their actual knowledge of EEU membership details.

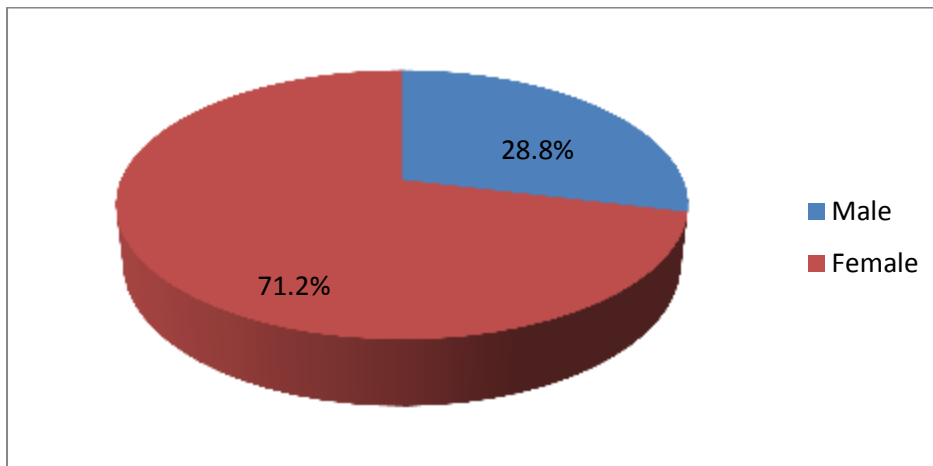
### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The study was significant in that its results helped to reveal and compare the connection between people's attitude towards joining EEU and their perceptions regarding the aforementioned issues.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

The study employed the stratified random sampling strategy. The predefined survey questions (Appendix 1) were asked through telephone calls made to the residents of Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor and Kapan cities. In case of Yerevan, the phone numbers were picked up randomly but in equal proportion from all the administrative districts of the city. One thousand (1000) people participated in the study.

*Figure 1. Distribution of Survey Participants by Gender in Percent*



*Table 1. Distribution of Survey Participants by Age in Mean and Range*

Mean	44
Range	65
Minimum	15
Maximum	80

For most of the questions, the respondents were asked to give their answers on the following scale:

- a) No
- b) Don't know
- c) Yes

## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

This section presents the survey results in percent, means and standard deviations.

Figure 2 shows respondents' answers to the question "Do you know what Eurasian Economic Union is". As can be observed, more than half of the respondents claimed to understand what Eurasian Economic Union is.

*Figure 2. Reported Awareness about Eurasian Economic Union in Percent*

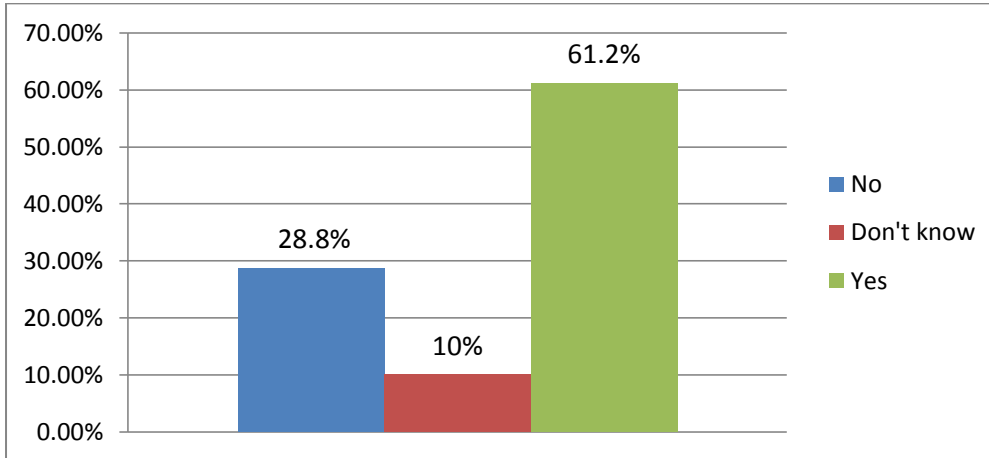
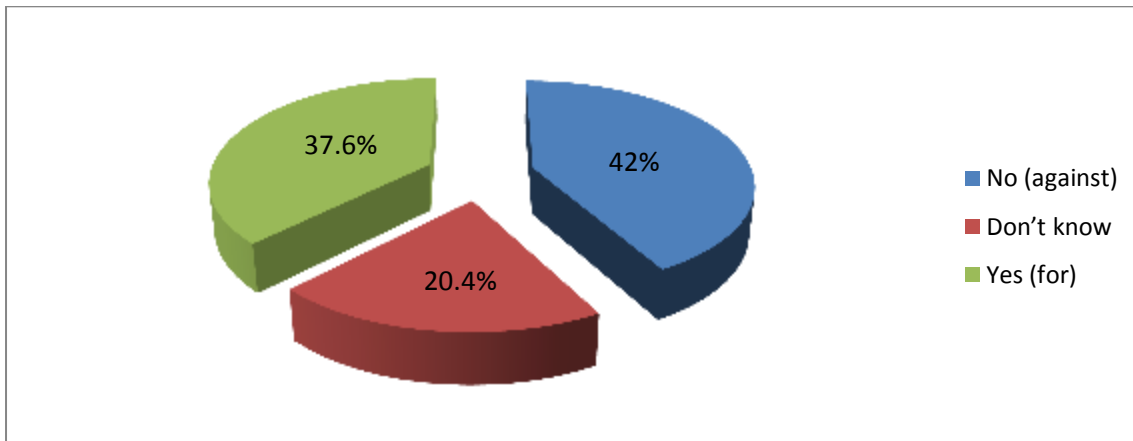


Figure 3 shows respondents' answers to the question "Do you favor Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union". As can be seen from the figure, the difference between those who are for and against is not great, with a slight advantage of those who are against. However, there is a notable number of people who haven't formed their attitude yet.

*Figure 3. Attitude towards Armenia's Membership in the Eurasian Economic Union in Percent*



Figures 4 and 5 show the respondents' attitudes towards Armenia's membership in EEU by gender. As we can observe from the figures, the percentage of women who are against EEU exceeds that of men by as much as 10%.

