

Address of cooperation - Tajikistan

March 2026 will mark 30 years since the establishment of Belarusian-Tajik diplomatic relations. Today, Minsk views Tajikistan as an important and reliable partner in Central Asia, the interaction with which is based on mutual trust, respect, and friendly support. In June 2019, the parties signed the Strategic Partnership Treaty, in which they consolidated a qualitatively new level of Belarusian-Tajik bilateral relations and reaffirmed their intention to actively develop them in all areas of mutual interest. Belarus and Tajikistan signed another important document in October 2022 - a roadmap for 2022-2026. In the context of implementing the program of accelerated industrial development of this Central Asian country, Tajik partners are interested in developing cooperation with the Belarusian side in the light, food, pharmaceutical, chemical and mining industries. In September 2025, the 18th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Dushanbe. How are the partnership ties between the two countries developing today and tomorrow? This is the subject of this study.



Boris Zalesskij

Professional experience in journalism - fifty years.

For twenty years he worked as an associate professor of the International Journalism Department of the Journalism Faculty of the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: contemporary international relations; international journalism and media cooperation.



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Chronicle of Economic Partnerships

Boris Zalesskij

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Table of contents

Cooperation based on respect,.....	3
mutual support and consideration of interests	3
A course of strategic partnership.....	15
From the commission's decisions –	25
to roadmap priorities	25
New steps in cooperation	37
Growth dynamics and prospects in key areas	47
Literature	57

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mutual support and consideration of interests

March 2016 will mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Tajikistan. Today, Minsk considers Tajikistan an important and reliable partner in Central Asia, with whom cooperation is based on mutual trust, respect and friendly support, and the implementation of agreements already reached will "significantly increase the momentum of multifaceted partnership"¹.

It should be recalled that in the 1990s, this former Soviet republic, more than 90 per cent of whose territory is mountainous, had to go through a five-year civil war after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which claimed the lives of more than 100,000 people, as well as a difficult period of national economic recovery. However, thanks to sustainable socio-economic development in subsequent years, Tajikistan has managed to significantly strengthen its position and authority in the international community, expanding productive cooperation with many countries around the world and authoritative international organisations. Today, it is recognised by 147 countries and maintains diplomatic relations with 128 countries.

By pursuing an "open door" policy, which involves the creation of effective means of combining national and international interests, Tajikistan demonstrates its commitment to the development of regional cooperation within existing international organisations that contribute to the solution of purely national tasks. Thus, in a very short period of time, the United Nations has already approved three initiatives of this country: the declaration of 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater, the

¹ Congratulatory message to Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://president.gov.bj/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-respubliki-tadzhikistan-emomali-raxmonu-9755/

approval of 2005-2015 as the Decade of Action "Water for Life" and the declaration of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

Tajikistan has also made a significant contribution to strengthening the Commonwealth of Independent States, as evidenced by specific facts. In particular, at the summit in Dushanbe in 2007, the heads of state approved the Concept for the Further Development of the CIS, which formulated the immediate and long-term goals of this entity in the post-Soviet space, as well as specific ways to achieve them. In addition, "under the auspices of Tajikistan's chairmanship of the Commonwealth in 2011, fundamental documents were adopted, including a free trade agreement, an intergovernmental programme of innovative cooperation, a concept for the strategic development of rail transport, the framework programme "Atom-CIS Cooperation", and the concept of cooperation in the field of culture"².

Speaking about the CIS space, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon noted that in Dushanbe, "the specifics and beneficial aspects of cooperation with member states, i.e. with our traditional partners, have been defined, and we will continue to develop this cooperation." Rakhmon noted that in Dushanbe, "the specifics and beneficial aspects of cooperation with member states, that is, with our traditional partners, have been defined, and we will contribute to the development and improvement of integration processes in the Commonwealth with the aim of utilising their creative potential and developing mutually beneficial cooperation"³. Among such specific partners in the post-Soviet space that have significant creative potential and are able to use it

² Garkun, V. Tajikistan makes a significant contribution to strengthening and improving the activities of the CIS / V. Garkun // [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/person/opinions/Vladimir-Garkun_i_514987.html

³ Speech at a meeting with the country's diplomatic staff on the occasion of the opening of the new building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2013. – URL: <http://www.prezident.tj/ru/node/4114>

effectively in the implementation of integration processes, the Tajik side sees the Republic of Belarus.

The first impetus for the intensification of bilateral Belarusian-Tajik relations came with the visits of the heads of state to Dushanbe and Minsk in April 2000 and July 2001, respectively. This high-level dialogue resulted in a basic document – the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation, which "defined the basic principles of bilateral relations – mutual respect for independence and state sovereignty, equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and a mutual desire to establish mutually beneficial economic partnerships"⁴.

Even earlier, in 1999, the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was established, whose sphere of interest covers such priority areas as: the supply of machine-building products based on new leasing schemes; cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and energy sector; participation in joint economic projects; creation of a network of joint production enterprises on the territory of both states. However, a truly new page in relations between Belarus and Tajikistan was opened by the visit of the Belarusian head of state to Dushanbe in October 2011, during which the Belarusian side expressed its interest in actively developing mutually beneficial cooperation with Tajikistan in all areas, from agriculture and industry to security and cooperation within international organisations. The Tajik side, in turn, noted that "relations with Belarus occupy one of the leading places in Tajikistan's foreign policy and foreign economic strategy. We are interested in their steady development"⁵.

⁴ Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2012. – URL: <http://khovar.tj/rus/foreign-policy/30297-sotrudnichestvo-respubliki-tadzhikistan-s-respublikov-belarus.html>

⁵ Alexander Lukashenko pays an official visit to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2011. – URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-sovershaet-ofitsialnyi-vizit-v-tadzhikistan-5173/

These talks resulted in the signing of a number of bilateral Belarusian-Tajik documents that defined the nature of relations between the two countries in the short and long term. Firstly, the heads of Belarus and Tajikistan adopted a joint statement instructing their governments to focus their efforts on priority areas of economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation. Secondly, a long-term cooperation agreement for 2011-2020 was signed, under which the parties agreed to "promote the creation of favourable conditions for the development of trade and economic ties, the strengthening of interbank relations, the formation of individual projects and programmes, joint production structures and the implementation of investment activities"⁶ .

Thirdly, an Intergovernmental Cooperation Programme for 2011–2020 was approved, in which the parties identified nine main areas of Belarusian-Tajik cooperation as priorities for the long term:

- 1) cooperation in the agro-industrial complex, mechanical engineering, petrochemical industry, food and light industry;
- 2) supply of Belarusian quarry and road construction equipment, heavy-duty dump trucks for the needs of the Republic of Tajikistan, further development of the service and warranty repair system;
- 3) creation of assembly plants for industrial products, including tractors and other agricultural machinery;
- 4) supply of agricultural machinery, including through leasing schemes;
- 5) supply of cotton fibre, fruit and vegetables and other products from Tajikistan;
- 6) development of regional cooperation and interaction through chambers of commerce and industry;
- 7) involvement of Belarusian enterprises in the development of mineral deposits in the Republic of Tajikistan;

⁶ Agreement between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tajikistan on long-term cooperation for 2011–2020 [Electronic resource]. – 2011. – URL: <http://www.tajembassv.by/files/dpb-2.pdf>

8) military-technical cooperation;

9) cooperation in the field of freight transport⁷.

At the same time, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries established the Tajik-Belarusian Business Council, which set as its main goal the expansion and development of business contacts and mutually beneficial cooperation between entrepreneurs, the promotion of business in the markets of both countries, and the attraction of mutual investments to Belarus and Tajikistan. And already at the 8th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (), held in April 2013 in Dushanbe, the parties discussed specific opportunities for expanding bilateral trade, the legal framework and partnership ties between the regions of the two countries, as well as cooperation in the fields of agriculture, transport, social protection of the population, migration, health care, education and culture, and industry, "including the creation of joint ventures for the processing of agricultural products, the assembly production of MTZ tractors in Tajikistan, the supply of quarry equipment by BELAZ in 2013-2014, and the organisation of its service and maintenance"⁸.

The timeliness of the measures taken was evident, as in 2012 the volume of Belarusian-Tajik trade turnover decreased by 20.6 per cent, amounting to \$57.7 million, with a positive balance for the Belarusian side of \$39 million. The basis of Belarusian exports at that time was "sugar, ferrous metals, tyres, furniture, machinery, equipment, medicines, vehicles, wood and wood products, and inorganic products"⁹. However, the downward trend in bilateral trade between Belarus and Tajikistan

⁷ Interstate programme of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011–2020 [Electronic resource]. – 2011. – URL: <http://www.tajembassv.by/files/dpb-2.pdf>

⁸ On the regular meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2013. – URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/be5f2ec75d7008b2.html

⁹ On the meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission [Electronic resource]. – 2013. – URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a6bf2f8f586c159a.html

continued in 2013, when its volume amounted to \$41.8 million. At the same time, Belarusian exports fell significantly, by almost 40 per cent, and their commodity structure underwent certain changes. "The main trend is a reduction in the share of food and raw materials due to a decrease in supplies of sugar, fluoride alumina and petroleum products, with a significant increase in the share of engineering products due to the resumption of supplies of BelAZ quarry equipment"¹⁰. This alarming signal became the main topic of discussion at the 9th meeting of the intergovernmental commission held in Minsk in early May 2014. Within the framework of this format of interaction, the parties, noting the slowdown in trade turnover growth, stated the need to "intensify trade and economic cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food and light industry, machine building, and the humanitarian sphere"¹¹.

This topic was discussed in even greater depth by the heads of the two states during the visit of Tajik leader Emomali Rahmon to Belarus at the end of May 2014. The Belarusian side then stated a very specific position: "We need not only to restore the economic relations that once existed, but also to significantly exceed them, despite the fact that we have seen a certain decline in trade at the end of last year"¹². To solve this problem, the official Minsk announced a number of specific initiatives.

