

## Results-oriented

Latin America is one of the political and economic centers of the emerging multipolar world, home to more than 650 million people. Many countries of this region are aimed at pursuing an independent foreign policy and seek to move away from the historically raw material-based nature of their economies through accelerated innovation development. The Republic of Belarus can provide effective assistance to these countries by developing the most concrete trade and economic interaction. The nomenclature of Belarusian exports to this region includes potash fertilizers, means of land transport, ferrous metal products, chemical and petrochemical products, instruments and optical devices, and dairy products. Belarus also has positive production experience in Latin America. These include participation of Belarusian companies in geological and seismic exploration, mining, and construction projects in a number of countries. It is envisaged to further increase the volume of trade and investment through the implementation of joint cooperation projects to move from simple trade to the creation of joint ventures and assembly plants. This is the subject of this study.



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*Prospects for an integrated approach to new opportunities partnerships*

**Boris Zalesskij**

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## **Belarus - Latin America: maximising concrete trade and economic interaction**

Latin America is one of the political and economic centres of the emerging multipolar world, home to more than 650 million people. "Many countries of this region aim to pursue an independent foreign policy and seek to move away from the historically raw material character of their economies through accelerated innovative development"<sup>1</sup>. And the Republic of Belarus can provide effective assistance to these states by developing the most concrete trade and economic co-operation.

In June 2022, the Belarus-Latin America Forum was held in Moscow at the Business and Cultural Complex of the Belarusian Embassy in Russia. The Forum brought together representatives of the embassies of Latin American countries in Belarus and Russia from 15 countries. The event was attended by ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions and diplomats from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and El Salvador.

The Latin America and Caribbean region is interesting for Belarus as an important platform for integration into global trade and economic ties. In 2021, the total imports of the region's countries from Belarus "totalled \$715.5 million, up 3.5% year-on-year in 2020. The commodity nomenclature of Belarusian exports to the region includes potash fertilizers, means of land transport, ferrous metal products, chemical and petrochemical products, instruments and optical devices, and dairy products"<sup>2</sup>. At the end of 2021,

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<sup>1</sup> Aleinik told how Belarus is interested in co-operation with Latin American countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/alejnik-rasskazal-chem-belarusi-interesno-sotrudnichestvo-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-567456-2023/>

<sup>2</sup> NCM on the prospects of promoting Belarusian goods and services in Latin America [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-latinskoj-ameriki-8247//>



Belarus' trade turnover with the Latin American region totalled about USD 1.5 billion.

Belarus already has positive experience in the region. "This includes participation of Belarusian companies in geological and seismic exploration, mining in Venezuela and Ecuador, construction projects in Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, supplies of Belarusian agricultural, automotive and passenger equipment to Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Nicaragua and Bolivia, export of quarry equipment to Venezuela and Chile"<sup>3</sup>. The work in these areas is quite active. It is envisaged to further increase trade and investment volumes primarily through the implementation of joint co-operation projects. In its co-operation with Latin America, Belarus aims to move from simple trade to the creation of joint ventures and assembly plants.

For example, the dynamically developing agricultural sector in Latin American countries needs appropriate machinery. Reliable and price-competitive tractors, combines, and other Belarusian machinery can occupy a worthy place here. "The range of modern products manufactured in Belarus, primarily agricultural machinery, dump trucks, trucks, road construction equipment, public electric transport, tyre products and many others, can be of direct interest to meet the needs of Latin American producers of agricultural products, the mining industry and the transport sector"<sup>4</sup>.

Belarus is interested not only in trade in goods, but also in exports of services, the basis of which are transport, computer, construction and mining services. "At the end of 2021, trade in services with Latin American countries grew to \$200 million (58.3 per cent by 2020). Belarusian exports reached

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<sup>3</sup> Shestakov: Belarus is ready to strengthen cooperation with Latin American countries in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/shestakov-belarus-gotova-k-ukrepleniju-sotrudnichestva-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-po-vsem-510548-2022/>

<sup>4</sup> Pivovar, E. Belarus in co-operation with Latin America aims at the transition to the creation of JVs and assembly plants / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-sotrudnichestve-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-natselena-na-perehod-k-sozdaniju-sp-i-sborochnyh-510550-2022/>

\$178.9 million (97.9 per cent)"<sup>5</sup> . Nevertheless, the dynamics in mutual trade in goods and services, as well as the existing level of trade and economic relations between Belarus and many Latin American countries do not fully correspond to the real possibilities of the parties. Undoubtedly, exporters are maximally interested in promoting Belarusian "sophisticated technical products - products of mechanical engineering, scientific sector, ranging from tomographs to spare parts and engines for existing automobile and tractor equipment"<sup>6</sup> . A promising area of co-operation is the expansion of contacts in the field of education. Belarusian universities are ready to accept applicants to study various specialities in demand in Latin American countries, including the training of specialists in industry, agriculture, and health care.

In recent years, Latin American countries have maintained the role of points of growth and foreign trade activity of Belarus. These include Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

**The Brazilian** market is of great interest to the Belarusian machine-building and chemical industries. This is due to Brazil's ever-growing demand for agricultural and other machinery, fertilizers, tyres, and other goods produced by Belarusian companies. In 2021, bilateral trade totalled about \$800 million, with exports totalling \$585 million. Commodity items such as cord materials (yarns and fabrics) for the production of car tyres, beer malt, and electric vehicles have a significant potential for increasing supplies to the Brazilian market.

**Argentina** is an important trade and economic partner for Belarus. In 2021, trade turnover between the countries totalled USD 136 million. Prospective areas of trade and economic cooperation with this country include the supply of Belarusian complex technical products: agricultural and forestry

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<sup>5</sup> Pivovar, E. Foreign Ministry of Belarus: trade with Latin America demonstrates steady growth / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mid-belarusi-torgovlja-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-demonstriruet-ustojchivyj-rost-510549-2022/>

<sup>6</sup> Pivovar, E. Shestakov: Belarus can sell a wide range of products to Latin America / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shestakov-belarus-mozhet-prodavat-v-latinskuju-ameriku-shirokij-spektr-produktsii-510577-2022/>

machinery, forage and grain harvesters, dump trucks, passenger cars and electric vehicles.

In 2021, trade turnover between Belarus and **Colombia** totalled \$90 million, while Belarusian exports totalled \$80 million. New commodity items that may be in demand in the Colombian market include agricultural machinery, buses, foodstuffs, and may also be the IT sector.

Belarus also has points of interaction with **Venezuela** to intensify trade and economic relations. In 2021, almost USD 2 million worth of Belarusian goods were supplied to Venezuela, an increase of 82%. Among the most promising commodity items for Belarusian exports to Venezuela are condensed and dried milk and cream, printed books, brochures, pipes, tubes, hoses and plastic fittings, and whey.

Belarus and **Cuba** are also working on new joint projects in the trade and economic sphere. Tractors and tractors, condensed and dried milk and cream, parts for receiving and transmitting equipment, parts and accessories for cars and tractors, devices and appliances used in medicine, and reciprocating internal combustion engines form the bulk of Belarusian supplies to Cuba. Supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment may also become a promising area of Belarusian exports.

In September 2022, a Belarusian-Cuban business forum was held, where participants considered promising areas of trade and economic interaction between the two countries and topical issues of doing business. More than 90 representatives from 65 enterprises in areas of interest to Belarus for promotion to the Cuban market and 18 representatives of Cuban business held talks on the development of "mutually beneficial co-operation and implementation of joint projects in molecular immunology, scientific and

technological developments, education, metallurgy, agricultural engineering, trade, coffee, rum production and other areas"<sup>7</sup>.

It should be noted that this is the first meeting of business representatives of the two countries in a long time. Moreover, for Belarus, Cuba is a partner in export-import operations, an independent and autonomous country, and is also seen as a platform to enter the large market of Latin America - Venezuela, Bolivia and other major countries in the region. "Trade turnover between Belarus and Cuba totalled \$22.9 million in 2021, more than \$20 million of which is accounted for by Belarusian exports"<sup>8</sup>. The participants of the business forum showed that the potential of the two countries has not been exhausted yet. Moreover, the establishment of business contacts between representatives of the business communities of Belarus and Cuba will spur further development of trade and economic relations.

The Cuban side is ready to co-operate with partners from Belarus, particularly in the machine-building sector. For reference, more than 20,000 Belarusian-made tractors are currently operating in the fields of Cuba. At the same time, the cooperation can be "not only in the purchase of new models, but also in the purchase of spare parts for the restoration of machinery that is already available in Cuba. We are interested in supplying spare parts for repair and restoration of tractors, MAZ trucks, AMKODOR, buses. We can engage in assembly, as well as create projects to supply this equipment to the

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<sup>7</sup> Belarus and Cuba will discuss the prospects of trade and economic cooperation at the business forum on 27 September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-obsudjat-perspektivy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-na-biznes-forume-27-525866-2022>

<sup>8</sup> Business of Belarus and Cuba intends to develop co-operation in medicine, engineering and logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-belarusi-i-kuby-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-meditsine-mashinostroenii-i-logistike-525975-2022/>

Latin American market. Belarus and Cuba also have great potential in the digital economy and tourism"<sup>9</sup>.

However, medicine is of the greatest interest to Cuban partners. In particular, in November 2022, the first Belarusian medicines were registered in this Latin American country. "This step was made possible thanks to long-term joint work between the Belarusian (Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare, Managing Company of Belpharmprom Holding) and Cuban (Centre for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices (CECMED)) parties. It concerns medicines produced by the UE "Minskintercaps""<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare and CECMED signed an agreement on inter-laboratory comparisons, which will contribute to increasing the level of trust between testing laboratories of Belarus and Cuba, qualification of specialists in the field of laboratory research, promote harmonisation of requirements for quality control of medicines and, as a result, increase the effectiveness and safety of medicines for patients of the two countries.

The Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPO) and the Medical University of Havana also signed a cooperation agreement in November 2022. At the Cuban Centre for Immunological Research, Belarusian specialists agreed to cooperate in prenatal diagnostics, neonatal screening, oncology and diabetology, as well as the possibility of using Cuban reagents as an adequate replacement for those currently used in various screening tests. "At the Cuban Centre of Molecular Immunology, representatives of BelMAPO agreed to open joint research projects in the

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<sup>9</sup> Medicine, engineering, tourism. The Ambassador of Cuba told about the areas of cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/meditsina-mashinostroenie-turizm-posol-kuby-rasskazal-o-napraavljenijah-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-525993-2022/>

<sup>10</sup> Belarusian medicines are registered in Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-lekarstva-zaregistrirovany-na-kube-536206-2022/>

field of therapy of neurological diseases and in the field of ophthalmology and combustiology with the help of stem cell technologies"<sup>11</sup> .

