

Investment, technology, creativity

In May 2025, Beijing hosted a meeting of the Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee, where the parties discussed the issues of building up trade and investment cooperation, strengthening transport and logistics ties, implementing projects under the technical and economic assistance of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and promoting the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone". The main emphasis in joint work in the near future will be placed by the two countries on deepening and scaling up practical cooperation in the development of productive forces of new quality, strengthening technological and production cooperation. The priority areas in this work should be to increase the level of localization of existing joint ventures and promote new projects in machinery, machine tools and instrumentation, optics and electronics, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, petrochemicals and medical equipment production, as well as the creation of production clusters to meet the needs of large enterprises. How are these projects already being implemented? This is the subject of this study.



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Transformation of All-Weather Belarusian-Chinese Strategic Cooperation

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strategic cooperation

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A project that will shape the future

May 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the visit of the leaders of the two countries, Alexander Lukashenko and Xi Jinping, to the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. This event became a kind of starting point for the park's rapid development. And indeed, in such a short period of time, roads were laid, water and electricity were connected, heating and gas have been installed, more than 60,000 square meters of standard production buildings have been erected, the first office building, a residential building and a research and development center have been built, and about 60 investment projects have been attracted, with a declared investment volume exceeding one billion dollars. All this allows us to agree with the conclusion that "in five years, the China-Belarus Industrial Park has become a good testing ground for bilateral cooperation, promoted mutual understanding between China and Belarus and ties between their enterprises, and contributed to cultural exchange. That is why "Great Stone," as a comprehensive strategic platform for trade and economic cooperation between China and Belarus, has attracted the attention of potential partners from both our countries and other states and has become a model of cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative."¹.

It should be noted that such high praise for the "Great Stone" is no longer limited to Belarus or China. In November 2019, the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones () held a summit in Monaco, the main theme of which was strengthening cooperation and transforming the successful experience of free economic zones (FEZs) into working tools. More than 400 representatives of FEZs from the

¹ Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" symbolizes the strong friendship between Belarus and China / H. Zheng // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikij-kamen-simvoliziruet-tverduju-druzhu-belarusi-i-kr-hu-chzhen-7289/>

UK, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Asian and African countries, as well as chambers of commerce and industry, government authorities, and potential foreign investors. FEMOZ is a non-governmental and non-profit organization supported by the United Nations, which was founded in 1999 in Geneva with the aim of supporting and promoting free and special economic zones around the world, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, assisting SEZ residents in entering the international market and attracting foreign investment. FEMOZ's functions include developing norms, rules, and guidelines for the development of SEZs, providing them with technical, legal, and economic assistance, and training specialists. Statistics show that "there are currently 3,500 free zones in 130 countries around the world, accounting for more than 70 million jobs"². However, "despite the incentives and preferences granted to them in all countries, < ... > only 300-400 are effective. All this is due to technological backwardness, which prevents SEZs from becoming part of the global economy"³.

The Republic of Belarus has been actively involved in FEMOZ activities for several years now. The summit in Monaco was truly significant for the Belarusian side, as it was there that the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" was awarded the FEMOZA Awards 2019, winning in the category "Fastest Growing Industrial

² Barcelona will become the capital of free zones in 2019 [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL:

<https://ru.wikinews.org/wiki/%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D1%8B%D1%85%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B2%2019%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%83>

³ Grigorieva, V. President of the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones (Femoza) Juan Torrents Tolosa visited Gomel [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/vse-sezy-v-gosti-k-nam.html>

Park." The special feature of this nomination is that "the key factors in determining the winner were the Great Stone's potential for global investment and its rapid pace of development"⁴. Indeed, today in "Great Stone," the Belarusian side has created substantial incentives for residents, both in terms of taxes and land acquisition, as well as a favorable regime under which businesses can be registered in the shortest possible time on a "one-stop shop" basis. As a result, "today this park is showing tremendous growth, with investors coming to us from all over the world,"⁵.