In particular, Tajik partners were offered the supply of Belarusian goods under leasing schemes, as well as preferential lending, including with the participation of Tajik banks. Given that Tajikistan's priority task is now

¹⁰ On trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan in 2013 [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: <http://tajikistan.mfa.gov.bv/ru/embassy/news/ab80403d8ea1de2f.html>

¹¹ Belarus and Tajikistan intend to intensify cooperation in agriculture, food and light industry [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Belarus-i-Tadzhikistan-namerenv-aktivizirovat-sotrudnichestvo-v-selskom-xozjajstve-pischevoj-i-legkoj-promyshlennosti_i_667853.html

¹² Alexander Lukashenko met with President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://president.gov.bv/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsja-s-prezidentom-tadzhikistana-emomali-raxmonom-8846/

to renew its machinery fleet and set up service centres to maintain it, the Belarusian side expressed its readiness to fully meet this demand for both equipment and comprehensive service support. To this end, a network of machine and tractor stations could be formed in cooperation with the Tajik side, and joint agricultural machinery assembly plants could be established. In this regard, the idea of creating a production facility for agricultural mounted and trailed equipment on Tajik soil was considered promising.

As a result, the parties adopted a substantial package of documents expanding Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in a number of areas. In the field of construction, cooperation agreements were reached between the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus and the Committee for Architecture and Construction under the Government of Tajikistan; in the field of sports – the National Olympic Committees of the two countries; in the field of mass media – the National State Television and Radio Company of Belarus and the Committee on Television and Radio under the Government of Tajikistan; in the industrial sphere – the Bellegprom concern and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Tajikistan; in the field of education – Grodno State Agrarian University and the Sh. Shotemur Tajik Agrarian University. The agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation signed during this summit between the Minsk and Sughd regions, the Uzden and Yavan districts, and the cities of Mogilev and Khujand testify to the significant intensification of bilateral interregional cooperation.

Speaking about the need to more actively engage the potential of regional cooperation, both sides drew attention to the need to involve small and medium-sized businesses, as well as business associations from both countries, in joint work. In this regard, it is important to note that in Tajikistan, "improving the efficiency of the use of national

wealth, especially human resources and fixed assets"¹³ is considered one of the priorities in long-term state strategies and programmes until 2030. After all, the population of this small Central Asian country is now more than eight million people, which indicates a substantial labour surplus. That is why, in pursuing an "open door" policy, the country is thinking first and foremost about industrial cooperation with foreign partners and the creation of new jobs: "This is an opportunity to create small businesses in Tajikistan's free economic zones and to use transport and communication corridors to establish cooperation between various companies operating in the business sector"¹⁴.

For this reason, the Tajik side is seriously interested in the emergence of joint ventures with Belarus on its territory, including those focused on exports to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, which could be created on the basis of existing enterprises in Tajikistan by expanding their production capacities. "We are talking about enterprises that will use semi-finished products manufactured in Belarus, as well as Belarusian technologies, investments and software"¹⁵.

Work on the creation of such enterprises is currently underway, in particular, in the Dangara free economic zone in the Dangara district of the Khatlon region, where it is planned to organise the assembly of Belarusian tractors. A total of four FEZs have been created in Tajikistan – Sugd, Panj and Ishkashim. The Dangara FEZ is an industrial zone, which "aims to stimulate industrial development in neighbouring areas through the effective use of local resources. Not far from the Dangara

¹³ Address by President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to the Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <http://www.prezident.tj/ru/node/8137>

¹⁴ Koimdodov, K. Tajikistan: doors open for cooperation / K. Koimdodov // [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <http://www.kurier.lt/tadzhikistan-dveri-dlva-sotrudnichestva-otkrvtv/>

¹⁵ Savko, S. Tajikistan proposes Belarus to create a multi-profile joint venture in the construction industry / S. Savko // [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Tadzhikistan-predlagaet-Belarusi-sozdat-mnogoprofilnye-SP-v-stroitelnoj-otrasli_i_670360.html

SEZ, there is a railway line and construction of a road bridge to Afghanistan is underway, which contributes to the development of logistics and transport services"¹⁶. In the Gissar district of Tajikistan, an assembly plant for mounted and trailed equipment of OJSC Bobruiskagromash is to be built.

There are interesting prospects for Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in a number of other areas. For example, in the field of healthcare, the parties intend to focus their efforts "on resolving issues related to increasing supplies of Belarusian medicines and medical equipment to Tajikistan, providing educational services, and exchanging experience in the field of transplantology"¹⁷. At the same time, Tajik partners are particularly interested in the possibility of cooperation with Belarus in the field of postgraduate education and internships for Tajik doctors in Belarusian healthcare institutions.

It should be recalled that, speaking at the Belarusian State University in May 2014, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon noted that his country currently needs qualified specialists in a number of areas, including international relations, engineering and medicine. For this reason, "Belarus and Tajikistan intend to actively <...> develop new projects in the field of education, especially in the field of university science and the acquisition and improvement of education"¹⁸.

Prior to this, on 31 May 2013, the parties signed an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of higher and postgraduate education, creating a legal basis for intensifying cooperation in this area.

¹⁶ Karimova, M.T. The role of free economic zones in the development of industry in Tajikistan / M.T. Karimova // Current issues in economics and management: materials from the II International Scientific Conference (Moscow, October 2013). – Moscow: Buki-Vedi, 2013. – P. 123.

¹⁷ On the meeting between Ambassador O. Gavruk and the Minister of Health of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2013. – URL: http://mfa.gov.bj/press/news_mfa/a96995adef720ff7.html

¹⁸ BSU diploma opens the door to the future for Tajikistan students – Rahmon [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/societv/Diplom-BGU-otkrvvaet-dlia-studentov-Tadzhikistana-vorota-v-budushee---Raxmon_i_670351.html

Now, each party has the opportunity to accept annually "for a full course of study: five students for the first stage of higher education; two students for the second stage of higher education (master's degree); one student for a candidate of science degree"¹⁹ . As a result, in the 2013/2014 academic year, "245 citizens of Tajikistan studied in Belarusian educational institutions, which is twice as many as in the previous academic year"²⁰ .

It is also interesting to note that since 2012, the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi has been operating a joint engineering and technical faculty with the Belarusian National Technical University. Training here is carried out in two stages in Russian according to integrated curricula developed by Belarusian teachers. In the first stage, students who do not speak Russian study preparatory courses in Tajikistan, while those who do speak Russian study in the first and second years. In the second stage, students study in Belarus for 3-5 years, defend their thesis and receive the appropriate qualification. "The first graduation of students enrolled in this faculty will take place in 2017. The main areas of training are construction and architecture, energy, mechanical engineering and metallurgy, road transport, information technology, and economics"²¹ . Building largely on this existing experience, in 2014 the Belarusian Ministry of Education launched an initiative to "create a joint secondary vocational education institution in Tajikistan"²² . Overall, the parties intend to increase both

¹⁹ Tajik-Belarusian relations [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: <http://www.tajembassy.by/politicheskoe/>

²⁰ Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Tajikistan have common approaches to solving pressing contemporary issues / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Belarus-i-Tadzhikistan-imejut-obschie-podxody-k-resheniju-aktualnyx-problem-sovremennosti-i-679524.html

²¹ Joint faculty of BNTU and Tajik Technical University to open on 11 September in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. – 2012. – URL: <http://www.movbv.com/news/92466/>

²² On the meeting between Ambassador O. Gavruk and the Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c6a6e78ca4fcfe82.html

the number of students and the list of specialities in the near future, as well as expand training and exchanges for interns and young specialists. The measures to intensify Belarusian-Tajik cooperation, outlined at the highest level in May 2014, had already yielded results by the autumn. In the first 10 months of this year, the volume of supplies from Belarus to Tajikistan increased by 11.1 per cent, with the range of Belarusian exports including 140 commodity items, 37 of which were new. The largest shipments of new items were frozen beef, engines for repairing trucks, gas stoves, sawn timber, and hot-rolled steel bars.²³

These facts clearly demonstrate the growing interest of the two former Soviet republics in fruitful cooperation in a wide variety of areas. Thus, modern high-performance machinery and equipment manufactured in Belarus can be effectively used in Tajikistan not only in the areas already mentioned above, "not only in the construction of hydraulic structures, but also in the development of the country's mineral deposits – the extraction of Tajik gold, silver, rare metals, polymetallic ores, uranium, and precious stones"²⁴. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the work currently being done by the parties to comprehensively develop the existing potential of bilateral Belarusian-Tajik relations will, in the very near future, bring them to a qualitatively new level.

²³ On trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan for the first 10 months of 2014 [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: http://tajikistan.mfa.gov.bv/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/statistics/c3e89aa71e790a80.html

²⁴ Belarus – Tajikistan: Customs union as a stimulus for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2010. – URL: http://export.bv/resources/izdaniva_i_publicacii/belarus_%E2%80%94%94_tadzhikistan_tamozhennii_sovuz_kak_sti.html

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The course of strategic partnership

In June 2019, in Minsk, the presidents of Belarus and Tajikistan, Alexander Lukashenko and Emomali Rahmon, signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, which established a qualitatively new level of Belarusian-Tajik bilateral relations and confirmed their intention to actively develop them in all areas of mutual interest. It is expected that the implementation of the provisions of this document will give new impetus to further work in all areas. This is especially true in the trade and economic sphere, since at the end of 2018, trade turnover between the two former Soviet republics amounted to only about forty million dollars, which, according to the parties, "absolutely does not correspond to the potential of Belarusian-Tajik cooperation"²⁵. That is why, when signing the document, the need for significant deepening and expansion of cooperation was announced. The main promising areas included: industrial cooperation; supplies of Belarusian trucks, road construction and passenger vehicles, renewal of the railway carriage fleet; expansion of cooperation in agriculture, including agricultural education; and intensification of interregional cooperation.