<sup>12</sup>In November 2022, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education documents was added to the legal framework of the Belarusian-Cuban relations, which considers such promising areas of cooperation as "joint research on the development of medicines and pharmaceutical substances; development and manufacture of medical devices and devices for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases in cardiac surgery, traumatology and orthopaedics, oncology, dentistry; and development of joint ventures in the field of medical science and technology, including in Cuba. The parties will cooperate both within the framework of science and technology parks, which are actively developing in Belarus and Cuba, and will consider the possibility of establishing joint ventures, including in Cuba. In addition, other proposals are being discussed: the possibility for higher education institutions of the two countries to participate in competitions of Belarusian-Cuban scientific and technical projects in priority areas of cooperation; the implementation of joint educational programmes to train bachelors and masters in a number of areas - pharmaceuticals, information technologies, engineering and technical specialties. Now there are 10 direct agreements between the universities of our countries. Thus, a good foundation for further development of the Belarusian-Cuban bilateral relations has already been laid.

**Nicaragua** should also be named among Belarus's important political and economic partners in Latin America. Moreover, in May 2024, the two countries will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. And in May 2023, Minsk and Managua said that they

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<sup>11</sup> BelMAPO and the Medical University of Havana signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belmapo-i-meduniversitet-gavany-podpisali-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-536529-2022/>

<sup>12</sup> Belarus and Cuba signed an agreement on the recognition of educational documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-podpisali-soglashenie-o-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-535587-2022/>

aim to seriously intensify trade, economic and humanitarian ties in order to constantly support and promote the bilateral agenda, filling it with new projects and cooperation programmes. It should be noted that trade relations between Belarus and Nicaragua are still relatively small. They are based on supplies of Belarusian products. The legal framework is still in the process of formation.

In May 2023, a government delegation from this Latin American country visited Minsk. This visit showed that Belarus and Nicaragua intend to actively develop the legal foundation of bilateral relations. In particular, several important documents were signed in the Belarusian capital. Firstly, the General Agreement between the two governments on the provision of export credits, which will strengthen the position of exporters from Belarus. "The buyers of Belarusian machinery will be the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Nicaragua, the Municipal Institute of Transport Regulation of Managua, and the Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development. The lending will be carried out with the use of loan funds from the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus OJSC"<sup>13</sup>.

Secondly, the basic agreement, which opens up opportunities for industrial cooperation and will allow "in the long term to significantly increase supplies of Belarusian machinery in demand in Nicaragua. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the increase in joint trade"<sup>14</sup>. Third, the agreement on cooperation in education will provide a legal basis for interaction between the parties and establish working contacts between educational institutions of the two countries, "training specialists in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Industry: the agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits will strengthen the positions of Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-soglashenie-s-nikaragua-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-ukrepit-pozitsii-belorusskih-567470-2023/>

<sup>14</sup> Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik on the results of negotiations with the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua (19 May 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b1045153bb04077c.html>

specialities most in demand in Nicaragua"<sup>15</sup> , as well as facilitate the exchange of relevant information and develop scientific and technical cooperation, which is part of this work. In addition, Minsk and Managua are working on draft agreements on trade and economic cooperation, promotion and mutual protection of investments, establishment of a joint committee on trade and economic cooperation, as well as on the abolition of visa regime.

Belarus and Nicaragua also decided to take a comprehensive approach to trade and economic interaction with a focus on industrial cooperation and investment cooperation. The parties focused on the implementation of joint projects in agriculture and the supply of Belarusian passenger, road-building and agricultural machinery to the Nicaraguan market. In particular, "in economic terms, first of all, we are talking about the development of industrial cooperation and the use of Belarusian agricultural technologies in the development of Nicaraguan agriculture..."<sup>16</sup> . Back in June 2022, at the talks in Minsk between the Ministries of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and Agriculture and Livestock of Nicaragua, the parties considered the prospects for cooperation in agriculture. They agreed to co-operate in livestock breeding, veterinary medicine, agrarian education, and exchange of experience in crop production. In addition, "Belarus is interested in supplies from Nicaragua of raw cane sugar, coffee, cocoa beans and semi-finished fruit products for baby food production"<sup>17</sup> .

Another interesting topic that may become promising on the Belarusian-Nicaraguan economic agenda is the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal. The fact is that back

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<sup>15</sup> Belarus signed an agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-podpisala-s-nikaragua-soglashenie-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-567453-2023/>

<sup>16</sup> Aleinik: Belarus and Nicaragua are aimed at serious intensification of trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/aleinik-belarus-i-nikaragua-natseleny-na-serjeznuju-aktivizatsiju-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-567428-2023/>

<sup>17</sup> Belarus and Nicaragua intend to co-operate in livestock breeding and agrarian education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-nikaragua-namereny-sotrudnichat-v-zhivotnovodstve-i-agrarnom-obrazovanii-506979-2022/>



in 2012, the National Assembly of Nicaragua approved the project for the construction of the "Great Transoceanic Canal of Nicaragua," which "if completed, will connect the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The new interoceanic canal is expected to be a longer, wider and deeper alternative to the Panama Canal (opened in 1920) and will seriously relieve maritime traffic"<sup>18</sup>. So, despite geographical remoteness, distance is not an obstacle to establishing co-operation when partners have respect, trust and friendship.

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<sup>18</sup> Foreign Minister of Nicaragua does not rule out the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/glava-mid-nikaragua-ne-iskljuchaet-vozmozhnosti-uchastija-belarusi-v-stroitelstve-nikaraguanskogo-567406-2023/>

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## **Belarus - Uzbekistan: joint initiatives build co-operation in innovative areas**

In August 2022, Minsk hosted the ninth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, where participants noted the importance of continuing systematic work for new promising joint initiatives in order to jointly achieve a multiple increase in the volume of mutual trade in the coming years. Recall that "in 2021, trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan amounted to \$301.9 million and increased by 7.8% compared to 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>19</sup>. The main items of Belarusian exports in 2021 were meat and meat products, medicines, vinyl chloride polymers, milk powder, diagnostic reagents, vaccines, blood serums, chipboard, cheese and cottage cheese. In the first half of 2022, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$190 million and increased by almost 40 per cent. At the same time, the positive balance on the Belarusian side totalled \$100.7 million. Now the parties see a real opportunity to achieve a mutual trade turnover of \$500 million. In this regard, Belarus is ready to increase supplies of food and agricultural goods, road-building, municipal and special equipment, dump trucks, woodworking products, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment.

As for industrial cooperation and the creation of joint productions, "a total of 103 organisations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, Belvitunifarm LLC"<sup>20</sup>. In 2022, a good result of joint work can be considered the release of equipment based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant.

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<sup>19</sup> Golovchenko and Aripov discussed building up the trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-i-aripov-obsudili-naraschivanie-tovarooborota-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-520574-2022/>

<sup>20</sup> Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 23.

"If until recently only superstructures on ready-made machine kits were carried out, in April this year the first MAZ dump truck assembled in Uzbekistan was presented. There are all possibilities to ensure high localisation of this production"<sup>21</sup>. Work is underway to resume production of Belarusian tractors in Uzbekistan. And "BELAZ is ready to supply Uzbekistan with completely new models of machinery for transporting rock masses, which are both highly environmentally friendly and efficient"<sup>22</sup>. Belkommunmash is interested to take part in the development of Uzbek transport infrastructure and jointly implement initiatives to launch environmentally friendly passenger transport. Belarusian specialists are ready to offer a comprehensive solution to create an efficient and safe system of public electric transport: from building the necessary infrastructure to supplying the most modern models of vehicles. The implementation of such a project would be a truly landmark event in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek relations.

Indicators between the two countries have also increased in the field of agro-industrial complex. In the first six months of 2022, the turnover of agricultural products increased in both exports and imports. "Meat products, dairy products and baby food are exported to Uzbekistan. Imports are mainly represented by vegetable and melon products, grapes, dried fruits, nuts"<sup>23</sup>. For Uzbekistan's growing livestock industry, Belarus is ready to organise supplies of high-yield premixes with access to joint production of mixed fodder in this Central Asian country.

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<sup>21</sup> Agro-industrial complex, industrial co-operation, construction. Zayats on the plans of interaction with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/apk-promkooperatsija-stroitelstvo-zajats-o-planah-vzaimodejstviya-s-uzbekistanom-520299-2022/>

<sup>22</sup> Industrial cooperation, machinery supplies, woodworking. Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed mutual cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-postavki-tehniki-derevoobrabotka-belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-vzaimnoe-520492-2022/>

<sup>23</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed the issues of further cooperation in the sphere of agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-voprosy-dalnejshego-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-apk-520545-2022/>

Speaking about Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, Belarusian investors in Tashkent are successfully implementing a project for the production of antibiotics with a broad spectrum of action. Belarusian holding Belfarmprom and its colleagues in Uzbekistan are working out the possibility of setting up joint ventures to produce medical drugs in non-overlapping areas. In the field of construction, the parties are interested in jointly designing Uzbekistan's infrastructure facilities, industrial buildings, healthcare facilities, including those of the pharmaceutical industry. The Uzbek side is interested in Belarusian wooden house-building products. Given Uzbekistan's actively developing tourism sector and its need for environmentally friendly residential facilities, cooperation in this area is very promising.

Interesting Belarusian-Uzbek projects are also being implemented in the educational sphere. In particular, Baranavichy State University (BarSU), together with Samarkand State University and Jizzak State Pedagogical Institute, is currently implementing "double degree" programmes. It is expected that undergraduate and master's students will be trained at BarSU and partner universities on the basis of Belarusian and foreign positive experience. "Recruitment is planned to be carried out in the specialities of "practical psychology", "preschool education", "psychology", "economics""<sup>24</sup>. And Brest State Technical University will cooperate with the Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology. In July 2022, the universities signed cooperation agreements to interact in organising retraining and professional development of teachers from Bukhara in Brest. "We will start with this, further on we can co-operate on the first and second levels of higher

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<sup>24</sup> BarSU develops joint educational programmes with Uzbek partners [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-razrabatyvaet-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-s-uzbekskimi-partnerami-520325-2022>

education"<sup>25</sup> . The institute in Bukhara is a major educational and research centre in Uzbekistan. Teaching is carried out at eight faculties, higher education is received by more than 11 thousand students in 30 bachelor's degrees.