The facts show that "Great Stone" has already become an international platform for the creation of high-tech enterprises. As of early November 2019, there were 57 residents registered here. And there is every reason to believe that their number "by the end of 2020 may grow to 80"⁶. A project to establish solar battery production is already underway here. In July 2019, construction began on a Belarusian-Chinese plant for the production of mechanical gearboxes with an investment of \$17 million. In October 2019, the MAZ-Weichai engine manufacturing plant opened here, producing "small-scale assembly of Euro 5 and Euro 6 engines for trucks, special-purpose vehicles, and buses. The production capacity in a single shift will be

⁴ "Great Stone" recognized as the fastest growing industrial park in the world [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-priznan-samym-bvstrorastuschim-industrialnym-parkom-v-mire-369159-2019/>

⁵ Megalothons in "Great Stone" and IT records – Rumas spoke about opportunities to invest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/megaloty-v-velikom-kamne-i-rekordy-it-rumas-rasskazal-o-vozmozhnostyah-investirovat-v-belarus-370269-2019/>

⁶ The number of residents of the "Great Stone" may increase to 80 by the end of 2020 [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-k-kontsu-2020-goda-mozhet-uvlichitsja-do-80-365696-2019/>

10,000 engines per year.⁷ . But even more impressive plans are being implemented here in the near future.

At the end of October 2019, the 12th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" was held in Beijing, during which participants focused their attention on the following areas of development for this special economic zone: improving the legal environment of the park; establishing additional comfortable conditions to attract investment in the creation of competitive industries; creating a sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure; digital construction; developing the park as a smart city; implementing projects with technical and economic assistance. Among the tasks for the development of the industrial park in 2020, the following were identified as priorities: export orientation, attracting anchor investors with high-tech projects, and expanding international activities⁸ . At the same time, they intend to continue to be guided by four basic principles of development: "First, globalization, because the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Second, industrialization. The main task is to attract international industry clusters. Third, digitalization, which should give the park a big boost. Fourth, going green. Protecting the environment and following environmental rules are key to sustainable development."⁹ .

As a reminder, at the beginning of 2020, 60 residents from 15 countries were already registered in Veliki Kamen, including: 33 from

⁷ Opening of the Maz-Weichai engine manufacturing plant in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9051>

⁸ The Great Stone Industrial Park will be presented at the Chinese International Import Expo in November [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-v-nojabre-predstavjat-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-367476-2019/>

⁹ Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoi-platfornoi-dlja-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>

the People's Republic of China; 15 with companies from Austria, Germany, Israel, Canada, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, the United States of America, Switzerland, and Estonia; 12 created by Belarusian business entities. By this time, in less than five years, 32 kilometers of roads had been built, about 400 kilometers of water and gas pipelines, power lines, and sewer lines had been laid, and the construction of 25 buildings with a total area of about 300,000 square meters had been completed. The total volume of contracts signed and investments exceeded one billion dollars from 11 countries around the world.

Speaking about the trends observed today in the industrial park, several key ones can be identified. One of them is the development of "Great Stone" as a smart city with innovative industry and a high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020, an agreement on the development of 5G technology in the industrial park was signed by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus, CJSC "Industrial Park Development Company" and the administration of "Great Stone." It was noted that one of the most promising areas for the development of 5G technology here is driverless transport. Ultimately, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park should become "the first model base for the introduction of 5G technologies in Belarus"¹⁰.

It should be noted that the priority areas for the development of Great Stone remain machine building, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, new materials, and logistics. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the innovative activity of residents. Approximately 20 projects are already yielding

¹⁰ Nemanova, Yu. Pilot project for the development of 5G to be implemented in "Great Stone" / Yu. Nemanova // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyi-proekt-po-razvitiyu-5g-realizuiut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>

results. Among them is the commercial and logistics company China Merchants, which has received a certificate to operate the only general-purpose bonded customs warehouse in Belarus. In November 2019, the production facility of a subsidiary of the Swiss company Garrosserie Hess AG, Hess Great Stone, was opened in Great Stone to manufacture electric passenger vehicles. "This type of transport will be distinguished by zero carbon dioxide emissions and quiet operation. The batteries on the roof will be charged at the final stop in a few minutes," said¹¹. This industrial park resident plans to reach full production in 2021, when up to fifty bus bodies will be manufactured here.

The innovative activity of the park's residents is also evidenced by the following fact: in March 2020, Assomedika, a manufacturer of a wide range of medical products registered in Veliki Kamen as a resident in 2017, "mastered the production of new disposable respiratory masks and bacterial and viral filters for adults, children, and newborns."¹² These products provide maximum protection against germs and viruses and can be used for 12-24 hours.