In developing Belarusian-Tajik **industrial cooperation**, Minsk and Dushanbe proceed from the assumption that "direct cooperation and joint production of high-quality competitive goods should become the driving force for the further development of economic cooperation between our countries"²⁶. The first steps in this direction have already been taken. In particular, a joint assembly plant for MTZ tractors has been operating in the Tajik city of Gissar for the second year now. And in January 2019, with the aim of supplying the domestic market with high-quality dairy products and with a view to entering the markets of neighbouring

²⁵ Negotiations with the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: http://president.gov.bj/ru/news_ru/view/peregovorv-s-prezidentom-tadzhikistana-emomali-rahmonom-21425/

²⁶ Ibid.

countries, an agreement was signed to establish a joint venture in Dushanbe, VATAN Dairy Products Production LLC, founded on the Belarusian side by Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1 OJSC. Belarus will supply raw milk for this enterprise, as well as finished dairy products for the Tajik partner's distribution network. The fact that Tajikistan has already expressed interest in establishing another joint venture for the production of dairy products speaks volumes. Only this time, it will be based on Avicenna LLC, with the Belarusian participant being the Grodno-based OJSC Molokny Mir. As part of this project, Avicenna has already acquired a dairy farm with more than 1,500 head of cattle, as well as production facilities and equipment for a dairy plant in Gissar. Negotiations are currently underway with the International Finance Corporation to secure the necessary financing. The project is designed for the Afghan market.²⁷ . As a result, it is expected that dairy products produced jointly with the Belarusian side at enterprises in Dushanbe and Gissar will enter the market of this Central Asian country as early as the beginning of 2020.

As for the prospects of **supplying Belarusian equipment** to Tajikistan, cooperation with Tajik partners of the Belarusian enterprise Belkommunmash, which is working on a contract to supply its equipment to this country for thirty million dollars, looks very promising in this regard . The fact is that in recent years, work has intensified in Dushanbe to modernise and upgrade passenger and public transport. Suffice it to say that the Tajik capital's budget for 2019 provides for the purchase of more than 300 units of equipment. In May 2019, as part of the "Sustainable Development of Public Transport in Dushanbe" project, four autonomous trolleybuses worth one million dollars were delivered

²⁷ Matveev, V. The first dairy products from the Belarus-Tajikistan joint venture will hit the market in 2020 / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervaia-produktsija-molokopererabotki-sp-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-vv-det-na-rv-nok-v-2020-godu-353105-2019/>

from Belarus with a loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Also in May 2019, Belkommunmash and the Dushanbe City Council signed a memorandum of understanding on the supply of 100 autonomous trolleybuses. However, the possibility of supplying 150 units is currently being discussed.²⁸ . Autonomous trolleybuses will help solve many problematic issues in the capital of Tajikistan. Firstly, they can be used to lay new routes and extend old ones, as well as to run additional trolleybus lines to residential areas or areas with underdeveloped transport infrastructure. Secondly, the use of new contactless trolleybuses could have a beneficial effect on reducing traffic jams on the streets of Dushanbe, as conventional trolleybuses remain stationary on the roads for hours in the event of a power cut, obstructing traffic. Thirdly, "the innovative trolleybus can travel up to 15 km without a contact network, while conventional trolleybuses can travel no more than 500 m on autonomous power"²⁹ . The Belarusian side plans to establish a service centre here, where local specialists will be trained, with the prospect of turning it into a base for assembly production and continuing work for third countries.

Interesting prospects for Belarusian-Tajik cooperation are also opening up today in **the field of education**. Statistics show that there are currently about 1,500 Tajik students studying at Belarusian universities. In addition, thanks to the creation of five joint faculties at leading higher education institutions in Tajikistan, it is now possible to obtain a Belarusian education in that country. Nevertheless, according to Tajik leader Emomali Rahmon, "the time has come to explore the possibility

²⁸ . Matveev, V. Belkommunmash is working on a contract to supply equipment to Tajikistan worth \$30 million / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belkommunmash-prorabatvvaet-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-tadzhikistan-na-30-mln-353062-2019/>

²⁹ Belkommunmash electric buses to start operating in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/elektrobusv-belkommunmash-nachnut-kursirovat-v-dushanbe-333003-2019/>

of implementing new joint Tajik-Belarusian educational projects"³⁰ . At the same time, the creation of branches of Belarusian universities in Tajikistan, the opening of new joint faculties and even higher education institutions "seems promising"³¹ .

It should be noted that Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in the field of education is currently based on several intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements: on cooperation in the field of higher and postgraduate education (2013), on cooperation in the field of education (2000), and on cooperation in the field of pre-school education (2018). These partnerships between universities in the two countries are developing particularly dynamically. Suffice it to say that "contractual relations between Belarusian higher education institutions and Tajik educational institutions are implemented within the framework of 77 inter-university agreements in the field of education"³² . Indeed, joint Belarusian-Tajik faculties, of which there were already five by mid-2019, have become a very effective form of implementing these agreements.

The first "swallow" in this regard was the engineering and technical faculty, opened in 2012 on the basis of the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi and the Belarusian National Technical University. Training at this faculty is conducted in Russian in two stages. The first stage is implemented at the Tajik university and includes training, first in preparatory courses for students who do not

³⁰ Krishenik, E. Rahmon: we are interested in attracting advanced Belarusian technologies to the real sector of the economy / E. Krishenik // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rahmon-mv-zainteresovanv-v-privlechenii-peredovvhtehnologij-belarusi-v-realnyj-sektor-ekonomiki-353119-2019/>

³¹ Negotiations with the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovorv-s-prezidentom-tadzhikistana-emomali-raxmonom-21425/

³² Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of education is actively developing [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://edu.gov.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-mezhdu-respublikov-belarus-i-respublikov-tadzhikistan-v-sfere-obrazovaniva-aktivno-r/>

speak Russian, and then in the first and second years. The second stage is training in Minsk with the defence of a thesis project. In the 2017/2018 academic year, 476 Tajik students studied at the faculty. The most popular areas of study among them are construction, architecture, mechanical engineering and instrument engineering. "In 2017, the first graduation of the joint faculty took place, with 24 graduates"³³.

In 2016, based at the same Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi, a civil aviation faculty was established in collaboration with the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation, where specialists are trained in such fields as "Technical operation of aviation equipment (instrument and electrical lighting equipment)", "Technical operation of aviation equipment (radio-electronic equipment)", "Organisation of air traffic and flight support (air traffic control)". "Currently, 25 students are enrolled in the first year of the joint faculty, and 28 students are continuing their studies at the BGA in the second year"³⁴.

Two joint faculties are also operating today on the basis of the Belarusian State University and the Tajik National University. Firstly, there is the joint faculty of information technology, the agreement to establish which was signed in June 2015 and where, since then, students have been trained in the specialities of "applied mathematics", "computer security" and "mathematics and information technology"³⁵. Secondly, there is the Faculty of Environmentally Friendly Technologies, established in 2016, where, at the beginning of 2018, 101 first- and second-year students were studying "first-level higher education

³³ Joint Engineering and Technical Faculty of BNTU-TTU [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <http://www.bntu.by/engineering-and-technical-faculty-bntu-ttu.html>

³⁴ Faculty of Civil Aviation of the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation – Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi (FCA BAU-TTU) [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <http://ttu.tj/ru/university-ru/structure/fmt-dmtb-dtu/fga-bga-ttu/>

³⁵ BSU and Tajik National University opened a joint faculty of information technology [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-tadzhikskij-natsionalnvi-universitet-otkryli-sovmestnyj-fakultet-informatsionnyh-tehnologij-4702-2015/>

specialisations: "Energy-efficient technologies and energy management", "Nuclear and radiation safety" and "Medical and biological affairs"³⁶.

Finally, in March 2019, a joint faculty of Polotsk State University and the Technological University of Tajikistan was opened. This allowed to enrol its first students in 2019 in two specialisations at the new faculty: "Machines and Equipment for Chemical Production and Building Materials Enterprises" and "Design, Construction and Operation of Gas and Oil Pipelines and Gas and Oil Storage Facilities". Following negotiations between representatives of Polotsk State University and the management of Tajik National University, plans were made to "implement cooperation in the field of training specialists, master's and doctoral students, joint participation in academic mobility programmes, conducting scientific research and implementing joint educational programmes in the specialities of "Practical Psychology" and "Tourism and Hospitality"³⁷.

It is to be assumed that other higher education institutions in the two countries will soon move on to more advanced forms of cooperation. In particular, this applies to the Belarusian State Medical University and the Tajik National University, which signed an agreement on academic and scientific cooperation back in October 2016. At the same time, the Belarusian side expressed interest in such partnerships, "especially if it is possible to give the cooperation a pronounced practical focus, for example, in the field of cardiovascular disease research"³⁸.

³⁶ Faculty of Environmentally Friendly Technologies at TNU [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <http://www.iseu.bsu.by/fakultet-ekologosberegayushhih-tehnologiy-tnu/>

³⁷ Alekseeva, D. Opening of a joint faculty with the Technological University of Tajikistan / D. Alekseeva // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.psu.by/novosti-mezhdunarodnoj-devatelnosti/11961-otkrytie-sovmestnogo-fakulteta-s-tehnologicheskimi-universitetom-tadzhikistana>

³⁸ Stasevich, M. Visit of the delegation of Tajik National University (Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan) to BSMU / M. Stasevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2016. – URL: <https://www.bsmu.by/allarticles/rubic2/page121/article1593/>

Another important element in the implementation of the Strategic Partnership Agreement is the development of **interregional cooperation** between the regions, cities and districts of Belarus and Tajikistan. When signing this document, the parties declared their desire to "promote in every way possible the expansion of direct ties between the regions of our countries and economic entities"³⁹. Representatives of the parliaments of both countries also speak of the need to "harness regional potential"⁴⁰. It should be noted that agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation have been concluded between the Vitebsk and Sughd, Minsk and Sughd, Gomel and Khatlon regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, the Yavansky and Uzden districts, as well as agreements on cooperation between the Mogilev and Sughd regions and on mutual cooperation between the cities of Mogilev and Khujand.

