(Appendix 1)

**Economic Mechanisms to Overcome the Vulnerability of the Economy and Social Sphere of Strategically Important Settlements of Kazakhstan**

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**For citation**: Orynbet, P. Zh., & Ivanova M. (2022). Economic mechanisms to overcome the vulnerability of the economy and social sphere of strategically important settlements of Kazakhstan. *Eurasian Journal of Economic and Business Studies, …*(…), …..

**Conflict of interest**: author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Abstract**

In Kazakhstan, there is an urgent need to develop depressed settlements, which have their own characteristics associated with the historically established heterogeneity of the location of industries and deep differentiation in terms of socio-economic potential. Urban agglomerations, city centers, regions with raw material extractive industries, whose products are in demand on the global market, have best adapted to a market economy. As a result, many settlements in Kazakhstan turned out to be, as a rule, less developed and competitive, and even worse socially vulnerable. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the structure and level of their development, revealed potential vulnerability issues, especially in small communities where there are no resources and materials to manage these consequences. The severity of these shocks will depend on the development of effective measures to address inequalities in strategically important communities. The main purpose of this article is to provide economic mechanisms to overcome the vulnerability of the economy and the social sphere of strategically important settlements in Kazakhstan. Estimated indicators in this study are based on the socio-economic indicator of Zhambyl, North Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan, Atyrau and Mangystau regions for 2009-2020. The results of this study show that there is a significant disparity between settlements in the regions of Kazakhstan in terms of such factors as the level and quality of life. Most of the regional problems faced by the most vulnerable communities are widespread and systemic. Socio-economic problems, lack of resources, low level of industrial production and lack of state support are the main reasons for the vulnerability and depression of the studied settlements.

***Keywords:*** Regional Economy, Economic Mechanism, Economic Vulnerability, Social Sphere, Settlements

***SCSTI***: 06.61.33

***JEL Code****:* B4, D60, I3, R1

***Acknowledgements:*** The study was carried out within the framework of Program-targeted ……….