The industrial park is also considering future prospects. This is evidenced by the fact that in March 2020, the Chinese company Sinomach registered as a resident of "Big Stone" with a project to create a zone for scientific and technical cooperation and innovative developments, within which it plans to build a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and auxiliary infrastructure. In the first stage, they intend to "implement four scientific and research projects related to developments such as optical devices, automotive sensors, semiconductor devices, and new

¹¹ Alexander Turchin: Belarusian-Swiss cooperation has serious potential [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9136>

¹² Production of respiratory masks launched in the Great Stone industrial park [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnyh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-383799-2020/>

materials. The company also plans to implement the second stage of the project"¹³ .

In terms of expanding the international activities of the Great Stone Industrial Park, one of the most effective tools could be attracting new residents by creating sub-parks, which means "the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of leading companies under the management of a separate management company. This opens up broad prospects for large corporations in particular."¹⁴ . We would add that the park's administration is addressing this proposal not only to Chinese provinces, "but also to investors from Europe, in particular Switzerland, as well as Japan."¹⁵ . The main condition for future residents, which must be met, is the creation of high-tech enterprises in the industrial park. There is enough space and opportunities here for everyone to build technology clusters and sub-parks on a national basis.

It should be noted that the sub-park format is already being used in practice in "Big Stone." Back in May 2017, the first phase of a trade and logistics sub-park was opened here, covering 29 hectares. This is 100,000 square meters of real estate, half of which is occupied by warehouses, and almost a quarter by an exhibition center. "Approximately\$ 120 million has been invested in the construction of the sub-park. Construction of the second phase is scheduled to begin in

¹³ New Chinese-owned resident registered in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>

¹⁴ Konoga, P. Alexander Yaroshenko spoke about new residents of the Great Stone industrial park, the satellite city, and plans for 2019 / P. Konoga // [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/vysech-pribyl-iz-kamnva.html>

¹⁵ "Great Stone" offers foreign partners to create subparks [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-predlagaet-zarubezhnym-partneram-sozdavat-subparki-365694-2019/>

the near future. The total area of the sub-park will be more than 90 hectares, with an investment of \$ 500 million,"¹⁶.

At the 11th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, held in Beijing in November 2018, it was noted that the necessary support would be provided in the near future for the practical implementation of sub-parks in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, and Guangdong Province in the Great Stone Industrial Park. and Guangdong Province. It was also planned to "work out in detail the issue of creating sub-parks in the industrial park with Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces, as well as Hangzhou" by the end of 2019¹⁷. As for Guangdong Province, back in January 2017, in its administrative center, Guangzhou, "a ceremony was held to sign an agreement on the creation of a Chinese (Guangdong) sub-park for LED products in the Great Stone Industrial Park"¹⁸, as well as five other documents expressing the intention of specific companies to join this sub-park.

Another document of significance in this context was signed in November 2018 at the first Chinese exhibition of imported goods and services in Shanghai. This is an agreement on the creation of the Chengdu-European Industrial Sub-Park in the Great Stone area. The fact is that Chengdu, the administrative center of Sichuan Province, has significant industrial potential, including developed automotive and aerospace industries, which is in line with the priorities of the Chinese-

¹⁶ Anatoly Kalinin took part in the opening of the first phase of the trade and logistics sub-park in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7228>

¹⁷ Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: http://belaruschina.by/data/fck/file/minekonomiki/protocol_11.pdf

¹⁸ A sub-park for LED products will be created in the Great Stone Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <https://industrialpark.by/novosti/2017/v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-budet-sozdan-subpark-svetodiodnoj-produkcii.html>

Belarusian industrial park. In addition, Chengdu is "the city in China that is most economically close to Europe"¹⁹.

It is important to note that a number of important meetings and negotiations have recently taken place to discuss the creation of national sub-parks of European countries in the "Great Stone." In particular, in August 2019, this topic was discussed by the Government of the Republic of Belarus with representatives of Swiss business circles, including the management of Ceres Group Holding AG and the Swiss industrial park BUSS, who positively assessed the Belarusian proposal not only to create a Swiss sub-park in "Great Stone," but also "to act as a developer in it, both in terms of construction and attracting Swiss businesses to cooperate with Belarus"²⁰. It is noteworthy that in December 2019, the industrial park registered its 60th resident – the aforementioned Swiss company "Hess Great Stone" for the production of electric passenger transport²¹. And in January 2020, the issue of the "possible creation of an Italian-Belarusian sub-park in Great Stone"²² was discussed in practical terms at a meeting in Rome with the owners and managers of Italian companies interested in investing in industrial park projects.