Belarusian-Tajik interregional cooperation began more than twenty years ago, when in the summer of 1998 the capitals of the two former Soviet republics became sister cities. At that time, **Minsk and Dushanbe** adopted two documents at once. The first, the "Agreement on the Twinning of the Cities of Minsk and Dushanbe," declared the mutual desire to "promote in every way possible the creation of the most favourable conditions for the development of friendly relations between the residents of our cities, cooperation between enterprises, organisations and firms"⁴¹. The second document, the Agreement on Cooperation in Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Fields, contained the parties' intention to assist in the creation of joint ventures, joint-stock

³⁹ Negotiations with the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: http://president.gov.bj/ru/news_ru/view/peregovorov-s-prezidentom-tadzhikistana-emomali-rahmonom-21425/

⁴⁰ Miasnikovich: new forms of work are important for expanding trade and economic relations with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/miasnikovich-novve-formy-raboty-vazhny-dlia-rasshirenija-torgovo-ekonomicheskikh-otnoshenij-s-295210-2018/>

⁴¹ Zaleski, B. Second wind / B. Zaleski // Evening Minsk. – 1998. – 3 August.

companies, financial and industrial groups, trading houses, commercial and business centres, and regional information centres for the collection, processing and dissemination of information necessary for producers and consumers of goods and services to study market conditions. It seems that both of these documents are still relevant today, as they contribute to the development of sister-city and partnership relations between the two capitals and their specific economic entities. In this sense, the current example of cooperation between the Minsk-based enterprise Belkommunmash and the Dushanbe City Hall on the renewal of public transport in the Tajik capital only confirms the timeless nature of the documents adopted more than twenty years ago.

Among other participants in Belarusian-Tajik interregional cooperation, **the Sughd Region** stands out from the rest, actively developing partnerships with three Belarusian regions at once – Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev. An agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with **the Vitebsk region** was signed in April 2012. At the same time, "the priority areas of cooperation were identified as mechanical engineering, the furniture industry, leather processing and light industry"⁴². A similar agreement with **the Minsk region** was signed in May 2014. It should be noted that cooperation between the Belarusian capital region and its Tajik partners has generally yielded good results. Suffice it to say that "at the end of 2018, exports from the Minsk region to the Republic of Tajikistan amounted to US\$6.4 million <...>. The main export items were sugar and chemically pure sucrose in solid form; petroleum products; and printed matter"⁴³. To consolidate this positive trend, in June 2019, a number of enterprises in the Minsk

⁴² Rafieva, M. Sogd and Vitebsk signed a cooperation agreement / M. Rafieva // [Electronic resource]. – 2012. – URL: <https://news.vitebsk.cc/2012/04/26/sogd-i-vitebsk-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve/>

⁴³ Delegation from Minsk Region pays working visit to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.mlvn.by/2019/06/delegatsiya-minskoj-oblasti-s-rabochim-vizitom-posetila-tadzhikistan/>

region, including OJSC "Slutsk Meat Processing Plant", Minsk Meat Processing Plant OJSC, Borisov Meat Processing Plant OJSC, and Slutsk Cheese Factory OJSC, showcased their products at the Sugd-2019 international trade fair, which resulted in the signing of 14 agreements and memoranda of cooperation.

As for cooperation between the Sughd and Mogilev regions, its core can be described as the partnership between **Mogilev** and the city of **Khujand**, located in this Tajik region, which was formalised by a corresponding agreement in May 2014. From the outset, the parties declared their intention to "move to a new level of cooperation – from trade and exchange of goods to cooperation between industrial enterprises and the creation of joint ventures"⁴⁴. At the same time, the Tajik side expressed interest in cooperating with Mogilevliftmash to establish an elevator assembly plant in Tajikistan. In June 2015, the parties reached an agreement on the supply of lifts and lift equipment to Khujand for municipal needs, as well as on the creation of a joint production facility for the manufacture of lifts for sale in Tajikistan and neighbouring countries. In addition, "the Tajik side expressed great interest in establishing joint ventures in Khujand with the furniture companies Mogilevdrevo and Mogilevmebel. There is also a willingness to consider proposals for the creation of a joint venture for the production of confectionery products"⁴⁵.

Finally, in December 2017, an agreement on trade, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation was signed between the **Gomel and Khatlon** regions to give new impetus to the development of relations between the

⁴⁴ Kulyagin, S. Tajikistan is interested in developing cooperation with enterprises in the Mogilev region – Koimdodov / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-razviti-kooperatsii-predpriyatijami-mogilevskoj-oblasti-koimdodov-174610-2015/>

⁴⁵ Kulyagin, S. Mogilev and Tajik Khujand intend to establish joint ventures / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mogilev-i-tadzhikskii-xudzhand-namerevy-sozdat-sovmestnyve-proizvodstva_i_0000025058.html

two regions and to promote trade and economic cooperation. The fact is that in the first three quarters of 2017, the total trade turnover between the Belarusian region and Tajikistan amounted to only \$818,000. "Gomel enterprises supplied soap, sealing products, wallpaper and cattle carcasses"⁴⁶. There were thirteen exporting enterprises in total, including TUP Gomel Traditions of Taste, IPUP Alcopack, ODO Vimala, and OAO AFPC Zhlobin Meat Processing Plant. It is to be assumed that the signed agreement, in light of the recently adopted course towards Belarusian-Tajik strategic partnership, will play an important role in strengthening cooperation between the regions mentioned.

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⁴⁶ Gomel and Khatlon regions sign cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <https://newsgomel.by/news/society/15070-gomel-skava-i-hatlonskava-oblasti-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve.html>

From the commission's decisions – to the priorities of the roadmap

Belarus and Tajikistan have traditionally enjoyed close relations, and the countries are consistently strengthening their mutually beneficial strategic partnership. The Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation, established in 1999, plays a key role in the development of effective Belarusian-Tajik bilateral cooperation. Its sphere of interest "covers such priority areas as: the supply of machine-building products based on new leasing schemes; cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and energy sector; participation in joint economic projects; the creation of a network of joint production enterprises on the territory of both states"⁴⁷ .

In April 2021, the 14th meeting of the JPC was held in Dushanbe, where topical issues of cooperation in industry and production, agriculture and transport, healthcare and education, investment and information technology were discussed. At the same time, the following events were organised in the capital of Tajikistan: the Made in Belarus exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers; the Belarus-Tajikistan-Afghanistan business forum; and the TajBelAgro forum. All these events demonstrated once again that "despite the global crisis, Belarusian-Tajik trade and economic cooperation is positive and dynamic. Since 2016, mutual trade turnover has grown 5.5 times and amounted to \$111.7 million in 2020"⁴⁸ . At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Tajik market increased more than sixfold over the same period, reaching almost \$110 million, with a positive balance of \$107.5 million due to supplies from Belarus of cars,

⁴⁷ Zaleski, B. The vector of post-Soviet integration. A view from Belarus / Boris Zaleski. – Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. – P. 211.

⁴⁸ Belarus and Tajikistan need to be more active in implementing agricultural projects – Krupko [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-proektv-v-selskom-hozjajstve-krupko-435795-2021/>

sugar, tractors and tractor units, flour, meat by-products and fish, paper and cardboard stationery, and chipboard.

Among the major joint projects implemented recently is the shipment to Afghanistan of the first batch of Belarusian tractors assembled at the Agrotekhservis in the Tajik city of Gissar, where it is planned not only to produce modern equipment for the agro-industrial complex – forage harvesters, attachments, and expand the range of tractors assembled – but also to create more than 100 skilled jobs, taking into account the further development of this project. In this regard, during the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, an agreement on the expansion of assembly production through the development of PST-9 tractor semi-trailers at the site in Gissar was signed by OJSC UKH Bobruiskagromash and AOZT Agrotechservice. "In addition, the companies have signed a contract for the supply of the first batch of machine kits, which is scheduled for shipment in the second quarter of 2021,"⁴⁹. It should be noted that, with Belarusian assistance, a training centre is also operating in Gissar to train specialists in the effective operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment used in the fields of Tajikistan.⁵⁰. The implementation of a contract for the supply of 100 Belarusian trolleybuses with autonomous driving to Dushanbe is also in its final stages.

Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in the field of agriculture also developed quite dynamically in 2020. Suffice it to say that the volume of mutual trade in agricultural products and foodstuffs between the two former Soviet republics reached almost ten million dollars. An important detail is that "Belarusian food exports to this country increased 1.4 times and

⁴⁹ Bobruiskagromash to expand assembly production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-rasshirit-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-v-tadzhikistane-436621-2021/>

⁵⁰ Belarus and Tajikistan discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation and industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiju-436006-2021/>

amounted to \$9.5 million <...>. In January 2021, domestic agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$775,000 were delivered to Tajikistan (a sevenfold increase compared to the same period last year)"⁵¹. And there is every reason to believe that this positive trend will continue in the medium term. The Belleprom concern is also exploring opportunities to supply flax to this Central Asian country, which is attracting increased interest from Tajik business circles. In particular, the IPC discussed "the issue of supplying products from the Orsha Flax Mill and Kamvolya flax-containing fabrics to the Tajik market."⁵².

The Made in Belarus exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers, held in Dushanbe in 2021, is also designed to promote the growth of exports from Belarus to Tajikistan. It showcased the products of 40 domestic companies from key industries: Agrofood – agriculture and food products; TechMach – mechanical engineering and technology; Wood – woodworking industry and furniture production; Health – healthcare and pharmaceuticals; FMCG – consumer goods. Tajik partners were also able to learn about the export opportunities of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex and the prospects for bilateral cooperation in the field of crop and livestock production at the TajBelAgro agricultural forum, where they discussed not only the conclusion of contracts for mutual supplies of agricultural products and equipment, but also options for cooperation. Finally, within the framework of the Tajikistan-Belarus-Afghanistan business forum, which was attended by more than 200 enterprises from the three countries, "eight documents on the development of partnership in the fields of industry, education, and food

⁵¹ Exports of Belarusian agricultural products to Tajikistan increased 1.4 times in 2020 [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vvros-v-14-raza-434869-2021/>

⁵² Belleprom is exploring opportunities for supplying flax to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belleprom-prorabatvvaet-vozmozhnosti-postavok-lna-v-tadzhikistan-435980-2021/>

and beverage supplies were signed⁵³, which testifies to the growing momentum of partnership in this trilateral format.

It should be noted that in June 2022, the 15th meeting of the JPC was held in Minsk, at which the parties noted the most significant areas of bilateral cooperation: investment, industry, agriculture, transport, social, cultural and scientific-technical spheres. It should be recalled that "in 2021, Belarus' trade turnover with Tajikistan amounted to more than \$126 million, an increase of 12.6% compared to 2020, with exports slightly exceeding \$122 million (an increase of 11.1%) and imports amounting to \$4 million (an increase of 90.5%)"⁵⁴. Today, both countries are interested in expanding areas of cooperation, which could include the development of assembly production of Belarusian lifts, organised in Tajikistan, the creation of a joint venture for the production of carpets, the supply of Belarusian passenger, mining and construction equipment, as well as pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection, and the increase in exports of food products, including those certified according to Halal standards. Belarus, in turn, is interested in importing raw materials for the Belarusian light industry from Tajikistan, as well as continuing cooperation in the fields of education, culture and sport.