Figure 4. Male Respondents' Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU in Percent

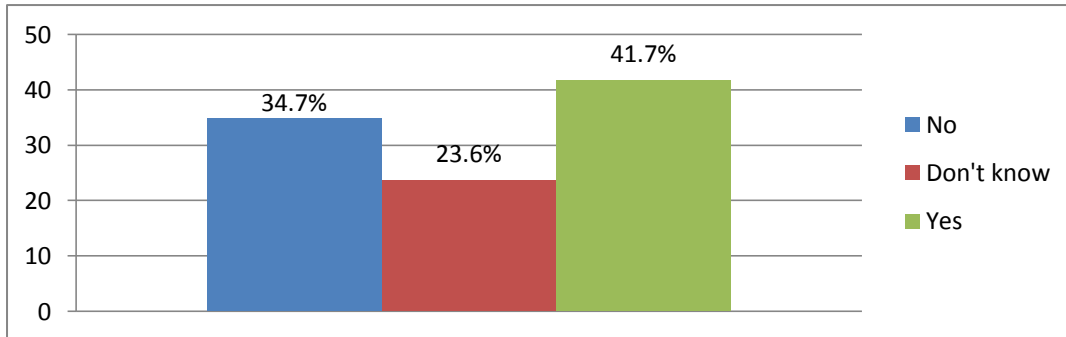
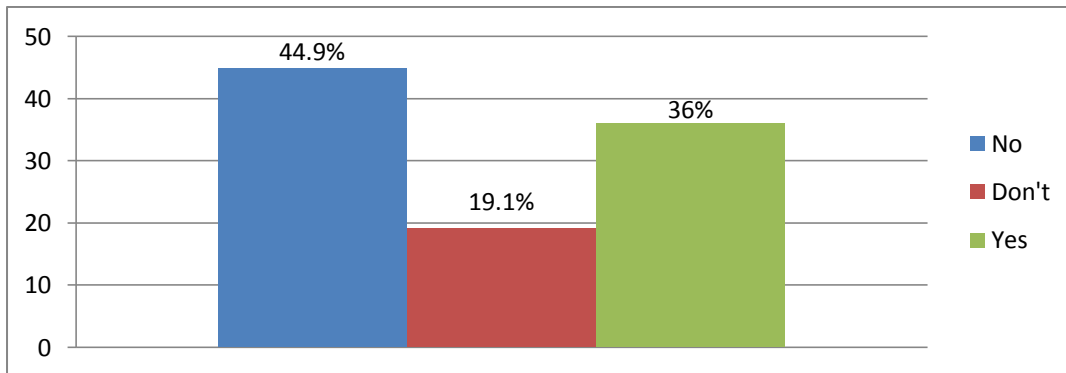


Figure 5. Female Respondents' Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU in Percent



Figures 6 and 7 show the attitude towards Armenia's membership in EEU among those respondents who are younger than 41 versus the ones who are older than 40.

The results suggest that the percentage of opponents of EEU who are younger than 41 slightly exceeds that of the opponents of EEU who are older than 40.

Figure 6. Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU among Respondents Younger than 41 in Percent

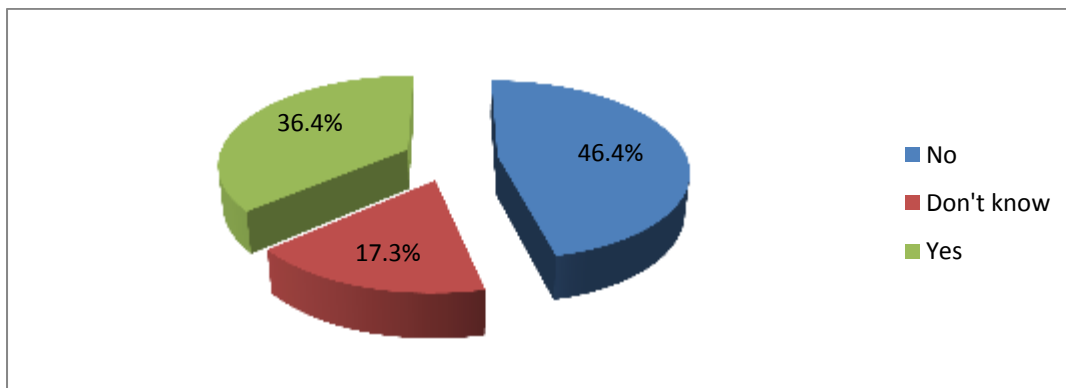


Figure 7. Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU among Respondents Older than 40 in Percent

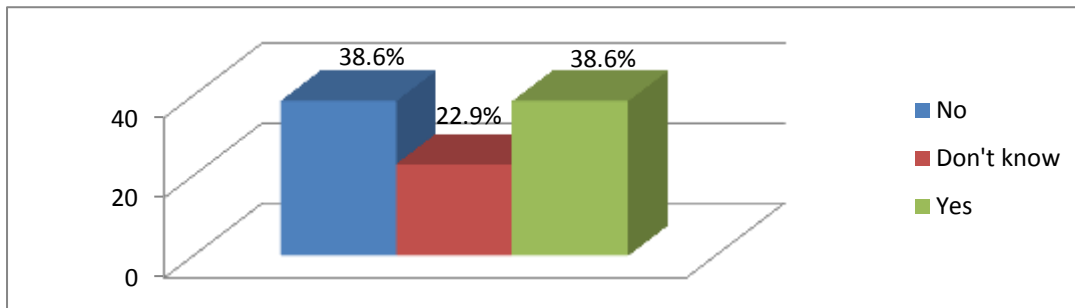


Figure 8 shows the respondents' answers to the question "Will the prices for gas and petrol go down as a result of Armenia's membership in EEU". As the answers suggest, more than half of the respondents don't expect decrease of prices for gas and petrol. However, the number of respondents who are not sure is also considerable.