Undoubtedly, all these facts underscore the very high growth dynamics of the Great Stone industrial park, a project whose role in the Belarusian economy will soon become significant in terms of innovation, investment, and technology.

¹⁹ China's Chengdu is considering the possibility of creating high-tech production facilities in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: https://interfax.by/news/polity/ekonomicheskaya_politika/1251824/

²⁰ Kryzhevich, I. A Swiss sub-park may be created in the Great Stone area / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/na-territorii-velikogo-kamnya-mogut-sozdat-shveitsarskiy-subpark-.html>

²¹ The 60th resident has appeared in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://interfax.by/news/biznes/businesses/1268182/>

²² Belarus and Italy will consider the creation of a joint subpark in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-italiya-rassmotriat-vopros-sozdaniya-sovmestnogo-subparka-v-velikom-kamne-376060-2020/>

The goal is to introduce innovations

Scientific and innovative development is an important part of the comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. There are three main areas of focus in this segment of bilateral cooperation. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of large joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation, where a network of joint innovation centers and scientific laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships for specialists, teachers, and students are being conducted,"²³. The focus on innovation is particularly evident today in the development of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone," which allows for the creation of competitive production facilities, a sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure, and digital construction with the aim of transforming the park into a "smart city." At the same time, the pace of innovation has accelerated significantly in 2020. Here are just a few examples that confirm this observation.

In May 2020, the first stone was laid in Great Stone for the future construction of a scientific and technical cooperation and development zone, or the Torch project, by the Chinese corporation Sinomach. It should be recalled that in June 2014, the Belarusian government signed a strategic partnership agreement with this corporation, on the basis of which large-scale investment projects are currently being implemented in Belarus. As for the Torch project, this zone will be "aimed at creating conditions for attracting Chinese and European technologies,

²³ Zaleski, B. Vector of Partnership – China. Collection of articles / Boris Zaleski. – Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. – pp. 115–116.

introducing and testing them in the park, and further exporting them to Europe and China," according to²⁴ . It is planned to build office buildings and premises for scientific research, where "four research and development projects are planned to be implemented in the fields of optical technologies, mechanics, electronics, and new materials. There are also plans to build a laboratory, office-type co-working spaces, comprehensive educational facilities, and high-tech commercial pilot facilities," according to²⁵ . Not only research institutes and enterprises of the Sinomach corporation will participate in the implementation of this project, but also enterprises of the Chinese Zhongguancun technology park and structures of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

The mention of the Zhongguancun Technology Park in this context indicates that the Chinese side takes the Torch project in Great Stone very seriously. The fact is that this technology park, founded in 1988 in the northwestern part of Beijing, is considered the Chinese equivalent of Silicon Valley. It is the first of its kind in China, one of the largest in the capital, and consists of 16 scientific zones. It was here that " , the first Chinese vacuum cylinder, the first computer, the first switchboard, etc. were developed. In total, more than 5,000 types of products were developed, filling a void in the history of Chinese high technology"²⁶ . Today, the park is home to research and development offices of many multinational corporations. China has high hopes for this technology park in terms of "implementing the ambitious Made in

²⁴ On the development of the SINOMACH scientific and technical cooperation and development zone in the Great Stone Park [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/cf39e9ad1f75824a.html>

²⁵ Sinomach's "Torch" park to be built in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-postrojat-park-sinomach-fakel-390613-2020/>

²⁶ Wei, V. China's Silicon Valley / V. Wei // Models, Systems, Networks in Economics, Technology, Nature, and Society. – 2013. – P. 19.

China 2025 strategy, which will make the country technologically independent and bring it to the forefront in many areas. The Chinese government will spend about \$300 billion on the implementation of the program.²⁷ . When talking about this technology park, one cannot fail to mention the following figure: from January to November 2019, it recorded an increase in revenue of almost 14 percent. At the same time, "the revenues of leading high-tech enterprises in the technology park reached 5.43 trillion yuan (about \$779 billion) during this period."²⁸ .

Returning to innovative developments in the "Great Stone," we note that in May 2020, another significant event took place here, demonstrating that one of the promising areas of development for the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park is digitalization. An electric driverless bus developed using Singaporean technology was tested here for the first time. "The maximum speed that the prototype can reach is 40 km/h. <...> The range is about 180 km. A full charge takes no more than 4 hours,"²⁹ . The technology for operating the new vehicle will be tested at the Great Stone industrial park, after which, judging by all indications, commercial operation of this unmanned transport will become possible in the near future.