In this context, it is important that Tajikistan has declared 2022-2026 as years of industrial development. "During this period, it is planned to ensure an average annual economic growth of at least 7% and double the GDP per capita, create more than 500,000 new jobs and reduce the poverty level to 15%. Belarusian companies are invited to actively participate in solving these tasks. A separate request has been made to continue training Tajik specialists in Minsk for various sectors of the

⁵³ Belarus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed eight documents on partnership development at a business forum [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-tadzhikistan-i-afghanistan-podpisali-na-biznes-forume-8-dokumentov-o-razviti-i-partnerstva-435998-2021/>

⁵⁴ Belarus and Tajikistan are interested in expanding areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-zaintereso-van-v-rasshirenii-napravlenij-sotrudnichestva-506166-2022>

economy"⁵⁵. In this regard, the Belarusian side is ready to provide Tajik partners with all types of machine-building equipment, primarily quarry and road machinery, for the implementation of infrastructure projects in the country's mining and electric power industries. There is an opportunity to significantly increase supplies to the Tajik market of new models of Belarusian buses, trucks, woodworking, petrochemical and metallurgical products, as well as to open joint ventures for the assembly of lifts, household appliances and furniture.

In the agro-industrial complex, Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery and meat and dairy products. In particular, significant work is underway to ship agricultural machinery from Belarus, which is urgently needed by the Tajik agricultural sector. "In 2021, 411 tractors of various brands and more than 124 agricultural machines were delivered to Tajikistan"⁵⁶. At the same time, the Tajik side expresses interest in continuing cooperation in this area. In addition, partners from Tajikistan plan to expand the range of beef products, dairy products and raw materials supplied. During the 15th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, the parties also noted "the potential for growth in the supply of Belarusian-bred cattle and the possibility of providing Tajik farmers with highly productive, balanced feed and additives"⁵⁷.

Cooperation between the regions of Belarus and Tajikistan is also developing successfully in 2022. In particular, the agenda includes the

⁵⁵ Pivovar, E. Krutoy announced Belarus' readiness to supply Tajikistan with all types of engineering machinery / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krutoj-zajavil-o-gotovnosti-belarusi-obespechit-tadzhikistan-ljubymi-vidami-mashinostroitelnoi-tehniki-523859-2022/>

⁵⁶ Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian meat and dairy products and agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-uvlichenii-postavok-belorusskoj-mjaso-molochnoj-produktsii-i-506657-2022/>

⁵⁷ Belarus is ready to supply halal products to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-postavljat-v-tadzhikistan-haljalnuju-produktsiju-506619-2022/>

development of cooperation between the capitals of the two countries in a number of areas, including technology, pharmaceutical production and education. It should be recalled that in 2019, Minsk implemented a large project to supply Dushanbe with Belkommunmash trolleybuses. Today, these vehicles already adorn the Tajik capital. Another project is being implemented in the field of dairy production – cooperation between Tajik partners and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. The plans include the development of cooperative ties and the creation of joint production of municipal equipment. As for the educational sphere, about 600 Tajik students are currently studying in Belarus. Most of them choose Minsk and technical universities for their studies. Many of them study at the Aviation Academy and various faculties of the Belarusian State University. In addition, there are four joint faculties of Belarusian and Tajik universities. So the two capitals are developing many mechanisms for cooperation. And "in the future, a document will be signed that regulates the further development of relations between Minsk and Dushanbe"⁵⁸.

Another example of regional cooperation is between the Gomel and Khatlon regions, which intend to develop cooperation in agriculture and industry. Gomel specialists are ready to build turnkey farms in the Tajik region. Partners from the Khatlon region have "intentions to purchase mineral fertilisers, timber, cattle, as well as feed for poultry farms"⁵⁹. The Khatlon region is a large region of Tajikistan, where 48 to 78 per cent of the republic's total volume of certain agricultural products is grown. These include vegetables, early fruits, melons and citrus fruits.

⁵⁸ Cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan discussed at the Minsk City Executive Committee [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-obsudili-v-mingorispolkome-525441-2022/>

⁵⁹ Gomel and Khatlon regions intend to develop cooperation in agriculture and industry [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-hatlonskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promyshlennosti-507131-2022/>

Another important document was signed by Belarus and Tajikistan in Dushanbe in October 2022 – a roadmap for 2022-2026. In the context of implementing the programme for the accelerated development of industry in this Central Asian country, Tajik partners are interested in developing cooperation with Belarus in the light, food, pharmaceutical, chemical and mining industries. In addition, "the agricultural sector in the field of industrial cooperation and interregional cooperation were identified as priority areas for economic cooperation"⁶⁰. In addition, the two republics adopted a number of important bilateral documents. These include intergovernmental agreements on a system to promote mutual trade and on cooperation in the field of youth policy. The General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus and the Agency for State Financial Control and Anti-Corruption of Tajikistan adopted a document on cooperation in the field of anti-corruption. The Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus and the Committee for Tourism Development under the Government of Tajikistan agreed to develop cooperation in the field of tourism. A cooperation agreement was also signed by the National Centre for Marketing and Price Conjuncture of Belarus and the Export Agency under the Government of Tajikistan. The national academies of sciences of the two countries agreed to train personnel in the fields of virology, microbiology, molecular biology, epidemiology, biotechnology and pharmacology. In addition, a "plan of measures for the development of trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation between the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Executive Authority of the City of Dushanbe for 2023-2024" was approved. The Mogilev district

⁶⁰ Rahmon outlined priority areas for cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/rahmon-oboznachil-prioritetnyve-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-528619-2022/>

established twinning relations with the Spitama district of the Sughd region of Tajikistan...⁶¹ .

In October, Dushanbe also hosted a Tajik-Belarusian business forum, which was attended by representatives of 73 enterprises from Belarus, almost fifty of which showcased their products at the Made in Belarus exhibition. "Practically all sectors of the Belarusian economy are represented at the business forum: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, food products, woodworking, and light industry. The total value of contracts signed amounted to about \$46 million. In addition, agreements worth another \$2 million were secured during online negotiations."⁶² .

In particular, the Minsk Tractor Works signed contracts with Tajik companies worth \$11 million. "Thus, 170 units of BELARUS tractor equipment worth about \$4 million will be supplied to the Madadi Tursunzoda company. A trade agreement has been signed with Agrotechservice for the delivery of 320 tractors worth more than \$7 million"⁶³ . It should be noted that in the first three quarters of this year, about 370 Belarusian tractors have already been delivered to Tajikistan. This is almost 50 per cent more than in January-September 2021. For reference: in November 2017, an assembly plant for BELARUS tractors was opened in the city of Gissar, and contracts were signed for the production of seven models.

Another fact: the Minsk Automobile Plant will supply 14 units of automotive equipment to the Tajik market for almost \$500,000. The contract was signed during the Tajik-Belarusian business forum by MAZ

⁶¹ Belarus and Tajikistan sign roadmap for 2022-2026 and several other important documents [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-na-2022-2026-gody-i-esche-neskolko-vaznyh-dokumentov-528597-2022/>

⁶² Tajik-Belarusian Business Forum held in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/fotofakt-tadzhiksko-belorusskij-biznes-forum-prohodit-v-dushanbe-528500-2022/>

⁶³ MTZ signs contracts with Tajik companies worth \$11 million [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zakljuchil-kontraktv-s-kompanijami-iz-tadzhikistana-na-11-mln-528650-2022/>

and OBI ZULOL CJSC, the largest producer of bottled water, carbonated drinks and natural juices in Tajikistan. In 2019, MAZ supplied the company with 18 vehicles, including road trains and flatbed trucks with trailers.⁶⁴

Another participant in the Tajik-Belarusian business forum was the Belgospisheprom concern, eight of whose enterprises took part in the Made in Belarus exhibition and even signed a number of contracts with Tajik partners for the supply of sugar, brewing malt and confectionery products. Incidentally, "in terms of export volume, Tajikistan ranks first among the concern's trading partners in Central Asia and the Middle East this year"⁶⁵ .

Representatives of the Belleprom concern explored the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan during the business forum. The heads of the Orsha Flax Mill and the Baranovichi Cotton Production Association, who visited Dushanbe, held talks on the possible import of cotton yarn and fibre, as the price of cotton yarn has become more acceptable for Belarusian producers in Tajikistan in recent years. It should be noted that there are other areas of interest in the cooperation between the two countries in the light industry. "This year [2022], the Belarusian company Mogotex supplied its products to Tajikistan for the first time. Technical fabrics were exported, with the total value of the transactions amounting to \$250,000. The Mogilev-based company has agreed on deliveries to Tajikistan for 2023 as well. <...> Mogotex will supply technical fabrics worth \$300,000."⁶⁶ .

⁶⁴ MAZ to supply equipment to Tajikistan worth almost \$500,000 [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-tehniku-v-tadzhikistan-pochti-na-500-tys-528637-2022/>

⁶⁵ Zhidkov: Tajikistan is one of the key partners for Belgospisheprom in the Central Asian market [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zhidkov-tadzhikistan-odin-iz-kljuchevyh-partnerov-dlia-belgospisheproma-na-tsentralnoaziatskom-rvnke-528642-2022/>

⁶⁶ Belarus is exploring the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-izuchaet-vozmozhnost-investirovaniya-v-proizvodstvo-hlopka-v-tadzhikistane-528489-2022>

The Vitebsk Carpets holding company will also be represented on the Tajik market, which is setting up a joint production facility in Khujand, Sughd Region, with Tajik partners. Interestingly, in mid-April 2022, this city hosted the official opening ceremony of a joint Belarusian-Tajik elevator assembly plant owned by Mogilevliftmash OJSC, whose partner is Khujandtorgmash LLC. The new elevator production workshop provided jobs for 50 residents of Khujand, where "using modern equipment and technologies, various types of elevators will be manufactured – freight and passenger elevators for high-rise buildings, manufacturing enterprises, as well as healthcare institutions"⁶⁷.