Figure 8. Respondents' Perception of Expected Decrease of Prices in Gas and Petrol Prices in Percent

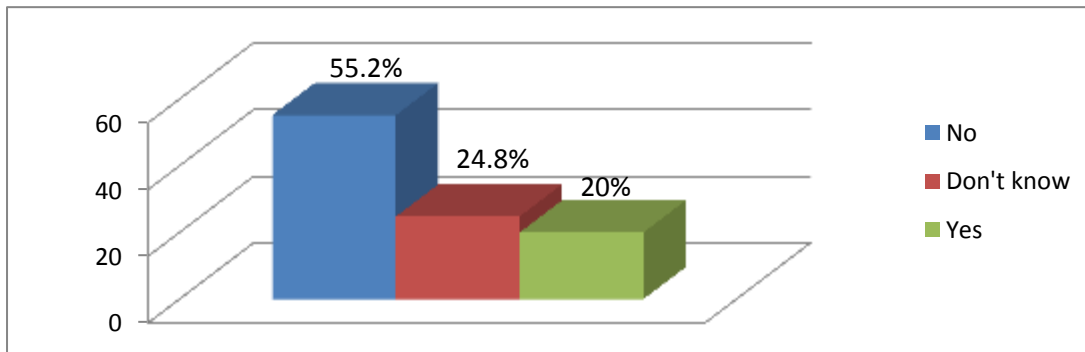


Figure 9 shows the respondents' answers to the question "Will Russian products become cheaper as a result of Armenia's membership in EEU". As the results suggest, almost half of the respondents don't expect decrease of prices as a result of joining EEU. Still, 1/4 of the respondents reportedly don't have information about possible price changes for Russian products.

Figure 9. Respondents' Perceptions of Expected Decrease of Prices for Russian Products in Percent

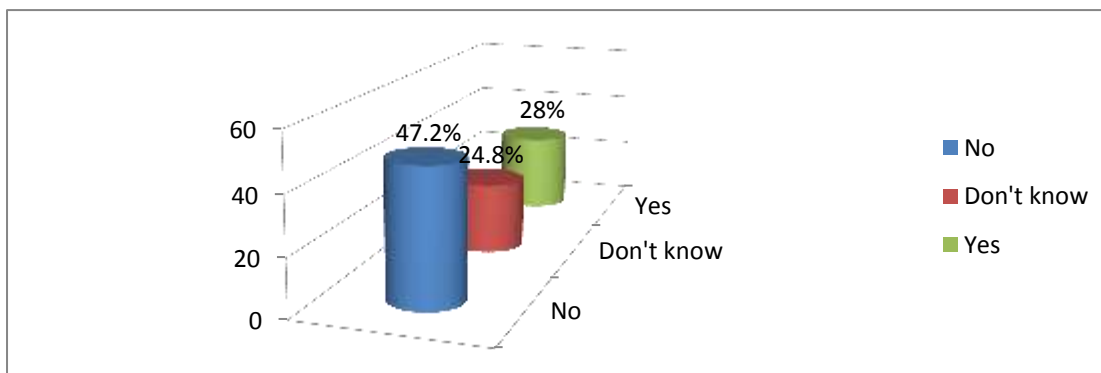


Figure 10 shows the respondents' answers to the question "Will food, equipment, clothes and furniture imported from other countries become more expensive". The answers reveal that almost half of the survey participants expect rise in prices for the mentioned products imported from other countries. The number of respondents who don't think that there will be rise in prices and those who don't know is roughly equal.

*Figure 10. Respondents' Perceptions of Expected Rise in Prices for Food, Equipment, Clothes and Furniture Imported from Other Countries in Percent*

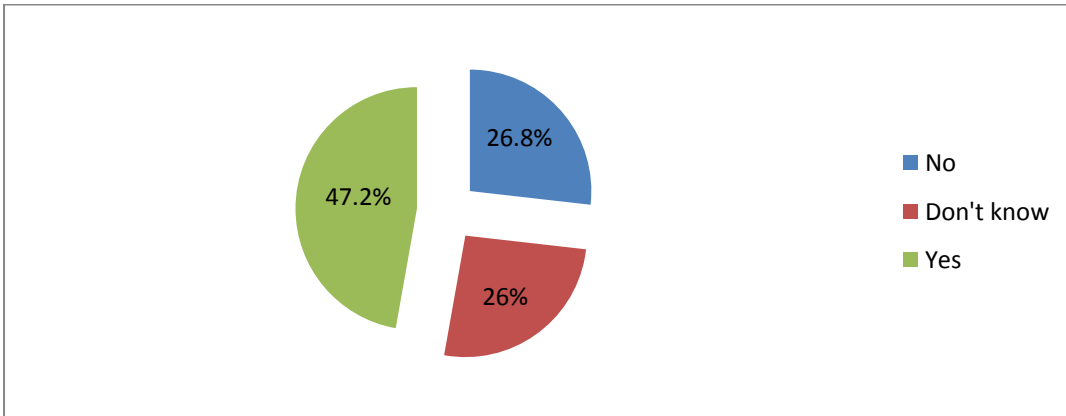


Figure 11 shows the respondents' answers to the question "Is the Russian economy declining or growing now". As can be observed, most of the respondents tend to think that Russian economy is suffering a decline.