In January 2023, Belarus and Uzbekistan celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations. In recent years, the two countries have significantly intensified bilateral dialogue also at the regional level. Suffice it to say that as of April this year, the parties have already signed 15 interregional agreements. "Delegations from the regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan regularly exchange visits. The practice of developing roadmaps for the implementation of interregional agreements has proved effective"<sup>26</sup> . Among the active participants of this interregional interaction are such oblasts as Vitebsk and Kashkadarya, Gomel and Fergana.

In particular, in October 2022, the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a co-operation agreement with the khokimiyat of the Kashkadarya region. This document promotes the building up of mutually beneficial "trade and economic ties between enterprises and organisations of the regions. In addition, it will define ways to develop co-operation in scientific and technical, tourist, cultural, sports and health care areas"<sup>27</sup> . In the same October 2022, several important documents were also signed, developing the interaction between the individual participants of this interregional partnership: two agreements and two memorandums of co-operation. As for the agreements, these are the interaction between the Eufrosinia Polotskaya Polotsk State University and the Karshi Institute of

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<sup>25</sup> BrSTU will co-operate with Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-buharskim-inzhenerno-tehnologicheskim-institutom-514381-2022/>

<sup>26</sup> C. Rachkov: Belarus considers Uzbekistan as an important partner in Central Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://sovrep.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/srachkov-belarus-rassmatrivaet-uzbekistan-kak-vazhnogo-partnera-v-tsentralnoj-azii-22630-2023/>

<sup>27</sup> Delegation of Vitebsk region in Uzbekistan will sign an agreement with the khokimiyat of Kashkadarya region [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsiya-vitebskoj-oblasti-v-uzbekistane-podpishe-soglasenie-s-hokimijatom-kashkadarjinskoj-527596-2022/>

Engineering and Economics, as well as between the P.M. Masherov Vitebsk State University and the Karshi State University. Memorandums were adopted between the free economic zones of the two regions, the concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and an enterprise for the supply and processing of dairy products. In addition, the parties signed contracts worth about three million dollars. It is about food and woodworking products, as well as the supply of electrical equipment for the oil industry and measuring devices. And the Vitebsk region has been working out the issue of supplying its products to the Uzbek market. The Kashkadarya region was very interested in meat and dairy products, electrical appliances, cable products in terms of sharing the experience of enterprises in production within this country"<sup>28</sup> .

At the same time, the Belarusian and Uzbek regions planned to cooperate in other areas as well. For example, back in 2021, in the territory of the free economic zone of Kashkadarya region, the Vitsebsk holding Marko set up an enterprise where more than two hundred employees sew shoes. Now Uzbek partners are interested in new competences - in light industry, dairy farms, milk processing enterprises. In May 2023, at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovations. Investments. Prospects", held in Vitebsk, the parties proposed a number of other new areas of co-operation, including the linen industry. "Vitebsk region is ready to assist in providing varieties that can be grown under the conditions of Uzbekistan. This proposal is being prepared by specialists of the Flax Institute RUE. In addition, options for co-operation in woodworking are being actively worked out, in particular for the manufacture of individual wooden houses and furniture, including for educational institutions of Kashkadarya region"<sup>29</sup> . There are also initiatives in the pharmaceutical industry. For better development of contacts in economic,

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<sup>28</sup> Enterprises of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions signed contracts for \$3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-vitebskoj-i-kashkadarjinskoj-oblastej-podpisali-kontrakty-na-3-mln-529745-2022/>

<sup>29</sup> Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions plan to organise infotours to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-i-kashkadarjinskaja-oblasti-planirujut-organizovat-infotury-dlja-aktivizatsii-567511-2023/>

tourism and other spheres, the parties plan to organise joint information tours. Thus, joint activities of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions already create favourable prerequisites for both sides for the implementation of projects, which in the future may strengthen new points of contact in mutual cooperation.

As for Gomel region, which is also actively developing cooperation with Uzbek partners, we note that its trade turnover with Uzbekistan has more than tripled over the past three years and totalled \$33 million. And according to the results of 2022 Gomel exports increased almost one and a half times. "The main export positions of Gomel enterprises are paper, cardboard, wallpaper, chipboard boards, wood pulp, cattle meat, timber, paint, polyethylene products, wire, chemical threads, dairy products, agricultural machinery, furniture..."<sup>30</sup> . Among the regions of Uzbekistan interested in joint projects with Gomel partners is Fergana **region**, which intends to develop cooperation with the Belarusian region in the production of agricultural machinery, woodworking, chemical industry, and tourism. In February 2023, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee and the Fergana Oblast Hokimiyat signed a roadmap for 2023, which includes various directions. And there are already concrete developments. In the near future, "a company shop is expected to be opened in Fergana region, where woodworking products of the Belarusian region will be sold. Some of them will be sent for re-export to Uzbekistan's neighbouring countries"<sup>31</sup> . In Gomel the idea to open a trading house for selling fruits, dried fruits and vegetables from Uzbekistan is being worked out. Besides, Fergana entrepreneurs are interested in joint production of chemical and pulp-and-paper products with Gomel companies. To all appearances, the roadmap of

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<sup>30</sup> Trade turnover of Gomel region with Uzbekistan has increased more than three times in the last three years [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-uzbekistanom-vyros-bolee-chem-v-tri-raz-za-poslednie-tri-goda-549254-2023/>

<sup>31</sup> From combine-building to tourism: Gomel and Fergana regions intend to develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-kombajnostroenija-doturizma-gomelskaja-i-ferganskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-549242-2023/>



the two regions - Belarusian and Uzbek - will soon be filled in other areas as well.

Another interesting aspect of the interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the development of Belarusian exports in the Uzbek market using exhibition specifics. Especially since there will be several such projects in 2023. In March 2023, Tashkent already hosted the 22nd international exhibition "Foodstuffs, Ingredients and Production Technologies - UzFood", where Belarus presented a large-scale exposition - The Taste of Nature - with the participation of more than 20 food producers. Concern Belgospisheprom presented the products of confectionery factories Kommunarka, Spartak and Krasny Izhevik, which familiarised the guests of the Belarusian pavilion with the best products and production novelties - new types of confectionery products, chocolate and chocolate candies, wafers, biscuits, chewy and jelly marmalade.

Meat processing companies and dairy producers, which are part of the Grodniasomolprom holding and the Brestmyasomolprom concern, were also well represented at the exhibition. These were Brest, Pinsk, Slonim, Volkovysk, Grodno and Oshmian meat processing plants, which offered high quality beef in various versions, sausages, meat semi-finished products. In particular, the Grodno meat processing plant demonstrated new products, which brought to Uzbekistan raw smoked sausages "Vostochnaya" and "Kavkazskaya", cooked-smoked salami "Favourite" with olives, as well as with cheese.

The dairy segment was represented by Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Minsk Margarine Plant, Luninets Dairy Plant, Lida Dairy Canning Plant, Molochny Mir, Molochny Gostinets and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. "Belarusian producers demonstrate a wide range of whole-milk products -

milk, cream, kefir, cheese, cottage cheese, creams, yoghurts"<sup>32</sup> . Oil and fat products and rapeseed oil could also be seen at the exhibition. Bread and bakery products were presented by Berestaisky Baker OJSC, and Bellact Company showed products for baby food. In addition, the products of such enterprises as Maloritsky Canning and Vegetable Washing Plant OJSC and Lidskie Food Concentrates OJSC were demonstrated.

Within the framework of the exhibition, an Uzbek-Belarusian business forum was held, which was attended by more than 50 heads and representatives of state bodies and business circles of the two countries, where cooperation in the field of agriculture and food was discussed, the food potential of Belarus was outlined, and the export potential of the Brest and Grodno regions was presented. In addition, the business circles of the two countries held B2B negotiations, which took place separately and at the stands of Belarusian enterprises. As for the specific results of the exhibition, "Grodno Meat Processing Plant signed a contract for the supply of meat products worth \$500 thousand, and Minsk Margarine Plant signed a contract for the supply of its products worth 10 million Russian rubles. During the exhibition, Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1 held negotiations on increasing sales volumes to its key partners in Uzbekistan, in particular, on the supply of butter and skimmed milk powder, and also signed a contract for the supply of dairy products"<sup>33</sup> . Bellakt discussed opportunities to increase sales of its products, increase supplies of dried baby food and agreed to supply curd desserts and milk powder, including lactose-free milk, to this Central Asian country, while Molochniy Mir signed an agreement to supply almost two and a half thousand tonnes of whey powder and more than a thousand tonnes of milk powder.

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<sup>32</sup> Belarus presented its exposition at the exhibition of food industry in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predstavila-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-pischevoj-promyshlennosti-v-tashkente-557927-2023/>

<sup>33</sup> Belarusian enterprises intend to increase supplies to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predprijatija-namereny-narastit-postavki-v-uzbekistan-559267-2023/>

Bobruiskagromash Holding is also one of the Belarusian companies that are actively interested in promoting their export products in the Uzbek market. In March 2023, within the framework of the international exhibition "Agriculture - AgroWorld Uzbekistan-2023", specialists of the Belarusian company held negotiations with key Uzbek partners - Metal processing, Planeta Servis and MCHJ Buxoro Agro Texnika Garant, "with whom further volumes of machinery deliveries were agreed, as well as technical design of machines to adapt them to the requirements of the Uzbek market. In addition, during the negotiations the representative of the holding familiarised the partners with the novelties of Bobruiskagromash machinery: cotton cultivator, seeders and heavy-duty trailers"<sup>34</sup>. Partners from Uzbekistan confirmed their interest in annual deliveries of agricultural machinery from Bobruisk. For reference, since 2022, machines for the application of solid organic fertilisers and rotary mower-shredders have already been working in Uzbek fields.

In April 2023, Tashkent hosted the international industrial exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia", which covered six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy and materials, energy solutions, chemical industry technologies, information and telecommunications technologies, and infrastructure development. The exhibition featured an extensive Belarusian exposition Made in Belarus, which showcased the best industrial developments and innovative equipment of the country's engineering industry flagships. "7 major enterprises expressed their interest in participating <...>: Belarusian Metallurgical Plant, BELAZ, Minsk Tractor Plant, BATE, Scientific and Technological Park BNTU "Polytechnik", "Gomselmash", "StankoGomel"<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Uzbekistan is interested in supplies of agricultural machinery "Bobruiskagromash" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-postavkah-selskohozijsstvennoj-tehniki-bobrujskagromasha-556555-2023/>

<sup>35</sup> Belarus will present its exposition at the exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia" in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-innoprom-tsentralnaja-azija-v-tashkente-557617-2023/>

Another important reserve of Belarusian-Uzbek economic relations is the intensification of partnerships between free economic zones (FEZs) of Belarus and Uzbekistan, whose residents can build cooperation in various areas. In March 2023, during the Third Congress of Free Economic Zones held in Gomel, constructive negotiations took place between the administrations of FEZ Gomel-Raton and Navoi, where they discussed the potential for mutually beneficial partnership. In particular, "the first direction is to sell in Uzbekistan the demanded types of products of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents. Uzbekistan is quite an interesting market. It has 36 million population. <...> There are a lot of foreign investments, infrastructure projects"<sup>36</sup>. Among the most demanded products of Gomel manufacturers the Uzbek side names such topical positions as industrial, boiler, heating, ventilation, cooling equipment, as well as energy-saving and energy-efficient technologies. In short, the Uzbek market is an important area for Belarusian exports in Central Asia. And this is just the beginning.