In May 2020, a new resident was registered in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park – Crownhomes Scientific and Technical Company for Wooden Structures, which will create in Great Stone "a center for the production of production lines for the woodworking

²⁷ Krasilnikova, Yu. Beijing launches program to attract foreign IT specialists / Yu. Krasilnikova // [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing_lures_talent

²⁸ In the first 11 months of 2019, the Zhongguancun Technology Park in Beijing recorded a 13.8% increase in revenue [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: http://russian.news.cn/2020-01/07/c_138685700.htm?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.by%2Fnews

²⁹ First driverless electric bus tested in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-besplotnyj-elektrobus-protestirovali-v-velikom-kamne-390612-2020>

industry based on the principles of Industry 4.0"³⁰ . This production facility, based on innovative technologies, is expected to be launched in 2022.

In addition, in 2020, despite the alarming epidemic situation, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" continued to demonstrate fairly high growth rates, remaining a landmark project of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative in Eastern Europe. Suffice it to say that "at the end of October, it had 66 residents from 14 countries, with agreed investments of about \$1.2 billion"³¹ . The following fact also speaks volumes: in the first nine months of 2020, the revenue of the industrial park's residents increased almost three and a half times compared to the same period in 2019. "At the same time, revenue from the sale of goods, products, works, and services outside Belarus amounted to Br36.8 million (an increase of 8.7 times),"³² . And the number of employees working in "Great Stone" has come close to one thousand – 970 people. And, judging by all appearances, the industrial park has no intention of resting on its laurels, as evidenced by a number of facts from the second half of 2020, which show that this special economic zone is currently actively seeking new avenues for development in many areas, including logistics optimization and innovation.

In September 2020, Eurasian Railway Gateway CJSC was registered as a resident of Veliki Kamen. The company will implement

³⁰ New resident of Great Stone to manufacture woodworking products [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-vypuskat-produktsiju-dlja-derevoobrabotki-390684-2020>

³¹ Xiaoyun, S. China opposes external interference in Belarus' internal affairs / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kitaj-vvstupajet-protiv-vmeshatelstva-izvne-vo-vnutrennie-dela-belarusi-7572/>

³² Revenue of residents of the "Great Stone" in January–September grew 3.4 times to Br126.2 million [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vvruchka-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-v-janvare-sentjabre-vvrosla-v-34-raza-do-br1262-mln-416031-2020/>

an investment project to build a bimodal railway terminal in the park³³. The list of participants in this project, construction work on which will begin in 2021, is quite impressive. These include the world's largest inland port, Duisburger Hafen AG from Germany, the leading intermodal transport network operator in Europe, Hupac Intermodal SA from Switzerland, RUE Brest Branch of the Belarusian Railway, and a resident of the park, China Merchants C&B Commercial and Logistics Company. It is expected that the terminal's full capacity will take the residents of the " " industrial park to a whole new level in terms of their logistics capabilities.

Speaking about the innovative prospects for the development of the industrial park, it should be recalled that, again in September 2020, the Chinese-Belarusian Innovation Center for Industrial Technologies, established by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Guangdong Academy of Sciences, and the Foshan Industrial Technology Research Institute. The creators of this center see it as a platform for "the implementation of scientific and technical achievements between the two countries. The task of this platform is to develop scientific ideas and bring them to industrial implementation,"³⁴. It is expected that the scientific research and development work begun here today in areas such as new materials, modern industrial technologies, digitalization in manufacturing, bio- and eco-technologies will grow into concrete technologies and production within two to three years. In addition to serving as a link for scientific and technical cooperation between the institutions of the Guangdong

³³ New resident of "Great Stone" to build railway terminal [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-postroit-zhd-terminal-407959-2020/>

³⁴ Chinese-Belarusian Innovation Center for Industrial Technologies opens in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaisko-belorusskij-innovatsionnyi-tsentr-promyshlennyh-tehnologii-pojavilsja-v-velikom-kamne-408221-2020/>

Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the center will provide business consulting and other support services for selected incubated enterprises, including business plan consulting and training. Certain hopes for the successful development of this structure are also linked to the fact that "to ensure the commercialization of the results of research and development work at the industrial technology center, it is planned to create a special Belt and Road Initiative fund in the amount of \$1.5 million"³⁵ , The funds will be used to support the commercialization of selected scientific projects and incubated enterprises.