*Figure 11. Respondents' Perceptions of the State of Russian Economy in Percent*

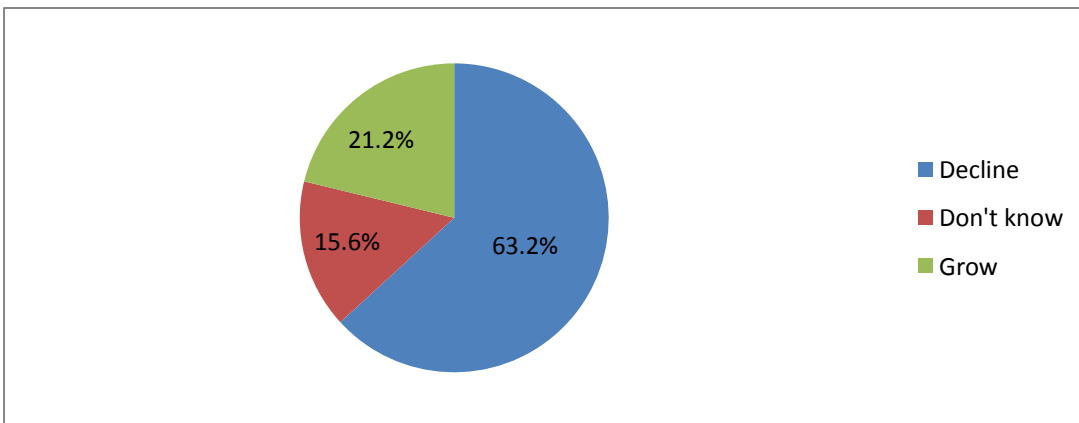
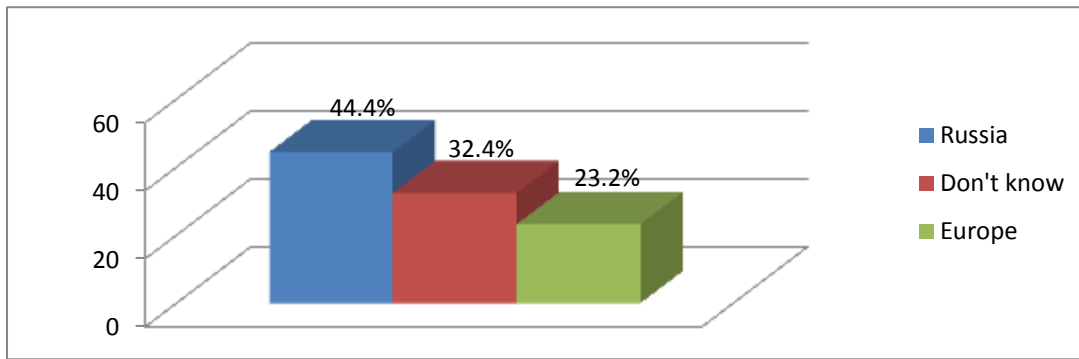


Figure 12 shows the respondents' answers to the question "Does Armenia trade more with Europe or with Russia". The answers show that almost half of the respondents suppose that Armenia trades more with Russia than Europe. And the considerable amount of people who are not sure is also worth mentioning.



Figure 12. Respondents' Perceptions of the Amount of Armenia's Trade with Europe vs. Russia in Percent



The respondents' attitude towards joining EEU was also compared with their responses to other questions to reveal respective trends, if any.

Figure 13 shows that most of the respondents **who are against joining the EEU** (hereinafter referred to as opponents) have reported that they don't expect decline in prices for gas and petrol as a result of Armenia becoming a member state of EEU.

Figure 13. EEU Opponents' Perception of Expected Decrease of Prices in Gas and Petrol Prices in Percent

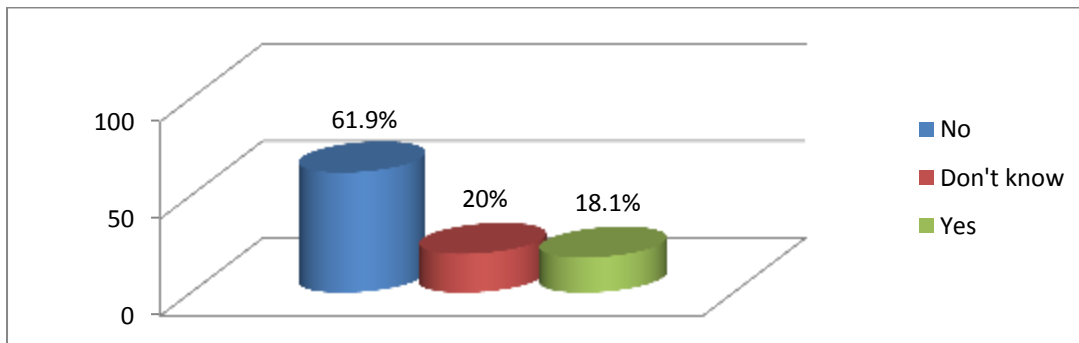


Figure 14 shows that slightly less than half of the respondents **who are in favor of joining the EEU** (hereinafter referred to as proponents) reportedly don't expect decline in prices for gas and petrol as a result of becoming a member state of EEU. However, the number of respondents who are not sure is greater compared to those who are against EEU.

Figure 14. EEU Proponents' Perception of Expected Decrease of Prices in Gas and Petrol Prices in Percent

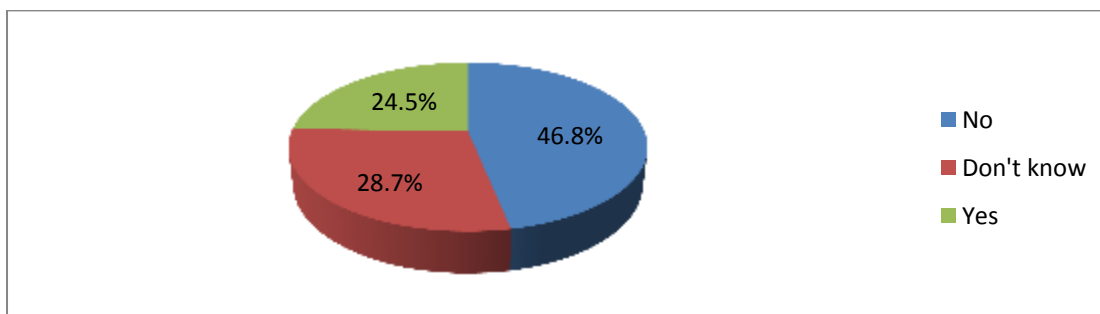


Figure 15 shows that more than half of the opponents of EEU don't expect cheaper prices for Russian products as a result of joining EEU.