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<sup>36</sup> Industrial co-operation and access to new markets. General Director of FEZ "Navoi" about the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promkooperatsija-i-vygod-na-novye-rynki-gendirektor-sez-navoi-o-partnerstve-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-557030-2023/>

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## Belarus-China: strategic partnership enters a new era

In March 2023, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted a **joint statement** on the basic principles of developing exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era, which include mutual support for the state course and on issues affecting each other's indigenous interests. In addition to this joint statement, "Belarus and China during the state visit concluded 27 intergovernmental, interdepartmental and interregional agreements and more than 10 commercial arrangements in various fields"<sup>37</sup>, and the cumulative economic effect of the visit is estimated at more than three and a half billion dollars.

Among the signed documents is the **Programme of Belarusian-Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation for 2023-2024**, which aims the two countries at creating joint innovative industries. After all, "a developed engineering base, a modern system of training highly qualified personnel, and many years of advanced experience of leading Belarusian design bureaus all form the basis for future high-tech industries"<sup>38</sup>. In this regard, we would like to emphasise that Chinese investors invested over USD 100 million in projects in Belarus in 2022. In addition, more than forty projects were implemented with the participation of Chinese companies, and about twenty more promising initiatives are being worked on this year. In this context, we should mention the Great Stone industrial park, where in 2022 "Belarusian resident enterprises launched production of glass for all types of land transport, innovative photographic printing products, automated process control systems in industry and energy. The InKata science and technology

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<sup>37</sup> Foreign Ministry: the state visit of the President of Belarus to Beijing has become a significant event in the relations with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid-gosvizit-prezidenta-belarusi-v-pekini-stal-znachimym-sobytiem-v-otnoshenijah-s-kr-557851-2023/>

<sup>38</sup> Belarus and China are aimed at creating joint innovative industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-natseleny-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-innovatsionnyh-proizvodstv-556688-2023/>

park was put into operation to accommodate companies carrying out scientific research and experimental development"<sup>39</sup>.

It should be recalled that in the last days of 2022, the number of residents in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Velikiy Kamen reached the mark of 100. For reference, we note that "as of the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"<sup>40</sup>. In particular, the 99th resident was Yunchenbel LLC, the founder of which is a large Chinese company SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform to enable the import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"<sup>41</sup>. And Belarusian company Human Kraft will produce medical products - customised bone tissue prostheses based on 3D printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and cancer treatment. Also at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent to enter the industrial park as residents of Foryu Information Technologies LLC and Tontun Information Technologies LLC (People's Republic of China) were signed.

In addition, at the end of 2022, the resident company IPD Group LLC signed a lease agreement for a 5.5 thousand square metres universal production building in the industrial park. This deal became one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial property market. "On these premises, a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices will be implemented. In particular, the company will produce computer hardware, server equipment, monitors, interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-

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<sup>39</sup> Abramenko: "Great Stone" is a colossal opportunity for doing business on the platform of "Belt and Road" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-velikij-kamen-eto-kolossalnye-vozmozhnosti-dlja-vedenija-biznesa-na-platforme-pojas-i-put-556679-2023/>

<sup>40</sup> Zalesky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Features of Eurasian cooperation dialogue in the conditions of global threats / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 5.

<sup>41</sup> The number of residents of "Great Stone" has reached 100 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-dostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

substituting products"<sup>42</sup> . In total, by the end of 2022, 19 residents were registered in Velikiy Kamen. Also. Last year, residents of the park exported their products for more than \$100 million to 20 countries.

In 2023, Veliky Kamen is expected to attract at least 20 residents. In January alone, several investors from Belarus have already been registered. In particular, "very interesting projects in the field of production of products for veterinary medicine. And the second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy"<sup>43</sup> . At the end of January, Veliky Kamen registered a new resident - BaikalGroup LLC. "The company with Chinese capital will create a transport and logistics centre <...> in the park. The park resident plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging, tracking, labelling..."<sup>44</sup> . Goods will be delivered to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three more new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. Heprotrade LLC will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tonnes per month. Realisation of the project will make it possible to provide the domestic market with such products and reduce imports, as well as to supply them for export"<sup>45</sup> . The second February resident, Rivex LLC, will produce innovative dressing materials and for sterilisation, which are intended for both the domestic market and Eurasian Economic Union countries. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, founded by a Chinese

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<sup>42</sup> Velikiy Kamen" finished the year with the largest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejshij-sdelkoj-542635-2022/>

<sup>43</sup> "Great Stone" this year plans to attract at least 20 residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-privlech-ne-menee-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

<sup>44</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will create a transport and logistics centre [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskij-tsentr-547574-2023/>

<sup>45</sup> Two more residents with Belarusian capital registered in "Veliky Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-belorusskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovany-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>



international logistics company, one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, intends to "develop logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introducing a wide range of services in this area. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organised"<sup>46</sup>. This initiative will also help in addressing the most important strategic task - expanding the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already registered in Veliky Kamen. And in general, already during the life of the industrial park, "the total number is 107 residents with a planned investment volume of \$1.3bn"<sup>47</sup>. It is expected that in order to create additional conditions for attracting new investors, work will continue in 2023 to further improve the special legal regime of the park with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that on the sites of Veliky Kamen "it is possible to quickly increase the level of localisation in the production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, to promptly replace falling imports with these products. In order to maximise the available potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build infrastructure and announce the project on a global scale"<sup>48</sup>. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the residents of the industrial park - in particular, and also create additional

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<sup>46</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

<sup>47</sup> This year "Great Stone" registered 7 new residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

<sup>48</sup> Chervjakov: the current challenges of the economy - a window of opportunity for the residents of the Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>

competitive advantages for the prospective development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

Another important document adopted in March 2023 is the **Comprehensive Strategy for Joint Industrial Development**, implemented by the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Informatisation of China, which provides for the creation of incentive mechanisms for Belarusian and Chinese enterprises to intensify and strengthen and technological cooperation. A roadmap with specific projects and initiatives has been prepared to implement this strategy. "It is planned to establish joint ventures in China, use Chinese technologies and competences to modernise Belarusian industries and attract Chinese investment to implement projects in Belarus"<sup>49</sup> in such key areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, woodworking, opto-mechanical, pulp and paper and chemical production.

In particular, **Minsk Tractor Plant** is ready to intensify co-operation with China. The project to organise the assembly of BELARUS tractors with a capacity of 350 horsepower is currently underway in the Celestial Empire. The first prototype was tested in 2020-2021. Last year, two more BELARUS 3523 tractors were delivered to China for certification, after which a decision will be made on localisation of the assembly of Belarusian tractors. And in Minsk, testing of the BELARUS 3523 model with a diesel engine from the Chinese corporation Weichai continues. It is expected that 100 such engines will be delivered to the plant in the near future. "Another direction is related to the supply of components from China. Last year, imports from China

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<sup>49</sup> Abramenko, A. On the peculiarities of doing business in CCW, joint projects and prospects for co-operation / A. Abramenko // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ob-osobennostjakh-vedenija-biznesa-v-knr-sovmestnyh-proektah-i-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-8633/>

totalled \$1.8 million, at the end of two months of the current [2023] year - \$400 thousand."<sup>50</sup> . So the parties are interested in joint investment projects.

During the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to China, several documents were signed concerning the development of production and **agro-industrial complex**. In particular, "the largest pig breeding complex in Belarus for 300,000 heads will be built in Minsk Region. <...> And we will modify our beef cattle breeding on the basis of Mogilev region. First of all - construction of a separate slaughterhouse. About a thousand lightweight sheds will be built for keeping cattle of Aberdeen-Angus or Limousin breeds"<sup>51</sup> .

Belarus also plans to almost double the volume of food supplies to China in 2023. Last year, these exports exceeded more than \$500 million. Belarusian supplies "increased in poultry meat (3 times), rapeseed oil (3.1 times), milk and cream (1.4 times) <...>. At present, 148 Belarusian producers are accredited to supply China with 171 categories of goods"<sup>52</sup> . And by the beginning of 2024, the goal is to reach \$900 million in product exports. In general, in trade and economic cooperation with its partners from China, this year Belarus has every chance to increase the volume of exports to \$2.2 billion.

Two more interesting documents signed in Beijing in early March 2023 concern the topic of **regional cooperation**. The first: it is the **plan of the Year of Regions between Belarus and China for 2023**, which "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives"<sup>53</sup> to attract at least \$150 million of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by

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<sup>50</sup> General Director of MTZ told about intensification of cooperation with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ob-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-kitaem-rasskazal-gendirektor-mtz-553348-2023/>

<sup>51</sup> Belarus expects to almost double the volume of food supplies to China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-pochti-v-dva-raza-narastit-objemy-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-553023-2023/>

<sup>52</sup> Export of Belarusian goods to China almost doubled in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/za-2022-god-eksport-belorusskih-tovarov-v-kitaj-prakticheski-udvoilsja-556681-2023/>

<sup>53</sup> Abramenko: Belarus and China seek to deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-belarus-i-kitaj-stremjatsja-k-uglubleniju-dvustoronnego-vzaimodejstvija-vo-vseh-oblastjah-556675-2023/>

2026. Second: it is the **Agreement between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the Ministry of Commerce of China on deepening trade and economic cooperation between the regions of the two countries**, in which the parties emphasise three Chinese regions. Firstly, **Tianjin** is a city of central subordination, where the production and logistics orientation prevails. Secondly, **Qingdao**, located in **Shandong** province, where enterprises of production and medical orientation are especially developing and where the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** free trade zone is being actively used. Thirdly, **Chongqing** is another centralised city. "It is the heart of logistics, transit. Here it is mainly e-commerce, emphasis on transport and logistics, including green corridors. This is when a train is not checked at the border, but controlled at the destination, which gives a big advantage in cost and time."<sup>54</sup> .