Another innovative center for the commercialization of scientific and technical achievements was planned to be opened in "Great Stone" by the end of 2020. This issue was discussed in September 2020 at a meeting of the Belarusian part of the Commission on Scientific and Technical Cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, which reviewed the implementation of the Belarus-China scientific and technical cooperation program for 2019-2020. This center is intended to become a comprehensive platform for nurturing start-ups.

Finally, in November 2020, another event took place that could seriously contribute to the introduction of innovations in this special economic zone. This refers to the agreement signed by the National Center for Intellectual Property and the administration of the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" on the creation of a Technology and Innovation Support Center on the territory of the park. This new structure is expected to "make it easier for researchers to find

³⁵ An innovation center is planned to open in Veliki Kamen by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. — 2020. — URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/innovatsionnyj-tsentr-v-velikom-kamne-planirujut-otkrvt-do-kontsa-goda-408059-2020/>

information on existing scientific achievements and boost the scientific and work of young scientists and start-ups"³⁶ . In particular, all interested employees of the park's residents will have free access to the patent and non-patent databases of the World Intellectual Property Organization. So there are considerable opportunities for innovation here.

It should be noted that today, Great Stone is also striving to make the most of the experience of other innovative structures operating in different parts of the world. This is evidenced by the fact that the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park has joined the innovative alliance of special free trade zones, created in the fall of 2020 in the Chinese city of Shenzhen. This initiative, which also includes 47 counties and regions of the People's Republic of China's innovative alliance of free trade zones, aims to "actively respond to global and regional plans such as the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Belt and Road Initiative, the EU Investment Plan, and the Africa Agenda 2063"³⁷ . In addition to "Great Stone," the new alliance includes many other foreign participants, cooperation with which may yield interesting results in the future, as each of them is an innovative platform with its own unique creative experience. These include the Lekki Free Trade Zone in Nigeria, the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia, the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone in East Africa, the Hambantota Industrial Park in Sri Lanka, the Eastern Industrial Park in Ethiopia, the Thai-Chinese Industrial Park in Rayong, and the Suez Canal Economic Zone. Let's take a closer look at them.

³⁶ Technology and Innovation Support Center established in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-podderzhki-tehnologii-i-innovatsij-sozdali-v-velikom-kamne-415194-2020/>

³⁷ "The Great Stone" has joined an innovative alliance of special economic free trade zones [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-voshel-v-innovatsionnyj-aljjans-osobyh-ekonomicheskikh-zon-svobodnoj-torgovli-405052-2020/>

The Lekki Free Trade Zone, located in the Nigerian state of Lagos, is one of the most promising in this African country. The project is a universal complex "divided into separate sectors for the oil and gas industry, industrial production, finance and commerce, tourism, health, and private housing"³⁸. The FTA accounts for five kilometers of coastline. Fifty kilometers away is the port of Apapa, the largest in West Africa, and 70 kilometers away is Murtala Muhammed International Airport.

The Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone is a foreign economic and trade cooperation zone in Cambodia, established by Chinese companies in collaboration with the Cambodian International Investment and Development Group to promote favorable market conditions. In 2010, a large industrial center was built in addition to the port. By early 2019, 153 companies from China, Europe, America, Southeast Asia, and other countries and regions had registered here. Among them, 139 are industrial enterprises, mainly engaged in such industries as textiles and clothing, manufacturing suitcases, bags and other leather goods, machinery and mechanisms, electronics, and woodworking"³⁹. In five years, more than 22,000 jobs have been created here.

As for **the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone** in East Africa, it was opened in July 2018 with the active participation of the Chinese company China State Construction. Once all stages of construction are completed, it is expected to "become the largest free trade zone in Africa and <...> a new engine of economic

³⁸ Rendeavour expands development project in Lekki Free Trade Zone [Electronic resource]. – 2016. – URL: <https://www.prnnewsire.com/ru/press-releases/ru-584836431.html>

³⁹ Ifeng, H. New industrial zone under construction in Sihanoukville province / H. Ifeng, S. Menghou // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/beltandroad/khm/ruindex.shtml>

development for Djibouti, helping Djibouti build a financial, shipping, and trading center in Northeast Africa"⁴⁰. The creators of this FTA see it as a testing ground for the so-called "Silk Road Station" to replicate China's successful experience in developing global enterprises.