As for cooperation in the field of education and science, at the forum of rectors of Belarusian and Tajik universities held in October 2022, the parties saw great potential in the field of innovation, in the implementation of joint educational programmes, and in the training of Tajik students at Belarusian universities and institutes. In particular, the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) signed a number of cooperation agreements with Tajik universities. These include Danghara State University, Tajik Agrarian University, Tajik National University, Tajikistan Technological University, and the Mining and Metallurgical Institute of Tajikistan. Belarusian and Tajik partners already see a number of areas for cooperation. "Interaction with these universities is a new level of entry into the Tajik educational services market. <...> Opening new horizons for cooperation..."⁶⁸. As a result, the parties believe that innovative interaction is the key to creating new joint ventures in Tajikistan and Belarus. Overall, all these facts "show the growing interest of the two former Soviet republics in fruitful

⁶⁷ Emomali Rahmon took part in the opening of the Mogilevliftmash lift assembly plant in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/emomali-rahmon-prinjal-uchastie-v-otkrvtii-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-liftov-mogilevliftmash-v-496483-2022/>

⁶⁸ BNTU and Tajikistan universities to cooperate in science, education and innovation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/bntu-i-vuzv-tadzhikistana-budut-sotrudnichat-v-sfere-nauki-obrazovanija-i-innovatsii-528871-2022>

cooperation in a wide variety of areas⁶⁹, which are reaching a new level in the form of comprehensive measures in the roadmap for Belarus and Tajikistan for 2022-2026.

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⁶⁹ Zaleski, B. International relations and media. Features of multi-vector international cooperation in a period of global challenges / Boris Zaleski. – Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. – P. 129.

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New steps towards cooperation

Belarus and Tajikistan plan to intensify trade and economic cooperation in order to increase trade turnover and reach a level of at least \$100 million in bilateral trade in 2024. Minsk and Dushanbe see positive dynamics and untapped potential to focus not only on "simple product supply, but also on expanding cooperation ties, creating long-term joint projects, assembly production in the field of agricultural machinery and attachments, lifts, dairy products, electrical transformers and other promising areas"⁷⁰.

It should be recalled that in 2022, Belarusian-Tajik trade turnover amounted to more than \$78 million. At the end of 11 months of 2023, this figure stood at around \$75 million. There are 9 enterprises with Tajik capital registered in Belarus, including 2 joint ventures and 7 foreign enterprises. There are more than 20 entities of the commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises and one joint venture operating in Tajikistan. In addition, interesting joint cooperation projects have emerged over the past five years. Firstly, since 2017, an assembly plant for Belarusian agricultural machinery has been operating in the Tajik city of Gissar. In 2024, it is planned to organise the assembly of combine harvesters there. Secondly, in 2022, an assembly plant for lifts manufactured by OJSC Mogilevliftmash was opened in the Tajik city of Khujand. Thirdly, a joint venture based on Belarusian technology was established in the country's capital, Dushanbe – OOO SP "Vatan Dairy Products Production", which has been manufacturing products under the ALMIR trademark since June 2023. Fourthly, in November 2023, OJSC Minsk Electrotechnical Plant named after V.I. Kozlov and OJSC Transformer from the city of Bokhtar signed a memorandum on the

⁷⁰ Cooperative ties and joint projects. Belarusian ambassador on cooperation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/kooperatsionnye-svjazi-i-sovmestnye-proekty-posol-belarusi-o-sotrudnichestve-s-tadzhikistanom-607001-2023/>

organisation of assembly production of Belarusian transformers in Tajikistan. Fifth, commercial agreements have been signed to supply cotton, yarn and cotton fabrics from this Central Asian country to Belarusian light industry enterprises until 2025 for a total amount of more than \$40 million. Sixth, OJSC BELAZ has been working on the creation of a quarry equipment manufacturing enterprise in Tajikistan in the near future.

In September 2023, the 16th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Dushanbe, at which trends in cooperation in the field of industrial cooperation, light industry, supplies of woodworking products, foodstuffs, pharmaceutical products. The parties also discussed issues of cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food and training of personnel for the agro-industrial complex, transport, education and science, health care and social protection, culture and sports, tourism and interregional cooperation. On the same day, a meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Business Council was held, attended by heads and representatives of 24 Belarusian enterprises and organisations, as well as small and medium-sized businesses. Following the event, its participants signed "13 bilateral documents – cooperation agreements and contracts for the supply of products worth a total of more than \$16 million"⁷¹.

In particular, during the 16th meeting of the IPC, Gomselmash OJSC signed a memorandum of bilateral cooperation with Agrotechservice CJSC. This document provides for the supply of five GS5A combine harvesters to the Tajik market in 2024. The fact is that Gomselmash has been working closely with Agrotechservice for several years to provide Tajikistan's farmers with grain and forage harvesting equipment, as well

⁷¹ Belarusian and Tajik companies signed contracts worth \$16 million during a business council meeting [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriiatija-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-vo-vremja-delovogo-soveta-podpisali-kontraktv-na-16-mln-590816-2023/>

as timely maintenance services⁷² . We would like to add that GOMSELMASH's economical and simple combine harvesters and self-propelled mowers are currently the most popular in this Central Asian country. The supply of machine kits and other equipment to Tajik partners is also planned. In addition, "Belarus will supply Tajikistan with seeds, livestock, canned meat, dairy and fish products"⁷³ .

In 2023, Belarusian-Tajik cooperation took on a new dimension in the woodworking and pulp and paper industries, where deliveries from Belarus increased 1.7 times in seven months. Looking at the figures for the last five years, exports by the Bellesbumprom concern have grown 2.2 times. "Currently, Tajikistan imports virtually the entire range of products manufactured by the republic's timber industry: sawn timber, wood-based panels, paper, cardboard and products made from them, wallpaper, furniture, plywood"⁷⁴ . The Belarusian concern already has clear prospects for further cooperation with its Tajik partners.

The decisions of the 16th meeting of the JIC also gave significant attention to investment cooperation between the two countries. Earlier, in February 2023, at the first meeting of the working group on these issues between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the State Committee for Investment and State Property Management of Tajikistan, the parties identified the key objective in this area – "to give impetus to investment cooperation, identify points of contact, and draw up a list of specific projects to attract business"⁷⁵ . The most promising areas and the

⁷² Gomselmash to supply a batch of grain harvesters to Tajikistan in 2024 [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-postavit-partiju-zernouborochnyh-kombajnov-v-tadzhikistan-v-2024-godu-591373-2023/>

⁷³ Belarus and Tajikistan agree on cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-selskom-hoziaistve-592218-2023/>

⁷⁴ Over the past five years, Bellesbumprom enterprises have increased exports to Tajikistan by 2.2 times [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-za-poslednie-5-let-narastili-eksport-v-tadzhikistan-v-22-raza-590869-2023/>

⁷⁵ Chervyakov: Priority areas for investment cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan need to be identified [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL:

formation of a list of investment projects, including import substitution projects, are already being discussed. These include mining, mechanical engineering, IT, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism. Plans also include exploring the possibility of creating a Belarusian-Tajik investment fund. In addition, among its new investment projects, Tajikistan wants to create a "multifunctional shopping complex in Minsk to serve as a coordination centre for representatives of both countries"⁷⁶. One of the priorities of Belarusian-Tajik cooperation is also the field of education, which will reach a new level in 2024. Today, various educational projects are already being implemented between educational institutions of the two countries, "within the framework of which joint faculties have been created and unified educational programmes have been adopted. The issue of opening branches of Belarusian universities in Tajikistan is being considered"⁷⁷. For reference, there are four joint Belarusian-Tajik faculties operating in higher education institutions in Dushanbe, whose graduates receive state-recognised diplomas of the Republic of Belarus. Firstly, there is a joint faculty of the Tajik National University with higher education institutions in Belarus: Belarusian State University (BSU), the A.D. Sakharov International State Environmental Institute of BSU, Belarusian State Technological University, and Polotsk State University. Secondly, it is the Faculty of Civil Aviation of the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation and the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi. Thirdly, it is the Engineering and Technical Faculty of the Belarusian National Technical University and the Tajik Technical University named after Academician

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-nuzhno-opredelit-prioritetnye-napravlenija-investsotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-552755-2023/>

⁷⁶ Tajikistan wants to establish its trading house in Minsk [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tadzhikistan-hochet-sozdat-v-minske-svoj-torgovji-dom-609906-2024>

⁷⁷ Safarzoda, B. Water for life, melting glaciers, Navruz and Kupala / B. Safarzoda // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/voda-dlja-zhizni-tajanie-lednikov-navruz-i-kupala-je-posol-o-tadzhikistane-i-druzhbe-s-belarusiju-8874/>

M.S. Osimi. Fourthly, it is the joint faculty of Polotsk State University based at the Technological University of Tajikistan. More than 500 Tajik students are studying at Belarusian universities.

In October 2023, a joint action plan for 2023-2026 was signed in Minsk between the Ministry of Education of Belarus and the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan . At the same time, the Belarusian capital hosted the second forum of rectors of the two countries, which was attended by representatives of more than 50 universities in Belarus and Tajikistan and where more than 10 bilateral agreements were signed at the university level. In particular, within the framework of this cooperation, "Belarusian State Pedagogical University is working closely with the Pedagogical University of Tajikistan specifically on the exchange of teaching staff and best practices in training future teachers"⁷⁸ . Baranovich State University and Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics have signed a cooperation agreement that "defines key areas of joint educational and research activities, as well as the implementation of joint youth initiatives"⁷⁹ . The universities are now preparing a roadmap for international cooperation to facilitate the implementation of educational modules, participation in scientific and educational tracking, and academic exchange.

Finally, in June 2024, the 17th meeting of the JPC on cooperation was held in Minsk, at which the parties discussed the state and prospects of trade, economic and investment cooperation in the field of transport and logistics, industrial cooperation, education and medicine, as well as interregional partnerships, in order to take a new step in deepening trade

⁷⁸ The Ministries of Education of Belarus and Tajikistan have signed a joint action plan for 2023-2026 [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministerstva-obrazovaniya-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-2023-2026-gody-592165-2023/>

⁷⁹ BarSU develops a roadmap for cooperation with a new partner university from Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-razrabatyvaet-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-s-novym-vuzom-partnerom-iz-tadzhikistana-592689-2023/>

and economic cooperation and set a clear goal – to improve joint Belarusian-Tajik production. Especially since there are already some interesting examples. As noted above, there is already a joint venture in Tajikistan that processes Belarusian milk and produces dairy products. Another area of cooperation is the assembly of Belarusian equipment on Tajik soil.