Also in early March 2023, Belarus and China signed a **plan to develop cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025**, which notes that "the parties will develop cooperation in the field of health care, science and education based on the principles of national legislation of the countries, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance"<sup>55</sup> . The two countries will give priority to cooperation in such areas as: organisation of joint scientific research in the field of medicine, exchange of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organisation of seminars and master classes for experts; cooperation in epidemiology and microbiology and exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; cooperation in surgery, transplantation and haematology; and participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of

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<sup>54</sup> . Nikolai Snopkov: The cumulative economic effect of the Belarusian-Chinese agreements is estimated at more than \$3.5 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10547>

<sup>55</sup> The plan for the development of cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025 between Belarus and China has been signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobytiya/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-gody-mezhdu-bela/>

Belarus.<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that as early as in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, issued in September 2022, Belarus and China agreed to develop cooperation in the field of high-tech medicine, vaccines and pharmaceuticals and "prioritised the formation of a joint pharmaceutical cluster, commercialisation of new pharmaceutical products and technologies, as well as the establishment of a high-quality centre of traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus" xml-ph-0.

For reference: the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on cooperation in healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese Ministries of Health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, a decree of the Belarusian government "On the state registration of strategically important medicines" was adopted, which allows for their accelerated registration to fight a pandemic. And at the same time, the Ministry of Health for the first time carried out the state registration of the Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) - soft capsules "Qingyi". And today "810 items of medical equipment, 502 medical devices and 480 medicines produced in China are registered in Belarus. From April 2020 to the present day, the PRC has provided gratuitous assistance in the amount equivalent to \$30 million. Belarus has received personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment, vaccine against COVID-19"<sup>57</sup>.

Our country has already established TCM centres and the necessary business conditions for setting up pharmaceutical production facilities. In particular, for the residents of the Velikiy Kamen park, the Ministry of Health of Belarus has developed a compendium "Main Aspects of Admission to Circulation of Medical Devices and Medicines" in Russian and Chinese

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<sup>56</sup> China and Belarus adopted the Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://zviazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-kitay-i-belarus-prinyali-sovmestnuyu-deklaraciyu>

<sup>57</sup> The Ministry of Health of Belarus and the Weigao Company signed a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompanija-weigao-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552445-2023/>

languages to inform them about opportunities and preferences. In addition, work has already been completed on the architectural project "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the Veliky Kamen Park, taking into account the creation of a regional centre for the promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine", and work is being completed on the inclusion of the specialty "doctor of traditional Chinese medicine" in the job nomenclature, which will give an additional impetus to the promotion of this topic in Belarus.

At the end of February 2023, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China said that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM issues, which should reflect the creation of a TCM centre in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster and the development of traditional Chinese medicine in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". It should be noted that "reflexotherapy methods, diagnostic methods, therapeutic gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies - electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, ultrasonic acupuncture <...> are used in Belarus. Centres of traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centres of Belarus. Co-operation has been established with a number of universities - Tianjin, Changchun, the University of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Zhejiang Province..."<sup>58</sup> . In addition, the educational process in this speciality is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexology. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained annually. The staff of the department has been repeatedly trained in Beijing, Taiyuan and Tianjin. These methods have shown their effectiveness, including in the treatment of postcoccygeal

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<sup>58</sup> Belarus and China are preparing a memorandum on traditional Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-knr-gotovjat-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoj-kitajskoj-meditsiny-552902-2023/>

syndrome. Reflexologists perform about 900 thousand reflexotherapy procedures in Belarus every year.

In 2023, the parties continue to actively co-operate in this context. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of co-operation agreements with Chinese partners. Firstly, in the city of Weihai, Shandong Province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies Chinese-made medical devices and spare parts. Second, in Shijiazhuang City in Hebei Province, with North China Pharmactutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been selected as a strategic partner to represent the interests of Belpharmprom Holding Company in the procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as to perform the functions of studying market conditions and submitting proposals for the supply of substances and raw materials to the holding company's management company in accordance with applications"<sup>59</sup>.

As for the development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the new era in the **field of education**, in February 2023, Beijing hosted the China Education Expo, which included a thematic exposition "Education in Belarus", where leading Belarusian universities made presentations of their educational programmes: the Belarusian State University of Economics, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Minsk State Linguistic University, and the Minsk State University of Economics and Radioelectronics. It should be noted that the Belarusian exposition was the only foreign one presented at this educational forum, which was visited by more than two thousand young men and women from China interested in studying in Belarus.

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<sup>59</sup> Agreement on co-operation signed by the Ministry of Health of Belarus and Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-552543-2023>

In addition, during the talks in the Chinese capital at the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, the possibility for Belarusian higher education institutions to join the International Engineering and Architectural Consortium of Educational Institutions was discussed. In general, "as a result of meetings of representatives of Belarusian universities in Chinese universities and consulting companies, 17 agreements on co-operation in the field of educational services were signed, 16 agreements are being worked out for signing"<sup>60</sup>. For reference, we note that "Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct co-operation agreements. To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000 people"<sup>61</sup>. In addition, Belarus and China are actively promoting the creation of joint educational structures. For example, seven joint projects are already functioning: three laboratories, two centres and two institutes. There are 40 joint educational programmes at the first and second levels of higher education, 10 of which have been developed over the last two years.

In this context, an important participant of international co-operation with the People's Republic of China in the field of education is the **Belarusian State University** (BSU), which already co-operates with more than 50 Chinese higher education institutions, and its classrooms are currently attended by more than three thousand citizens of the Celestial Empire. In March 2023, BSU identified new vectors and forms of cooperation with leading Chinese universities to strengthen, intensify and expand the areas of partnership.

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<sup>60</sup> Belarus - China: 17 new agreements in the field of education signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-kitaj-podpisano-17-novyh-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-553144-2023/>

<sup>61</sup> Zalesky, B. The route of interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 19.



In particular, BSU is entering a new level of co-operation with Peking University, which is the oldest university in China and was founded back in 1898, where the local library has more than eight million books and where more than 46,000 students, including more than four thousand foreigners, study. Recall that the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019. In March 2023, the parties initiated cooperation in the field of mathematical sciences. "The development of joint research projects, academic exchange for lecturing on modern advances in probability theory, mathematical statistics and data analysis are seen as promising"<sup>62</sup>. Besides, co-operation in the sphere of joint training of master's and postgraduate students will be expanded. For this purpose, this topic will be analysed in detail in the near future to identify the specialities and scientific fields of knowledge in which they plan to cooperate.

Another partner of BSU in China is Beijing Foreign Studies University, one of the leading universities in the country in the field of linguist training. In March 2023, BSU signed an agreement on exchange of students to develop academic mobility of undergraduate and graduate students studying Chinese, Belarusian and Russian languages. The parties will also develop joint innovative pedagogical methods.

As a result of the meetings held in March 2023, the Chinese University of Political Science and Law became a new partner of BSU. The universities signed a memorandum of understanding, which will allow co-operation in the field of jurisprudence in numerous vectors. "These include exchange of students, opening joint educational programmes, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching

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<sup>62</sup> BSU enters a new level of co-operation with Beijing University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bgu-vyhodit-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-s-pekinskim-universitetom-557082-2023/>

materials and scientific reports, organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and preparation of joint publications"<sup>63</sup> .

**Brest State Technical University (BrSTU)** is also among the active Belarusian universities developing co-operation with Chinese partners. In January 2023, BrSTU signed an agreement on cooperation in education, science, and culture with Guangdong Construction Vocational Technical Institute to combine the efforts of the two educational institutions to jointly train qualified specialists for the benefit of the economies of the two countries. The two sides plan to create a joint educational programme to train Chinese students. It is a question of recruiting training groups, where students will study in China for the first two years and then in Belarus. The Chinese side was particularly interested in the speciality "architecture". "These joint educational programmes are very popular because they allow students to get two diplomas in one cycle of study"<sup>64</sup> .

It should be noted that Guangdong Construction Vocational Institute is the largest and the only state higher vocational education institution that trains builders and architects and is located in the industrial centre of southern China. It has 22,000 students. With the support of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, an industrial and educational integration base has been built on the basis of the institute, where students study various innovative and traditional construction technologies, design methods, water supply systems, BIM-technologies, and property management. As for BrSTU, more than 200 Chinese citizens are studying in Brest today. The most popular among them are specialities in economics, construction and mechanical engineering.

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<sup>63</sup> Student exchange, joint programmes: BSU and leading universities of China have identified new vectors of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-sovmestnye-programmy-bgu-i-veduschie-vuzy-kitaja-opredelili-novye-vektory-557224-2023/>

<sup>64</sup> Brest University and Guangdong Institute will jointly train architects and builders [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-universitet-i-guandunskij-institut-budut-sovmestno-gotovit-arhitektorov-i-stroitelej-543128-2023/>

Finally, another set of documents signed in early March 2023 in Beijing concerned cooperation in the **media sphere**. This included an **agreement on co-operation between the news agencies of Belarus and China - BELTA and Xinhua**. In this regard, we note that the cooperation agreement between BELTA and Xinhua was first signed back in January 1993, then re-signed in June 2018. The new document - already the third - "implies the exchange of text news, photos and videos, mutual support and promotion on the Internet and social networks"<sup>65</sup> . The agencies agreed to exchange experiences and train journalists, editors and technical staff to improve their skills.

All these initiatives and projects adopted this spring in the relevant documents show that cooperation between Belarus and China in general tends to strengthen in all directions, but there is still a great unrealised potential, which will be implemented already in a new era - the exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two states.

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<sup>65</sup> BELTA and Xinhua signed an agreement on strengthening co-operation and intensifying news exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belta-i-sinhua-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ukreplenii-sotrudnichestva-i-aktivizatsii-obmena-novostjami-553192-2023/>

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## Belarus-China: on the foundation of new ideas

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee (IGC) was held, which formed a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China and created unique opportunities and mechanisms for deepening practical cooperation across the whole range of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that "our common goal should be a new point of growth in trade turnover of at least 120 per cent compared to the last [2022] year"<sup>66</sup>. To be more specific about the most important areas of Belarus-China economic co-operation, four key issues should be highlighted in this regard.