*Figure 15. EEU Opponents' Perceptions of Expected Decrease of Prices for Russian Products in Percent*

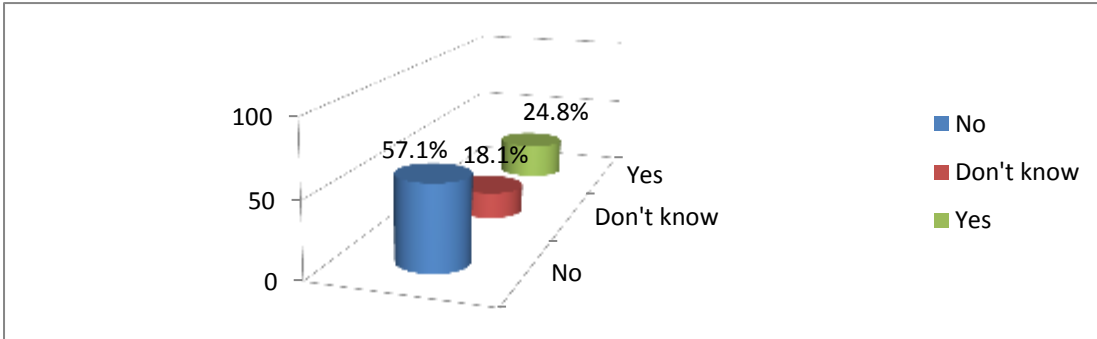
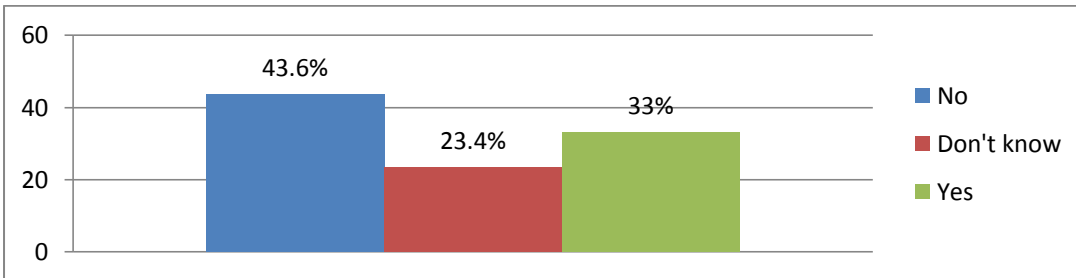


Figure 16 shows that the number of proponents of EEU who think that Russian products will become cheaper is greater than in case of opponents. And the number of proponents of EEU who think that Russian products won't become cheaper is respectively smaller compared to EEU proponents' answers.

*Figure 16. EEU Proponents' Perceptions of Expected Decrease of Prices for Russian Products in Percent*



Figures 17 and 18 show that the number of proponents and opponents of EEU who think that there will be a rise in prices for food, equipment, clothes and furniture imported from other countries is roughly equal.

*Figure 17. EEU Opponents' Perceptions of Expected Rise in Prices for Food, Equipment, Clothes and Furniture Imported from Other Countries in Percent*

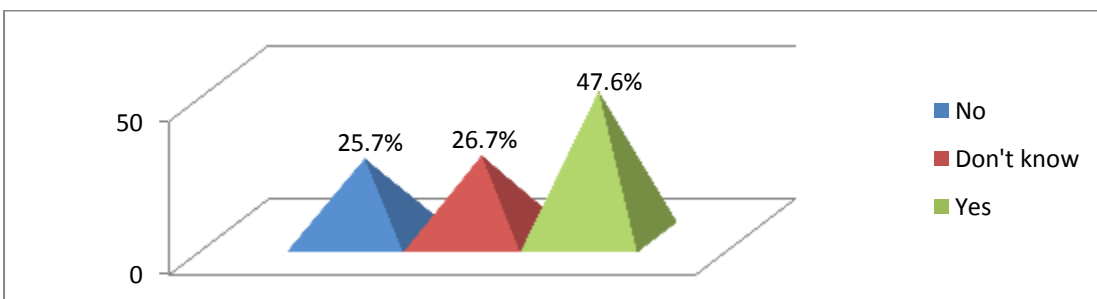


Figure 18. EEU Proponents' Perceptions of Expected Rise in Prices for Food, Equipment, Clothes and Furniture Imported from Other Countries in Percent

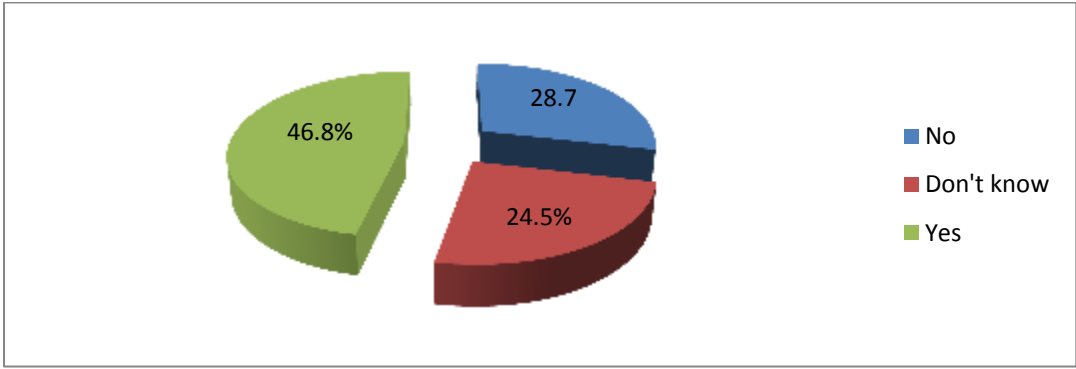


Figure 19 shows that majority of the opponents of EEU have claimed that Russian economy is suffering a decline.