At the 17th meeting of the JPC, it was emphasised that today there is a need to expand the area, the range of equipment produced and the product range. The Tajik side is also interested in the assembly of processing equipment, and motor vehicles and transport for housing and communal services will not be left out. It should be recalled that a Belarusian-Tajik enterprise, Agrotechservice, has been opened in Tajikistan, where machines from the Minsk Tractor Plant are assembled. The demand for this equipment is very high. At the same time, Tajik agricultural producers are interested not only in Belarusian tractors, but also in combine harvesters. An agreement has already been reached to purchase equipment from the Gomselmash enterprise. There are plans to expand cooperation with the Bobruisk Tractor Parts and Aggregates Plant.

As for Tajikistan's interests in Belarus, first of all, the Tajik side has been buying Belarusian breeding cattle for several years to develop its farms. Last year alone, approximately two thousand head of cattle were purchased. One of the enterprises in this Central Asian country is engaged in breeding cattle for further sale. Secondly, Tajik partners buy potatoes in Belarus. In 2023, their purchases amounted to 800 tonnes. This year, these figures will increase. Thirdly, another item of Belarusian exports to Tajikistan is flax seeds, which will be developed. Fourthly, the Tajik side has already supplied Belarus with a trial batch of safflower seeds, an oilseed crop, and can also provide tomato and cucumber seeds for cultivation in greenhouses. Finally, from late April to early May,

Tajikistan is already harvesting fresh apples, cherries and apricots. Once the logistics are in place, the parties could supply all these products in substantial volumes.

Continuing this theme, we note that deliveries of food products and agricultural raw materials from Belarus to Tajikistan last year amounted to more than 160 per cent. "The basis of agricultural exports was formed by sugar (a 2.1-fold increase), milk and dairy products (a growth rate of 140.9%), cattle (151.2%), meat and meat products (61.8%) <...>. Imports from Tajikistan in 2023 amounted to 103.8%. The basis of imports was the supply of dried fruits. Exports of food products and agricultural raw materials in January–March 2024 increased 2.4 times"⁸⁰. In addition, during the 17th meeting of the IPC, the parties agreed to establish an exchange programme for the training of specialists in the field of agriculture, as well as for students to undergo practical training.

Referring to the topic of Belarusian-Tajik interregional partnerships within the framework of the 17th meeting of the IPC, there are some interesting examples of this interaction. In particular, Minsk and Dushanbe. In June this year, the two capitals discussed the possibility of supplying snow removal and passenger equipment, spare parts, sugar, vegetable oil to Dushanbe, as well as the construction of a Tajikistan trading house in Minsk (), located in the area of Prititsky and Leshchinsky streets. The necessary documents for the implementation of this project are already being prepared. In Dushanbe, Belarusian specialists are expected to assist in the implementation of a joint project with South Korea to build a light rail system. There are other areas of cooperation that are just beginning to develop. This is evidenced by the

⁸⁰ Bartosz: Deepening cooperation with Tajikistan is facilitated by the improvement of joint production [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bartosh-uglubleniju-sotrudnichestva-s-tadzhikistanom-sposobstvuet-sovshenstvovanie-sovmestnyh-639287-2024>

fact that "trade turnover [between Minsk and Tajikistan] in the first quarter alone exceeded last year's volume"⁸¹ .

The development of cooperation with Tajikistan is also a promising area for the Gomel region. Suffice it to say that this year, trade turnover between the two sides has already quadrupled. Ferrous metals, wood products, dairy products and confectionery are supplied to this Central Asian country from the south-eastern region of Belarus. And cotton yarn is purchased in Tajikistan for enterprises in the Gomel region. As for the prospects for cooperation between the parties, they have already been practically defined in all areas. For example, batches of Gomel combine harvesters will be delivered to Tajikistan this year, and there are also plans for purchases next year. In turn, Tajikistan is ready to supply lemons, grapes, cherries, apricots and dried fruits. The parties also have the opportunity to create trading houses, "which would allow goods from Tajikistan to be presented in Gomel, and goods from Gomel producers to be presented in Tajikistan"⁸² . Partners in the field of agritourism and ecotourism, in healthcare institutions, and in the field of education – especially in terms of training personnel for the agricultural sector – also have their own plans for cooperation .

Returning to the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission, we note that the participants of this meeting focused on issues of intensifying trade and economic cooperation, the development of industrial cooperation and humanitarian interaction, emphasising the importance of further fruitful progress in the most relevant areas of partnership between Belarus and Tajikistan.

⁸¹ Supplies of equipment, construction of a trading house. Minsk and Dushanbe discussed areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/postavki-tehniki-stroitelstvo-torgovogo-doma-minsk-i-dushanbe-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-638915-2024/>

⁸² From mechanical engineering to agritourism. Gomel Region and Tajikistan to develop partnership in the agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-mashinostroenija-do-agroturizma-gomelskaja-oblast-i-tadzhikistan-budut-razvivat-partnerstvo-v-apk-639537-2024>

And finally, in October 2022, Belarus and Tajikistan signed a roadmap for bilateral cooperation for 2022-2026, which contains 39 points. To date, six have already been implemented, 33 are in the process of implementation, including 21 on an ongoing basis. Today, the parties continue to seek new opportunities to intensify cooperation in order to fully implement this strategic document and make a new contribution to the development of Belarusian-Tajik relations.

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Growth dynamics and prospects in key areas

In September 2025, Dushanbe hosted the 18th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission (MPC) on trade and economic cooperation, which summarised the results of bilateral cooperation and discussed the prospects for partnership relations in key areas – the agro-industrial complex and food security, personnel training and the development of agricultural science, industrial cooperation, education and interregional relations. Minsk and Dushanbe positively assessed the growth dynamics of trade turnover between the countries and noted significant potential for its expansion. Particular attention was paid to the diversification of supplies, increasing trade in agro-industrial products, and the prospects for "creating joint ventures and deepening industrial cooperation on the principles of mutual benefit. Such projects can become the basis for a sustainable economic partnership"⁸³.

It should be recalled that at the 17th meeting of the IPC, held in June 2024 in Minsk, the prospects for trade, economic and investment cooperation in the field of transport and logistics, industrial cooperation, education and medicine, as well as interregional partnerships, in order to take a new step in deepening trade and economic cooperation and to set a clear goal – to improve joint Belarusian-Tajik production. At the same time, it was emphasised that "there is a need to expand the area, the range of equipment produced by and the product range. The Tajik side is also interested in the assembly production of processing equipment, and motor transport and transport for housing and communal services will not be left out"⁸⁴. In the same year, 2024, the level of trade between the

⁸³ Diversification of supplies, growth of trade turnover in the agro-industrial complex. Belarus and Tajikistan have identified prospects for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/diversifikatsii-postavok-rost-tovarooborota-v-apk-belarus-i-tadjikistan-opredelili-perspektivy-738086-2025/>

⁸⁴ Zaleski, B. Evolution of Belarus' partnership formats with friendly countries / Boris Zaleski. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. – P. 22.

two post-Soviet republics exceeded \$168 million. At the same time, the volume of trade in food products and agricultural raw materials increased by 1.5 times, and supplies from Belarus increased even more – by 1.6 times. Belarusian exports to this Central Asian country consisted mainly of sugar, milk powder, chilled beef, canned meat, cattle, eggs and meat and bone meal. Tajikistan mainly supplies Belarus with dried fruit, cotton yarn, fabric and fibre.⁸⁵ . In January-July this year, trade turnover between the two countries in the agro-industrial complex increased by 52 per cent, with exports of Belarusian products up 54 per cent. At the same time, supplies of meat and meat products from Belarus increased 7.2 times, and eggs 4 times. In addition, in the first half of 2025, "impressive contracts were signed for the supply of canned fish and chilled beef"⁸⁶ . At the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, the parties identified mutual interests for further expansion of partnership ties. For example, Belarus is ready to increase supplies of food products, agricultural machinery and breeding cattle. , Belarusian producers also see potential in supplies from Tajikistan of fresh and canned fruits and vegetables, nuts, and fruit purees. Overall, at this meeting, Belarusian agro-industrial enterprises signed more than a dozen contracts worth a total of over \$16 million. Agreements and memoranda of cooperation were signed, opening up new prospects for long-term product supplies.⁸⁷ . Cooperation will cover not only trade, but also in-depth interaction in the scientific, educational and production spheres. This includes joint projects in crop and livestock production, the exchange of experience in

⁸⁵ Trade turnover in agriculture between Belarus and Tajikistan grew by 34.8% in five months [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-v-selskom-hozjajstve-mezhdu-belarusju-i-tadzhikistanom-za-pjat-mesiatsev-vyros-na-348-729107-2025/>

⁸⁶ Belarus and Tajikistan to develop cooperation in crop production and veterinary medicine [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/koopratsiju-v-rastenievodstve-i-veterinarii-stanut-razvivat-belarus-i-tadzhikistan-718582-2025/>

⁸⁷ Belarus and Tajikistan sign contracts worth over \$16 million [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-podpisali-kontraktvy-na-summu-bolee-16-mln-738238-2025/>

the field of veterinary medicine and breeding, and the training of specialists through the agricultural education system.

Let's take **production cooperation as an example**. Back in the summer of 2025, at a meeting of the prime ministers of the two countries in Dushanbe, it was noted that joint production is a key point for promoting the interests of both parties. So, "the creation of joint ventures both in Tajikistan and in Belarus is an important direction in which we need to move. This solves our common tasks"⁸⁸. A successful example of mutually beneficial cooperation is the Agrotechservice enterprise. This joint assembly plant in the Tajik city of Gissar was established in 2017. It assembles machines from the Minsk Tractor Plant, agricultural machinery from Gomselmash, and trailers from Bobruiskagromash. Currently, the production complex includes small and large assembly shops, a finished product warehouse, open and closed exhibition areas, and an administrative and training building where Tajik specialists are trained to service and operate Belarusian equipment. "In 2025, 1.5 hectares of land will be allocated to the assembly plant for capacity expansion, and preparations are underway for the construction of new production facilities"⁸⁹.