First, increasing and diversifying trade, systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers, and launching procurement channels for important goods through Chinese operators. Second, increasing rail container traffic to deliver Belarusian goods to China and Chinese equipment to Belarus, ensuring the operation of green railway corridors, and organising subsidised reverse trains from Belarus to major logistics centres in China and back. Thirdly, "deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed automobile manufacturing, assembly of electric cars, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, development of bio- and digital technologies"<sup>67</sup>. Fourth, financing of strategic investment projects within the framework of China's favourable credit lines, their effective implementation, building up credit, financial, technical and economic cooperation, including the purchase of necessary equipment. Recall that "at the end of 2022, the countries [Belarus and China]

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<sup>66</sup> Snopkov: a new model of strategic partnership between Belarus and China has been formed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-sformirovana-novaja-model-straticheskogo-partnerstva-belarusi-i-kitaja-576417-2023/>

<sup>67</sup> Chervjakov singled out important areas of cooperation to strengthen the relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-vydilil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlja-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

reached a record volume of \$5.8 billion in goods turnover. Five months of this year were marked by a 1.5-fold increase in trade turnover. Exports of Belarusian goods to China are growing at a record pace: 1.8 times in 2022 and 1.6 times in the first five months of 2023"<sup>68</sup>.

At the fifth meeting of the IGC, the parties agreed to focus their efforts on the implementation of major development and co-operation projects, including grant aid from the Chinese government. In this context, it should be emphasised that Belarus has already implemented 15 important socially oriented projects worth more than one and a half billion Chinese yuan. "About a dozen of new strategic projects are in the works, including infrastructure development of the Great Stone industrial park, supply of necessary technological equipment with the total amount of financing of over 900 million Chinese yuan"<sup>69</sup>. The parties plan to accelerate the implementation of these projects, including two international-class sports facilities - a stadium and a swimming pool - by September 2024.

As for other production and co-operation projects, in July 2023 the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese corporation China National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach) signed an action plan to develop cooperation "on priority areas of cooperation in the production of agricultural and municipal machinery, machine tools, as well as the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises"<sup>70</sup> and even discussed the creation of individual models of agricultural machinery, opportunities for the organisation of

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<sup>68</sup> Snopkov: Belarus and China demonstrates to the whole world an exemplary example of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-belarus-i-kitaj-demonstrirujut-vsemu-miru-obraztsovyj-primer-sotrudnichestva-576412-2023/>

<sup>69</sup> Belarus and China have agreed to implement major projects in the field of development and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-dogovorilis-o-realizatsii-krupnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiya-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

<sup>70</sup> The Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese company Sinomach signed an action plan for the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-sinomach-podpisali-plan-meroprijatij-po-razvitiyu-576228-2023/>

In July 2023, the Chinese company Baimen and JSC Slutsk Cheese Factory signed a strategic commercial agreement on the establishment of a joint venture to produce dairy products already this year in Shenyang, the administrative centre of Liaoning Province. It should be noted that this Chinese company is a major exporter of "Belarusian dairy products (about \$50 million worth of products exported in 2022). It is implementing a project to process colostrum and produce whey protein at the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"<sup>71</sup>. By establishing a joint venture in Shenyang, Baimen and Slutsk Cheese Factory intend to further scale up the project, systematically increasing the range of dairy products produced for Chinese customers.

And one more interesting fact. In the same July 2023, OJSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" held negotiations with YTO Group Corporation - a Chinese manufacturer of agricultural and construction machinery, part of the Sinomach complex machine-building conglomerate - "to organise joint production of self-propelled mowers, municipal machines, and also discussed issues of supplying components for Bobruiskagromash machinery from China"<sup>72</sup>. In the near future, the parties will prepare the necessary documents on this project.

A separate conversation in this context is about the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone industrial park. Let us recall that 2023 marks ten years since the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which marked a new era in the economic relations of states and united more than a hundred countries across the planet. Among the first participants of this megaproject was the Republic of Belarus, where the Great Stone Park is actively developing. It plays the role of a nodal

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<sup>71</sup> Belarusian-Chinese enterprise for the production of dairy products will be established in China this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-kitajskoe-predpriyatje-po-proizvodstvu-molochnoj-produktsii-sozdatut-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

<sup>72</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" and Chinese company YTO Group Corporation discussed the prospects of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-yto-group-corporation-obsudili-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-575895-2023/>

platform of this initiative and already unites more than a hundred residents from 15 countries. Suffice it to say that "the volume of actual investments of the park has already exceeded \$830 million, and the volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.34 billion"<sup>73</sup> . And in the first quarter of 2023 alone, 11 new companies with investment projects in logistics, e-commerce, medicine, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development have already registered here. More specifically, "the number of residents of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park has now reached 108 <...>. The volume of production [in the three months of 2023] has increased 1.3 times, revenue from the sale of goods - 1.8 times, export of goods - 1.2 times, foreign direct investment on a net basis - 2 times, tax payments - 3.5 times"<sup>74</sup> .

One of the priority areas of Veliky Kamen today is mechanical engineering. It should be reminded that the cluster of enterprises working in this area is the largest in the park and has more than 20 projects. In particular, there are joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprises producing internal combustion engines, gearboxes for passenger and freight transport. One of the Chinese residents produces construction machinery based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant, and a Belarusian resident produces glass for all types of land transport, which is in great demand in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Another topical area of Veliky Kamen is high-tech and competitive production - companies carrying out research and development. Now there are already more than 25 such companies registered in the park.

Speaking of new residents, in March 2023, another company was registered in the Velikiy Kamen industrial park - IRBI LLC, whose investment project has an innovative import-substituting character. "The park resident will produce monoblocks, mini-computers for offices and industrial

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<sup>73</sup> Declared investments of the residents of "Great Stone" are estimated at more than \$1.3 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajavlennye-investitsii-residentov-velikogo-kamnja-otsenivajutsja-bolee-chem-v-13-mlrd-568784-2023/>

<sup>74</sup> Ministry of Economy: 11 new companies were registered in the "Great Stone" in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minekonomiki-za-i-kvartal-v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrirovano-11-novyh-kompanij-567541-2023/>



computers, as well as computer hardware components. In addition to production, the company will implement its own application software complexes"<sup>75</sup> . These products will be intended for the domestic market of Belarus, as well as exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In April 2023, another resident was registered in the industrial park - SinoBelMedica LLC, initiated by the Chinese company Shanghai Electric Medical Group, which is part of the structure of the largest manufacturer of power and industrial equipment Shanghai Electric Group Company Limited. The new resident "will implement a project to create a modern high-tech production of X-ray tubes on the territory of the industrial park. The sale of products on the Belarusian market will contribute to import substitution"<sup>76</sup> .

In May 2023, at the talks between the park's management and a delegation from Gansu Province, the issues of traditional Chinese medicine development in Belarus were discussed, and "the possibility of establishing a centre of traditional Chinese medicine and developing pharmaceutical production in the territory of the park was discussed"<sup>77</sup> . And in June 2023 an agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei was reached to work out "the issue of creating a biotechnology cluster for the production of medicines, vaccines, insulin, CAR-T technologies <...> in the Great Stone Industrial Park. Work is underway to determine the prospects for localising the nomenclature of Jifei's pharmaceuticals"<sup>78</sup> .

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<sup>75</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce computers and components [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompjutyery-i-komplektujuschie-558151-2023/>

<sup>76</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" plans to produce X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskih-trubok-560903-2023/>

<sup>77</sup> Delegation of the Chinese province of Gansu will study the possibility of development of pharmaceutical production in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsija-kitajskoj-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiya-farmproizvodstv-v-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of Health and Chinese pharmaceutical company "Jifei" intend to write a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-dzhifej-namereny-podpisat-soglasenie-o-sotrudnicestve-569796-2023/>

And in June 2023, the Belarusian and Chinese sides said that they would continue to attract investors with large projects to the Great Stone Industrial Park, with special attention being paid to the development of traditional Chinese medicine at the park's site. Also, "the Ministries of Economy of the two countries and the largest shareholder companies of the Industrial Park Development Company agreed to continue active work on attracting anchor investors with major projects to Velikiy Kamen, to organise new demanded production facilities, in particular in the sphere of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, to increase localisation of existing production facilities of residents"<sup>79</sup>. The parties will pragmatically improve the investment environment on a systematic basis, consistently eliminate emerging development risks and bring the park to a new qualitative level of development, strengthening its position as a central Belarusian-Chinese project and international industrial cluster with an eye on the Eurasian Economic Union market.

At the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, which was held in July 2023, the parties discussed, among other things, the dynamics of mutual contacts in the field of education in order to strengthen direct inter-university ties and implement a number of large-scale joint educational and scientific projects. Among the promising areas of cooperation, the participants of the meeting noted such areas as: training of personnel and expansion of the practice of joint educational programmes on innovative specialties implemented by leading universities of Belarus and China; cooperation on the creation of digital platforms that provide public access to educational resources; joining efforts to develop norms and standards for digitalisation of education; and exploring

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<sup>79</sup> Belarus and China will continue to attract anchor investors with large projects to the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-prodolzhat-privlekat-v-velikij-kamen-jakornyh-investorov-s-krupnymi-proektami-569986-2023/>

the possibility of creating an Association of Higher Education Institutions of the two countries.

It should be noted that as of today more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have already been signed between the educational institutions of Belarus and China, which is about 10 per cent of the total number of existing inter-university agreements of Belarusian institutions of higher education. "There are also 9 joint educational and scientific structures (3 laboratories, 4 centres and 2 institutes) functioning on the basis of educational institutions of the two countries, 40 joint educational programmes are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed in the last two years, the implementation of 6 of them started in the 2022/2023 academic year. The possibility of implementing 20 more joint educational programmes and organising joint training of personnel of higher scientific qualification is being worked out"<sup>80</sup>. In autumn this year, the educational departments of the two countries plan to approve a plan for the development of academic and scientific exchanges for 2023-2025, within the framework of which new concrete steps will be taken for constructive interaction between Belarusian universities and Chinese partners.

The Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) is among the active participants of this co-operation. Back in April 2023, the Belarusian university discussed promising areas of partnership with members of the Guangdong Union for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, BSTU signed an agreement on co-operation and establishment of a joint laboratory of applied technologies with Guangdong Vocational College of Light Industry. "The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, summer schools, discussed the prospect of contacts in the field of polymers, functional coatings, paper

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<sup>80</sup> Bakhanovich: education provides intellectual, cultural and linguistic rapprochement between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bahanovich-obrazovanie-obespechivaet-intellektualnoe-kulturnoe-i-jazykovoe-sblizhenie-belarusi-i-kitaja-576391-2023/>

production technology and other areas"<sup>81</sup> . They also signed documents on the implementation of joint educational programmes with Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce, Guangdong Vocational College of Communications. And a bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was concluded with the Ningbo International Research and Innovation Centre to jointly develop modern polymer composite materials, elastomers and plastic masses, and additive technologies.