Figure 19. EEU Opponents' Perceptions of the State of Russian Economy in Percent

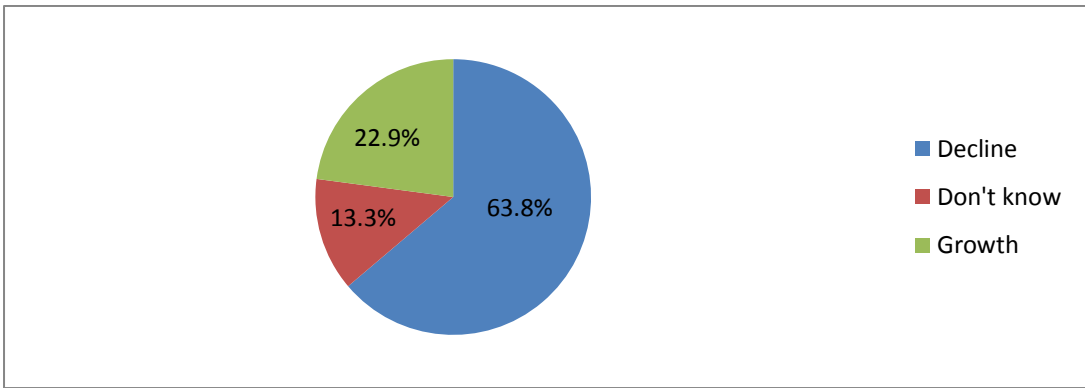


Figure 20 demonstrates that the majority of the proponents of EEU have also claimed that Russian economy is declining.

Figure 20. EEU Proponents' Perceptions of the State of Russian Economy in Percent

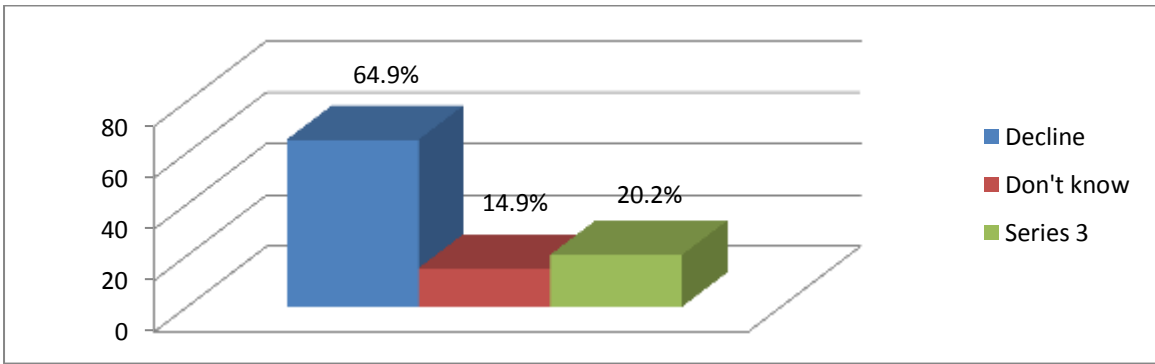


Figure 21 shows that the number of opponents of EEU who think that Armenia mostly trades with Russia exceeds the number of respondents who think that Europe is the main trade partner of Armenia by almost 15%. It is also worth mentioning that more than 30% of the respondents are not sure about this question.

*Figure 21. EEU Opponents' Perceptions of the Amount of Armenia's Trade with Europe vs. Russia in Percent*

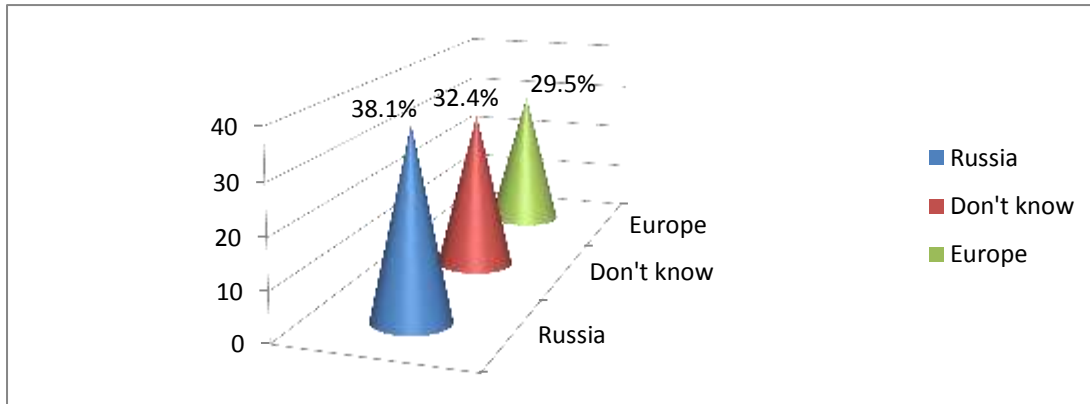
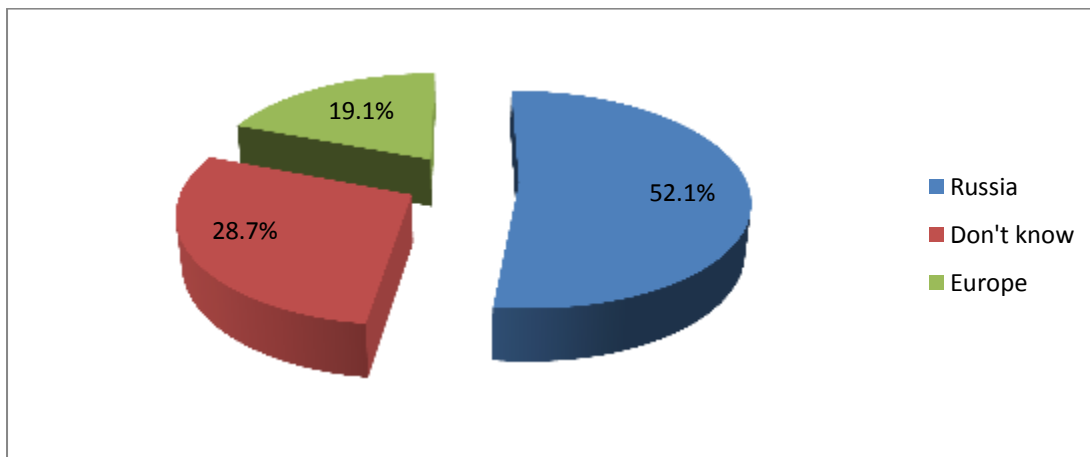


Figure 22 demonstrates that more than half of the proponents of EEU claimed that Armenia's main trade partner is Russia. It is also noteworthy that almost 30% of the respondents answered that they don't know.