Another interesting example of cooperation between the two countries is the Belarusian BKM Holding. The fact is that in Tajikistan, urban electric transport is represented by trolleybuses and electric buses, which are operated in Dushanbe. "A total of 60 electric buses and about 105 trolleybuses are in service, 104 of which are manufactured by BKM. From April 2019 to January 2021, the holding company supplied 104

⁸⁸ Turchin: joint ventures with Tajikistan are a starting point for promoting the interests of both countries [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/turchin-sovmestnye-proizvodstva-s-tadzhikistanom-opornaja-tochka-dlja-prodvizhenija-interesov-dvuh-718988-2025/>

⁸⁹ "An example of mutually beneficial cooperation" Ministry of Industry on assembly production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/primer-vzaimovvgodnogo-sotrudnichestva-minprom-ot-sborochnom-proizvodstve-v-tadzhikistane-719085-2025/>

trolleybuses of the 32100D model of the "Syabar" series for the needs of Dushanbe,"⁹⁰ . At the international exhibition "Tajikistan-2025", which took place in November this year and where products were presented by more than 60 companies from Tajikistan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Iran, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China, BKM Holding's stand featured models of the 32100D Olgerd trolleybus, the E433 Vitovt electric bus and the T811 tram. All this equipment can be supplied for the needs of Tajik settlements, as well as for the organisation of joint production of electric buses in the territory and other countries in Central and South Asia.

Tajikistan sees broad prospects for cooperation with Belarus in **light industry**, namely in the textile sector, which is one of the priorities within the framework of the accelerated industrialisation programme of this Central Asian country. Here, "tasks have been set to create six cotton and textile clusters in the country, from the complete processing of cotton fibre to the production of finished products"⁹¹ . In this regard, Tajik partners are interested in mutually beneficial cooperation to create these clusters, including through the acquisition of technological lines on a leasing basis or the use of other financial instruments. In addition, cooperation could be expanded in the processing of environmentally friendly agricultural products in the food industry.

Education occupies a special place in Tajik-Belarusian relations and has enormous potential for further growth. It should be noted that, thanks to joint exchange programmes based on agreements between higher education institutions in the two countries, the number of students from Tajikistan already exceeds 500. "They study in such sought-after fields

⁹⁰ BKM Holding presented its equipment at an exhibition in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bkm-holding-prezentoval-tehniku-na-vystavke-v-tadzhikistane-748760-2025/>

⁹¹ Rasulzoda: Tajikistan sees broad prospects for industrial cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/rasulzoda-tadzhikistan-vidit-shirokie-perspektivy-v-promyshlennom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-740056-2025/>

as engineering, technology and medicine, and return to Tajikistan with modern knowledge, becoming valuable specialists"⁹². Incidentally, in November 2024, the 3rd International Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and Tajikistan was held in Dushanbe, where joint educational programmes, academic exchanges and even the possibility of establishing branches of Belarusian universities in Tajikistan in order to take educational cooperation to a new level, increase the number of Tajik students in Belarus and expand the range of joint educational programmes. The forum was attended by the rectors of the Abuali ibn Sino Tajik State Medical University, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Tajik National University, the Belarusian National Technical University, Tajikistan Technological University, Brest State Technical University"⁹³, who signed 25 bilateral agreements between universities of the two countries. In particular, between Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics with Brest State Technical University and Belarusian-Russian University, between Khujand State University named after Bobojon Gafurov and Polotsk State University named after Euphrosyne of Polotsk. These agreements are aimed at supporting technical progress in both countries, training highly qualified specialists, conducting scientific research and introducing scientific and technical achievements into production. "Within the framework of the agreements reached by the universities of Tajikistan and Belarus, it is planned to hold annual academic exchanges of students and teachers, organise scientific conferences, seminars and round tables. These measures will allow the

⁹² Safarzoda, B. The cold of glaciers and the warmth of hearts. Tajikistan's ambassador on the horizons of friendship with Belarus and the priorities of the CIS chairmanship / B. Safarzoda // [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/interview/view/holod-lednikov-i-teplo-serdets-posol-tadzhikistana-o-gorizontah-druzhbv-s-belarusju-i-prioritetah-9510/>

⁹³ International forum of rectors of Belarusian and Tajik universities takes place in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/mezhdunarodnyi-forum-ректорov-vuzov-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-prohodit-v-dushanbe-678774-2024/>

development of educational and scientific projects, as well as contribute to strengthening ties between educational institutions⁹⁴. The forum focused on expanding cooperation in education, science and innovation, including projects in the green economy, digitalisation and teacher training.

In the same context, in February 2025, the Belarusian State University of Transport (BelSUT), the Belarusian and Tajik railways discussed the possibility of retraining specialists from Tajikistan "in railway transport specialities, as well as training workers in the professions of 'diesel locomotive driver' "Assistant diesel locomotive engineer"⁹⁵ and organising training courses or specialised courses for workers in other railway professions at the Belarusian Railway's road centre for training, retraining and professional development.

Finally, the decisions of the 18th meeting of the IPC noted the importance of developing **interregional cooperation** between the two countries. In this regard, several Belarusian regions have been particularly active recently. Take **the Gomel region**, for example, whose trade turnover with Tajikistan has grown 5.5 times over the past five years. This indicates that the development of trade, economic and investment cooperation with this Central Asian country is one of the priorities in the sphere of international cooperation for the Gomel region. The basis of mutual trade is represented by metal and woodworking products, food products, and agricultural machinery. Back in 2017, this Belarusian region signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, and humanitarian cooperation with **the Khatlon region**. And in October 2024, the leaders of the two partner regions signed a roadmap for 2025-2026 to implement this agreement in order to

⁹⁴ Forum of Rectors of Tajikistan and Belarus: 25 cooperation agreements signed in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://asia-today.news/29112024/5057/>

⁹⁵ Tajikistan is interested in training specialists at the Belarusian Railway Centre [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/tadzhikistan-zainterestovan-v-podgotovke-spetsialistov-na-baze-tsentra-belorusskoj-zheleznoj-dorogi-699159-2025/>

increase mutual supplies of high-quality goods and implement joint projects. At the same time, the Gomel region concluded agreements with Tajik partners for a total amount of six million dollars. In particular, the issue of joint assembly of the main part of the combine harvester at Gomselmash and finalisation at Agrotechservice in Tajikistan was discussed. "And a contract has been signed for 40 units for 2025"⁹⁶. The documents were also signed by Milkvita and Rogachevsky MKK. At the same time, new promising areas of cooperation were adopted. "These include the supply of food, furniture, wood products, agricultural machinery, and the design of dairy complexes"⁹⁷. Tajikistan also wants to open a trading house in Gomel and supply it with dried fruits, early vegetables, cotton and other products.

The Minsk region also has interesting areas of cooperation with Tajik partners. In particular, in May 2025, the Belarusian capital region signed an action plan for cooperation for 2025-2026 with **the Sughd region**, which ranks first in the country in terms of the number of industrial enterprises. "Thanks to its favourable geographical location, the region is the northern trade gateway of Tajikistan. Favourable conditions have been created here to attract investment, and enterprises with foreign partners are regularly appearing."⁹⁸. The signed plan is aimed precisely at strengthening cooperation between the regions. This is all the more so given that trade turnover between the Minsk and Sughd regions increased by 1.5 times in 2024 and by another 40% in the first five months of 2025. Minsk supplies its Tajik partners with sugar, beef,

⁹⁶ Gomel Region signs \$6 million contracts with partners from Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/dogovory-na-6-mln-podpisala-gomelskaja-oblast-s-partnerami-iz-tadzhikistana-669667-2024/>

⁹⁷ Trade turnover between the Gomel region and Tajikistan has grown 5.5 times over the past five years [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-tadzhikistanom-vvros-v-55-raza-za-poslednie-pjat-let-668993-2024/>

⁹⁸ Minsk and Sughd regions of Tajikistan signed an action plan for 2025-2026 [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/societv/view/minskaia-i-sogdijskaia-oblast-tadzhikistana-podpisali-plan-meroprijatij-na-2025-2026-gody-717348-2025/>

poultry, canned goods, and wood products, and in turn purchases dried fruits, nuts, and yarn. Thus, the prospects for regional partnerships between the two countries are on a growth trajectory and will only increase.

Returning to the 18th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, we would like to note once again that ten agreements on joint production and supply of products to the Tajik market were signed in Dushanbe. These documents include agreements between OJSC Slutsk Sugar Refinery and CJSC Obi Zulol, as well as between the state-owned Livestock Association Belplemzhivobedinenie and LLC Boboi Sharifbek on the supply of Belarusian breeding livestock to Tajikistan. A similar document was also signed between OJSC Slonim Meat Processing Plant and the unitary state enterprise for the production, purchase, storage and sale of essential food products in Dushanbe⁹⁹. Commercial contracts were signed between OJSC Pruzhansky Milk Processing Plant and LLC Lokhur Tijorat for the supply of dry milk and whey, as well as between OJSC Gluboksky Milk Canning Plant and the Agency for the Provision of Special Property under the Government of Tajikistan. All this indicates that cooperation between Minsk and Dushanbe goes beyond trade and now includes joint initiatives in various areas.

And finally, back in 2022, the leaders of the two countries signed a Roadmap for Bilateral Cooperation for 2022-2026, which identified the priority areas for this cooperation as "the economy, transport, agriculture, light industry and the food industry"¹⁰⁰. Today, we can see how this policy document has already become the basis for a sustainable

⁹⁹ Tajikistan and Belarus signed 10 agreements on industrial cooperation and product supplies [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://www.asiaplustji.info/ru/news/tajikistan/economic/20250920/tadzhikistan-i-belarus-podpisali-10-soelashenii-o-promishlennoi-kooperatsii-i-postavkah-produktsii>

¹⁰⁰ Relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://mfa.tj/ru/main/view/136/otnosheniya-tadzhikistana-s-belarusi>

Belarusian-Tajik economic partnership, contributing to the development of these priority sectors in both countries.

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