In May 2023, BSTU signed a cooperation agreement with Kunshan Institute of Industrial Technology to establish joint Belarusian-Chinese transfer centres in the field of high technologies and 3D modelling. The agreement stipulates that "every year the Belarusian side will select at least 10 projects to be financed by the PRC in order to develop co-operation in the field of high technologies"<sup>82</sup> . In addition, the parties agreed to create a joint university "Kunshan-Minsk" on the basis of the Belarusian State Technical University so that students could study part of the time in China and part of the time in Belarus, and eventually receive two diplomas. And one more interesting idea: together with Chinese companies, a biomedicine centre will be created in Minsk City Technopark, where they will develop testing technologies and drugs to treat human and various animal diseases. In short, an agro-industrial complex related to vaccines will be developed.

Another Belarusian university that continues close co-operation with Chinese partners in 2023 is the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR). In July this year, BSUIR opened a Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory of external electromagnetic influences in Minsk together with the North China Research Institute of Electromagnetic

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<sup>81</sup> Educational and scientific potential of BSTU presented in the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obrazovatelnyj-i-nauchnyj-potentsial-bgtu-prezentovan-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-563887-2023/>

<sup>82</sup> Investments, creation of a joint university and biomedicine centre. Kunshan delegation visited BSTU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-universiteta-i-tsentra-biomeditsiny-delegatsija-kunshanja-posetila-569539-2023/>

Protection. One of the key tasks of the new laboratory is to develop a finished product of practical interest and in demand in the global technology market, "to conduct fundamental and applied research, implement its results, promote training and professional development, internships for engineering staff and researchers of BSUIR and the partner institute"<sup>83</sup>, as well as to strengthen international co-operation of scientists and specialists for joint research within the framework of the implementation of China's initiative.

As for Chinese universities, Liaoning University, which became a partner of Brest Pushkin State University and Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) in July 2023, is highly interested in co-operation with Belarusian partners. In particular, the agreement between BrSTU and Liaoning University "provides for academic exchanges, joint educational programmes, implementation of scientific projects and social and cultural interaction. We plan to fill the agreement with real activities, and in the future to develop a roadmap"<sup>84</sup>. For example, to train Chinese students in the speciality "Smart Transport" on the basis of the Faculties of Mechanical Engineering and Information Technologies.

Returning to the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Co-operation, it should be noted that the participants in this discussion proposed to bring scientific and technical co-operation to a new level and considered the possibility of setting up joint high-tech production facilities in a number of areas. "Such directions <...> could be robotics, electric transport, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, laser technology"<sup>85</sup>. By creating a full innovation cycle - from the idea to the

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<sup>83</sup> Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory opened in BSUIR [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-kitajskaja-nauchno-issledovatel'skaja-laboratorija-otkrylas-v-bguir-576810-2023/>

<sup>84</sup> Universities of Brest signed co-operation agreements with Liaoning University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vuzy-bresta-podpisali-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-s-ljaoninskim-universitetom-576902-2023/>

<sup>85</sup> Shlychkov: the implementation of joint projects with China will allow to reach the creation of new high-tech industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

production of high-tech products, the parties will expand promising areas of partnership, interacting on the educational foundation of new ideas, which ensures intellectual rapprochement between Belarus and China. In addition, all these facts show that the new model of strategic, including trade and economic, scientific, technical, and educational, partnership between the two countries formed at the fifth meeting of the IGC on Cooperation is beginning to take concrete innovative shape for the benefit of the two peoples.

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## **Belarus-Iran: new energy - into positive dynamics of co-operation**

Iran is one of Belarus's most important partners in West Asia and the Islamic world. The countries established diplomatic relations in 1993. And by today, Belarusian-Iranian contacts are developing quite intensively. "In 2021, bilateral trade turnover between the two countries totalled \$33.3 million, exceeding last year's figure by 34.7%, including Belarusian exports - \$14 million, growth rate - 10.2%. <...> Exports of services from Belarus to Iran reached \$3.35 million last year. The balance of trade in services for Belarus is positive in the amount of \$2.8 million.<sup>86</sup> . The key items of Belarusian exports to Iran were equipment for the production of paper pulp products, specific goods, longitudinally sawn timber, newsprint in rolls or sheets, equipment for thermal processing of materials, reciprocating internal combustion engines, and bearings.

In July 2022, the **15th meeting of the mixed Belarusian-Iranian commission for economic cooperation** was held, where the parties discussed successful bilateral projects and reached certain agreements on the implementation of joint promising activities. Minsk and Tehran are interested in increasing the volume of trade between the two countries. In the best years, the sides reached \$250-300 million. "So we intend to reach the trade turnover within \$500 million in a short period of time. And there are all the prerequisites for this,"<sup>87</sup> . And Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade S. Amin even predicted even higher figures in the medium term and expressed

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<sup>86</sup> NCM on the peculiarities of doing business in the Iranian market and promotion of exports of Belarusian goods and services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-ob-osobennostjah-vedenija-biznesa-na-rynke-irana-i-prodvizhenii-eksporta-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-8226/>

<sup>87</sup> Parkhomchik: Belarus and Iran are interested in increasing co-operation in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-belarus-i-iran-zainteresovany-v-naraschivanii-sotrudnichestva-v-promyshlennosti-516021-2022/>



confidence that "we plan to increase co-operation in various spheres. All this will allow us to reach a trade turnover of \$1bn in the near future"<sup>88</sup>.

Iran is highly interested in Belarusian industrial goods, agricultural machinery, machine tools, passenger transport, electric transport, and household appliances. There are great opportunities to expand supplies of Belarusian machinery for the Iranian **mining industry**. Moreover, this sector is developing very rapidly in Iran. In particular, Iran is interested in large supplies of quarry machinery from the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ). After all, the country has huge reserves of copper, which today is a strategic raw material for the production of electric transport. "For the last ten years, BELAZ machinery has been very much in demand on the Iranian market. It is reliable and has shown itself only on the good side"<sup>89</sup>. Since the Iranian side plans to increase production in the mining industry, Iran would like to receive about 800 more dump trucks. First of all, Iranian partners are interested in dump trucks with payload capacity of 90-130 tonnes.

Iranian **investment projects** are attracting interest in Belarus. In particular, in the free economic zone (FEZ) "Vitebsk" the first resident in 2022 "became BRR Arshieh ECO Health LLC - an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging"<sup>90</sup>. In July 2022, another resident of FEZ Vitebsk became the Belarusian-Iranian company Oriye Galvametall LLC. The company was established for the construction of a hot-dip galvanising plant near the village of Farinovo, Polotsk district. The site has good infrastructural facilities, and now the founders are starting the pre-project preparation and design of the facility. It is

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<sup>88</sup> Minister of Industry of Iran: trade turnover with Belarus may reach \$1 billion in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministr-promyshlennosti-irana-tovarooborot-s-belarusiju-v-blizhajshee-vremja-mozhet-dostich-1-mlrd-516242-2022/>

<sup>89</sup> Iran is interested in large supplies of BELAZ quarry machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/iran-zainteresovan-v-krupnyh-postavkah-karjernoj-tehniki-belaz-516134-2022/>

<sup>90</sup> Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": optimisation with an eye on the result / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Vedecky pokrok na prelomu tysyachalety - 2022". Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 22.

planned to purchase Iranian equipment for production. The construction and commissioning of the plant will take about 2-3 years. The enterprise will be built near the Novopolotsk plant of technological metal structures, the products of which are also planned to be processed. "We are talking about cable-supporting structures, road barriers and other products used in road construction and operated in aggressive environments"<sup>91</sup>. It is also planned to process welded lattice decking, the production of which the plant of technological metal structures started in the first quarter of 2021.

Cooperation between Belarus and Iran in the sphere of agriculture and **foodstuffs** will also become one of the important areas of trade and economic co-operation in the coming years. The Belarusian side believes that Iran can be considered as a promising area for increasing domestic exports of dairy and meat products - beef, butter, chicken meat, chicken and quail eggs, as well as vegetable oil, mixed fodder and premixes for animals, complex technical products, innovative developments in the food industry and agriculture. "In 2021, mutual trade turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs totalled \$10.9 million, up 22% from 2020"<sup>92</sup>. The parties' plans include the need to further increase trade and economic cooperation in agriculture and food, including the organisation of deliveries of Belarusian crop, meat and dairy products, as well as animal feed and premixes to Iran, and counter deliveries - of vegetables, fruits, fish and seafood - from Iran to Belarus.

In November 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Iran, where various meetings and negotiations at the interstate level were held, during which it was noted that interaction between the two countries is now characterised by high dynamics of development in virtually all areas. In

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<sup>91</sup> Belarusian-Iranian tandem of investors will build a hot-dip galvanising plant in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-iranskij-tandem-investorov-postroit-zavod-gorjachego-tsinkovaniya-v-sez-vitebsk-513958-2022/>

<sup>92</sup> Belarus plans to supply crop, meat and dairy products to Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavljat-v-iran-rastenievodcheskuyu-mjasnuyu-i-molochnuyu-produktsiyu-492495-2022/>

particular, this year Minsk and Tehran "significantly increased the volume of cooperation in many areas, from trade turnover to commodity flows, cargo turnover"<sup>93</sup>. But, apparently, the parties still need to take a number of steps, conclude important documents, and hold many new events to realise the full potential that Belarus and Iran have in the field of industry, science and technology, as well as to agree on the approaches laid down in the draft roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026. It should be noted that for three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the two countries "increased to \$63.6 million (2.9-fold growth compared to the same period of 2021), exports - to \$48.6 million (4.4-fold), imports - to \$15 million (41.8% growth). The balance is positive - \$33.6 million"<sup>94</sup>.