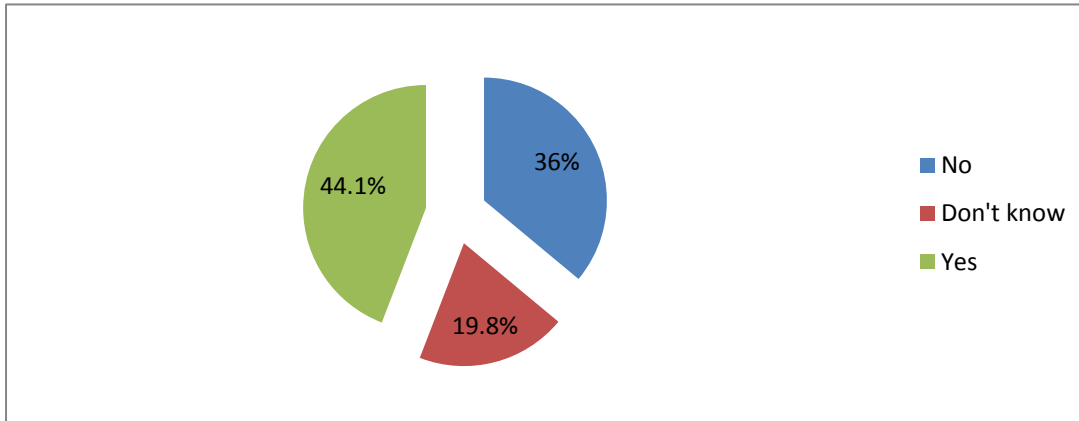
*Figure 22. EEU Proponents' Perceptions of the Amount of Armenia's Trade with Europe vs. Russia in Percent*



Figures 23 and 24 show the attitudes towards Armenia's membership in EEU among the respondents who consider Russia as Armenia's main trade partner vs. those who consider Europe as Armenia's main trade partner.

We can observe from Figure 23 that 44% of the respondents who consider Russia as Armenia's main trade partner actually favor Armenia's membership in EEU.

Figure 23. Attitude towards Armenia's membership in EEU among the Respondents Who Consider Russia as Armenia's Main Trade Partner in Percent



The opposite picture can be observed in Figure 24. 53% of the respondents who consider Europe as Armenia's main trade partner have reported to be against Armenia's membership in EEU.

Figure 24. Attitude towards Armenia's membership in EEU among the Respondents Who Consider Europe as Armenia's Main Trade Partner in Percent

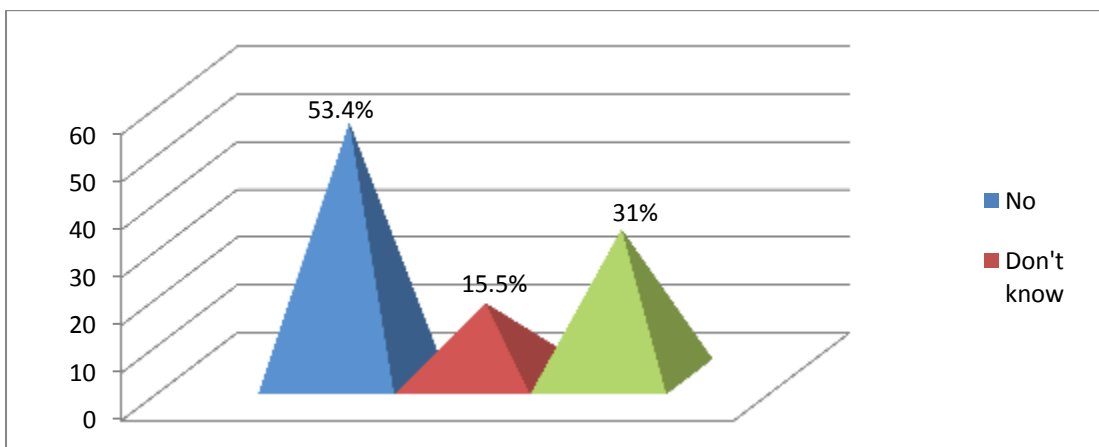


Table 2 shows the average number of correct answers among survey participants. It can be observed from the table that on average, half of the questions were answered correctly (total number of questions was five).

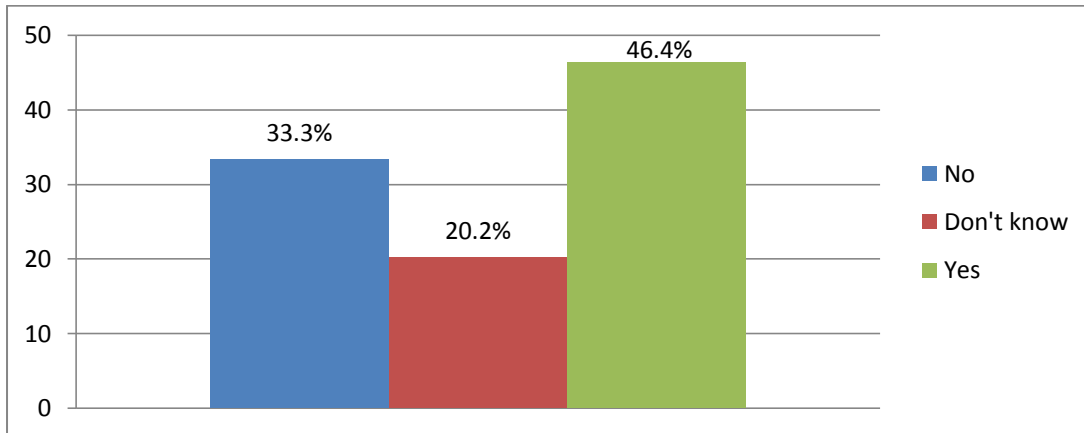
Table 2. Average Number of Correct Answers among Survey Participants.

Mean	Standard Deviation
2.6	0.85

Figures 25 and 26 show attitudes towards Armenia's membership in EEU among respondents who mainly gave wrong answers to the survey questions (correct answers < 2.1) vs. those who mainly answered the questions correctly (correct answers > 2).