An important event in the relations between the two countries was the **Iran-Belarus Business Forum** held in November 2022 in the Iranian capital, organised by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BelCCI) and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, "which has been BelCCI's main partner in Iran for 20 years"<sup>95</sup>. More than 120 executives and representatives of Belarusian and Iranian companies attended this forum. From Belarus, exporters from industrial production and machine building, woodworking, light and food industries were represented. The Iranian side proposed a number of measures to stimulate mutual trade. These include: empowering small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries, strengthening banking and insurance co-operation, identifying new joint projects, developing and simplifying visas for businessmen and tourists, creating the necessary infrastructure for the development of economic relations, especially in the commercial, industrial and technical sectors. In

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<sup>93</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Iran can achieve more in trade, economic and investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10474>

<sup>94</sup> Golovchenko: the positions of Belarus and Iran coincide on the whole range of issues on the economic agenda [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-pozitsii-belarusi-i-irana-sovpadajut-po-vsemu-krugu-voprosov-ekonomicheskoy-povestki-dnja-536376-2022/>

<sup>95</sup> Iran-Belarus Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/iransko-belorusskiy-biznes-forum/#>

addition, it was announced "to open a credit line of \$100 million for Belarusian traders interested in buying Iranian products"<sup>96</sup> . Following the business forum, the parties signed a number of joint documents. In particular, the BelCCI and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture adopted a co-operation agreement, which "will give a new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries" .<sup>97</sup>

As for cooperation between Minsk and Tehran in the **scientific sphere**, a number of treaties, agreements and memoranda have already been signed between institutes of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus and scientific organisations and universities in Iran. For example, "according to the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences and Azad Islamic University, 16 Iranian scientists have completed their postgraduate studies and defended their PhD theses in the postgraduate programmes of scientific organisations of the Academy of Sciences"<sup>98</sup> . But the parties intend to expand joint efforts to work on specific scientific areas and projects. To this end, in May 2022, the Belarusian side offered its Iranian partners a package of proposals on which they could work together to achieve effective results. Among them are new materials and technologies, production of medicines and pharmaceutical products, technologies and equipment for complex treatment of drinking water, technologies for processing minerals, unmanned aerial vehicles, training and exchange of students, internships for scientists and teachers. It is planned that on the initiative of the National Academy of Sciences, a draft roadmap for cooperation with Iranian scientific organisations will be developed, which will include promising areas of mutual interest.

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<sup>96</sup> Iranian-Belarusian business forum is held in Tehran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://iran.ru/news/analytics/121826/V\\_Tegerane\\_prohodit\\_irano\\_belorusskiy\\_biznes\\_forum](https://iran.ru/news/analytics/121826/V_Tegerane_prohodit_irano_belorusskiy_biznes_forum)

<sup>97</sup> Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belarus and Iran signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennye-palaty-belarusi-i-irana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-536244-2022/>

<sup>98</sup> NAS of Belarus will develop a draft roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations of Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-belarusi-razrabotaet-proekt-dorozhnoj-karty-sotrudnichestva-s-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-irana-500275-2022/>

In March 2023, the two countries celebrated a landmark date - the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In the same month in Tehran, the Presidents of Belarus and Iran signed a **roadmap for comprehensive cooperation** between the two countries for 2023-2026, which envisages interaction between Minsk and Tehran on a wide range of issues - in the political, economic, consular, scientific and technical spheres, as well as in education, culture, art, media and tourism. This document has become one of the most important elements of the legal framework of cooperation between Belarus and Iran. For reference, it should be noted that "the Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and more than 70 other documents"<sup>99</sup>. In March, eight more were added to their number, including: an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of plant quarantine and protection, as well as an agreement on the transfer of persons sentenced to imprisonment for further serving of their sentence; memoranda of understanding between the Ministry of Culture of Belarus and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran, as well as between the State Committee for Standardisation of Belarus and the Iranian National Standardisation Organisation.

Speaking about the memorandum on **standardisation issues**, we **would like to** stress that this document provides for cooperation between the parties in the field of conformity assessment procedures, standards and technical regulations for issuing halal certificates and their mutual recognition for products manufactured and mutually supplied by the countries. "At the same time, mutual recognition of the results of halal certification refers only to certificates issued by the respective bodies of the parties: the Iranian National Standards Organisation (INSO) and BelHalal LLC." The parties also plan to exchange experience and knowledge in the field of technologies,

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<sup>99</sup> Koltsov: Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and 70 other documents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/koltsov-belorusko-iranskij-pravovoj-reestr-vkljuchaet-bolee-30-mezhdunarodnyh-dogovorov-i-70-drugih-554851-2023/>

competences, infrastructure facilities, as well as research and development related to halal products"<sup>100</sup> . In addition, the parties reached promising agreements in industry, trade, transport and agriculture. This shows that Iran is the most important partner in the Middle East for Belarus. The parties are interested in mutually beneficial long-term co-operation in a number of areas.

We would like to emphasise once again that the relations between Belarus and Iran have shown a major breakthrough over the past two years. "In 2021, the trade turnover between the countries exceeded \$33 million, increasing by more than a third compared to 2020. But over the past year, the level of trade added even more significantly: in 2022, Belarus and Iran traded \$100 million, which is a threefold increase."<sup>101</sup> . **Economic cooperation** remains the key area of Belarusian-Iranian interaction. And there is confidence that the potential of bilateral interaction allows for a significant increase in trade turnover in the coming years. In particular, "new supplies of quarry machinery, cargo and passenger vehicles to Iran are currently under active discussion. The details of a licence agreement to organise joint assembly of tractors in Iran are being worked out"<sup>102</sup> . Another interesting fact: the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" in 2022 increased exports to this country of the Middle East by 2.3 times. "Positive dynamics is also noted in January this year. The growth rate was 134% by January 2022. Cellulose, paper and cardboard, sawn timber are actively supplied to Iran"<sup>103</sup> .

Belarus and Iran are also developing co-operation in the **transport sector**. In March 2023, the two countries agreed on a permit-free system for

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<sup>100</sup> Belarus and Iran will mutually recognise the results of certification of halal products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-budut-vzaimno-priznavat-rezultaty-sertifikatsii-haljalnoj-produktsii-555113-2023/>

<sup>101</sup> Raisi: relations between Iran and Belarus have shown a breakthrough [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/raisi-otnosheniya-mezhdu-iranom-i-belarusiju-prodemonstrirovali-proryv-555018-2023/>

<sup>102</sup> Rogozhnik: the potentials of Belarus and Iran allow to significantly increase mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogozhnik-potentsialy-belarusi-i-irana-pozvoljajut-znachitelno-uvelichit-vzaimnyj-tovarooborot-554952-2023/>

<sup>103</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" last year increased exports to Iran by 2.3 times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-proshlom-godu-uvelichili-eksport-v-iran-v-23-raza-555029-2023/>

road transport of goods. Apparently, "already in 2023, road carriers will be able to transport cargoes without permits <...>. Iranian airline Mahan Air has launched regular flights twice a week on the Tehran-Minsk-Tehran route since 26 March this year"<sup>104</sup>. The transport theme is continued by the fact that Belarus together with Iran will take part in the development of the international transport corridor North-South. After all, "today the Iranian side needs to build about 180 kilometres of railway. And the Iranian side has actively started this work to complete the North-South railway corridor towards the port of Bandar Abbas"<sup>105</sup>. This project is very important for Belarus, as it will actualise Belarusian transit through Iran to distant countries.

Another important topic in the context of Belarusian-Iranian interaction is the development of an active **interregional dialogue**. In this regard, we would like to remind that "relations are developing between Homiel Region and Mazandaran Province, Mahiliou Region and East Azerbaijan, Minsk Region and the capital region of Iran. Ties have been established between Minsk and Tehran, as well as between Mogilev and Tabriz"<sup>106</sup>. More specifically, for example, Homiel region already intends to resume and develop co-operation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, "a document on trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation with which was signed back in 2009"<sup>107</sup>. The Mogilev region plans to expand trade and economic co-operation and intensify ties in the sphere of tourism, education and culture with the province of East Azerbaijan, where the free

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<sup>104</sup> Belarus and Iran agreed on a permit-free system of road transport of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-dogovorilis-o-bezrazreshitelnoj-sisteme-avtoperevozok-gruzov-555173-2023/>

<sup>105</sup> Belarus will take part in the development of the North-South transport corridor through Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-razvicii-transportnogo-koridora-sever-jug-cherez-iran-555159-2023/>

<sup>106</sup> Koltsov, D. Trade, co-operation and removal of barriers. How Belarus and Iran will mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations during Lukashenko's visit to Tehran / D. Koltsov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/torgovlja-kooperatsija-i-snjatie-barjerov-chem-belarus-i-iran-otmetjat-30-letie-dipotnoshenij-vo-vremja-8621/>

<sup>107</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Priority - restoration of partnership / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI powieka - 2021", Volume 4. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 23.

economic zone "Aras" is located. In May 2022, constructive talks were held on the prospects of co-operation and development of ties between Grodno Region and Homozgan Province. "The parties confirmed mutual interest in the implementation of joint projects in various areas. Priority activities aimed at forming long-term sustainable relations have been identified"<sup>108</sup>.

Among the Belarusian regions that actively cooperated with Iranian partners in 2022, one should also mention **Minsk Region**, whose trade turnover with Iran grew 10.5 times compared to 2021. The statistics states that "in January-December 2022, trade turnover between Minsk region and the Islamic Republic of Iran amounted to \$51190.5 thousand (growth rate 114.1%). Including exports - \$44309.8 thousand (120%), imports - \$6880.7 thousand (113.5%). A positive foreign trade balance of \$37429.1 thousand was formed"<sup>109</sup>. The basis of export supplies of Minsk region last year was dominated by sawn timber, glued plywood, veneered wooden panels, other engines and power plants, electric motors and generators. In turn, Minsk voblast imports dates, figs, pineapples, avocado, guava, mango, mangosteen, lettuce, fresh and chilled chicory, other vegetables, fruits and nuts from Iran. In addition, there are "several successful Iranian projects being implemented in the metropolitan region. Projects such as AFTAB, the Bel Peka Paint project, and the Eastern Ship sheep farming project can be mentioned."<sup>110</sup>. In the future, it appears that the parties have great prospects for development in a number of areas.

The Belarusian side is also attentive to other proposals for co-operation between the regions. In 2022 alone, direct interaction was established with the

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<sup>108</sup> About the visit of the Ambassador of Belarus to Iran to the province of Hormozgan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/bdd91d54c2ef1c14.html>

<sup>109</sup> Narkevich, G. "We welcome Iranian investments in our economy". Turchin met with the ambassador of the country / G. Narkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mlyn.by/15022023/my-privetstvuem-iranskie-investiczii-v-nashu-ekonomiku-turchin-vstretilsya-s-poslom-strany/>

<sup>110</sup> Trade turnover of Minsk region and Iran in 2022 increased more than tenfold [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-minskoj-oblasti-i-irana-v-2022-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-desjat-raz-550380-2023/>



governors of the Iranian provinces of Hormozgan, Mazandaran, Isfahan, and Gilan, as well as with the mayors of the cities of Bandar Abbas, Isfahan, Resht, and Astara. This shows that new ties between the regions and cities of the two countries are on the way.

On the whole, in recent years Belarus and Iran have been finding the most efficient and effective ways to ensure positive dynamics for the long term in order to jointly breathe new energy into bilateral cooperation, preserving and multiplying everything positive for the implementation of a multifaceted mutually beneficial partnership.

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