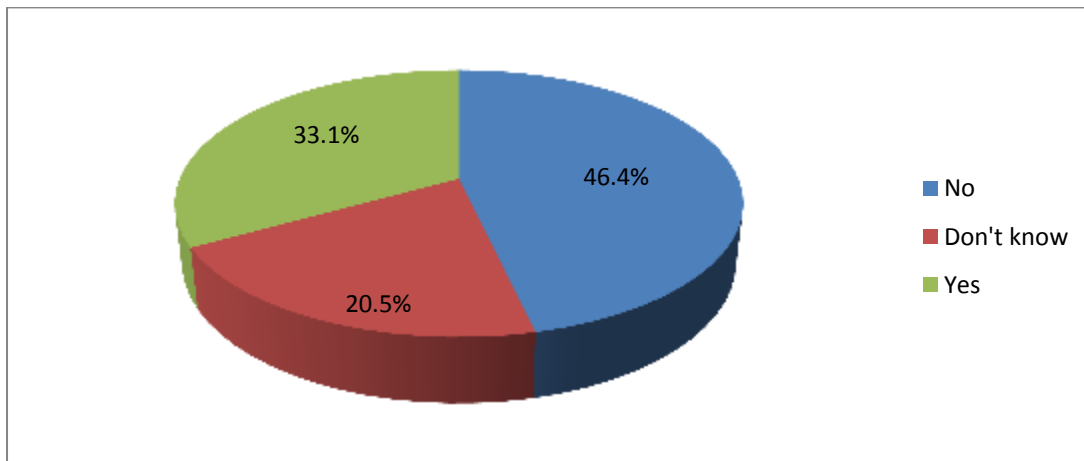
The results in Figure 25 suggest that 46% of respondents who gave predominantly wrong answers to the survey questions (5 in total) favor Armenia's membership in EEU.

*Figure 25. Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU among Respondents with Predominantly Wrong Answers to the Questions in Percent*



On the contrary, Figure 26 demonstrates that 46% of respondents who gave predominantly correct answers to the survey questions are against Armenia's membership in EEU.

*Figure 26. Attitudes towards Armenia's Membership in EEU among Respondents with Predominantly Correct Answers to the Questions in Percent*



## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The purpose of the survey study was to reveal people's awareness about the Eurasian Economic Union and their attitude towards Armenia's membership in EEU. The study was also aimed at finding out the connection between people's attitude and their awareness of EEU membership details.

The survey results showed that more than half of the respondents are aware of what Eurasian Economic Union is.

A very slight difference was observed between the percentage of respondents who favor Armenia's membership in EEU and those who do not, with a slight advantage of those who are against. An interesting finding was that the number of female respondents who are against EEU exceeded that of men by as much as 10%. Besides, the number of opponents of EEU who are younger than 41 slightly exceeded that of EEU opponents who are older than 40.

As the results suggest, more than half of the respondents don't expect decrease of prices for gas and petrol as a result of Armenia's membership in EEU. Nevertheless, when we compare EEU opponents' and proponents' answers, we can observe that the percentage of opponents of EEU who don't expect decrease of oil and gas prices exceeds that of the proponents of EEU by 15%.

Regarding survey participants' perceptions of expected decrease of prices for Russian products, almost half of the respondents reported that they don't have such expectations. When we look at the answers from EEU opponents' and proponents' perspectives, we can notice that the percentage of EEU opponents who don't expect decrease of prices for Russian products again exceeds that of proponents of EEU by 14%.

The results also suggest that almost half of the respondents expect rise in prices for food, equipment, clothes and furniture imported from other countries. It is worth mentioning that this figure is roughly equal among both opponents and proponents of EEU.

Regarding the amount of Armenia's trade with Europe vs. Russia, the study revealed very interesting trends. Almost half of the respondents claimed that Armenia's main trade partner is Russia. It is noteworthy that there was also a significant number of respondents who reported that they are not sure about this question. When we study this question from EEU opponents' and proponents' perspectives, we can observe that the percentage of EEU proponents who consider Russia as Armenia's main trade partner exceeds that of opponents of EEU by 14%. Likewise, the percentage of opponents of EEU who think that Europe is Armenia's main trade partner exceeds that of proponents of EEU by as much as 10%.

Another interesting finding was that 44% of respondents who consider Russia as Armenia's main trade partner favor Armenia's membership in EEU. On the contrary, 53% of respondents who consider Europe as Armenia's main trade partner reported to be against Armenia's membership in EEU.

The analysis of attitudes towards Armenia's membership in EEU among respondents who mainly gave wrong answers to the survey questions and those who mainly answered the questions correctly also reveals an interesting trend. On average, half of the questions were answered correctly. Respondents who gave predominantly wrong answers to the survey questions tend to favor Armenia's membership in EEU. Conversely, the respondents who gave predominantly correct answers to the survey questions tend to be against Armenia's membership in EEU.

Thus, the results suggest that there seems to be a relationship between respondents' attitudes towards Armenia's membership in EEU and their perceptions about possible decrease of prices for oil and gas, Russian products, and their perception of the amount of Armenia's trade with Russia vs. Europe.

We can also observe that there is still a considerable portion of the population who haven't formed an opinion and don't have clearly defined expectations from EEU and consequences of Armenia's membership in it.

The results also suggest that the more informed people are about EEU membership and its consequences, the more they reported to be against it.

The fact that there was a considerable number of respondents who are aware of EEU membership details and still favor joining it can be explained by different factors.

First of all, it is possible that they have fears that Armenia will be "punished" by Russia for refusing to join the union. The security issue may also be a decisive factor as Armenians may still see Russia as an ally and as a security guarantee, and, hence, as an obstacle for Azerbaijan to restart a full-scale war for regaining control over Nagorno Karabagh. Thus, it is suggested that a study be conducted to address the possible impact of the aforementioned factors.



## APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Do you know what Eurasian Economic Union is?
2. Do you favor Armenia's membership in Eurasian Economic Union?
3. Will the prices for gas and petrol go down as a result of Armenia's membership in Eurasian Economic Union?
4. Will Russian products become cheaper as a result of Armenia's membership in Eurasian Economic Union?
5. Will food, equipment, clothes and furniture imported from other countries become more expensive?
6. Is the Russian economy declining or growing now?
7. Does Armenia trade more with Europe or with Russia?