The goal of the Chinese-Sri Lankan project to **rebuild the port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka**, which is located very close to major international shipping routes, is to create a maritime transit hub for the entire South Asian region. "In the past, ships hardly ever called at this small fishing town. But everything changed after the launch of the joint Chinese-Sri Lankan project to revive the seaport,"⁴¹. Thousands of new jobs have already been created here as part of the Chinese "port-industrial park-city" model, which essentially involves the creation of an industrial park after the port has been developed, thereby helping to boost the city's growth. This, in turn, will transform the port of Hambantota into one of the key elements of the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road.

The **Eastern Industrial Park in Ethiopia** is another "Chinese national-level overseas trade and economic cooperation zone, which already houses more than 80 enterprises, most of them Chinese"⁴², engaged in pharmaceuticals, textiles, metallurgy, and a number of other industries. It should be noted that this is not the only project being implemented by the Chinese side in this African country. "Based on China's experience of economic growth, 15 industrial parks will be built

⁴⁰ Heads of state of five countries took part in the opening ceremony of the International Free Trade Zone in Djibouti [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: https://ru.cscec.com/xwzx_ru/gsxw_ru/201810/2891561.html

⁴¹ A Chinese-Sri Lankan cooperation project is being implemented in the port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <https://newsru.cgtn.com/news/3d3d414e6646444d77597a6333566d54/p.html>

⁴² Ethiopian-Chinese cooperation is a classic example of China's cooperation with Africa, says Ethiopian president [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: http://russian.news.cn/2018-08/14/c_137387915.htm

in Ethiopia in the coming years using Chinese technology,"⁴³, which, according to Addis Ababa, will enable this East African country to join the group of middle-income countries within the next ten years.

The Thai-Chinese industrial park in Rayong Province was built back in 2005. This cluster became the only one in Thailand certified by the Chinese government as a foreign trade and economic cooperation zone. By 2017, more than 90 enterprises were already operating here, which "brought more than \$2.5 billion in investment to Thailand, solved the employment problem for more than 20,000 local residents, and became an industrial center and export base for priority sectors of traditional Chinese industry in Thailand"⁴⁴. An interesting detail: Based on the experience of the industrial park in Thailand's Rayong province, the Chinese corporation Huayi opened the Baimei Huafushan industrial cluster in Mexico in October 2015 to help other Chinese companies enter and develop the US market.

The Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt was created in 2015 when a new 72-kilometer channel was opened to attract foreign investment for the implementation of an international industrial and logistics hub project. It is estimated that "with the development of the Suez Canal, the manufacturing and service industries located there will account for up to a third of the country's total economy"⁴⁵. In the spring of 2019, there were already 77 residents operating in the Chinese-Egyptian part of this seven-square-kilometer zone. In May 2018, an agreement was signed to create a Russian industrial zone in this region.

⁴³ Stronger cooperation, shorter path out of the "trap of backwardness" [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://finance.rambler.ru/markets/43964485-zhenmin-zhibao-kitay-obedinennye-obschey-tselyu-chast-2/>

⁴⁴ Huali Corporation: creating an "industrial Chinese quarter" on the "One Belt, One Road" initiative [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: http://russian.china.org.cn/exclusive/txt/2017-04/13/content_40612178.htm

⁴⁵ Egyptian president issues decree on creation of special economic zone in Suez Canal [Electronic resource]. – 2015. – URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/2181686>

In February 2020, Belarus also announced its intention to participate in the creation of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone.

Undoubtedly, the innovative experience of developing all these special free trade economic zones will be very useful for the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone," which, in turn, has much to share with its partners in the new alliance.

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To develop the existing potential for cooperation

In 2021, the People's Republic of China began implementing its 14th five-year plan for social and economic development until 2025, which will include new steps in reform policy and the formation of a new architecture for mutually beneficial international cooperation in order to "comprehensively enhance the country's openness to the outside world, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, foster innovation and trade development, and advance high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative"⁴⁶. At the same time, the Chinese side will aim to create new advantages in international cooperation and competition, as it believes that "international economic cooperation and exchanges remain objective requirements for global economic development. Openness to the outside world is a fundamental state policy of the country"⁴⁷. With regard to Belarus, the Chinese side expresses its confidence that both countries should continue to mutually leverage the advantages of their economies, which are largely complementary, and develop existing potential for cooperation, including within the framework of the "One Belt, One Road" and the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone," as well as expand cooperation "in areas such as epidemic control, trade and economy, education, science and technology, culture, and interregional ties."⁴⁸

It should be recalled that the Republic of Belarus has built fairly strong and open relations with the People's Republic of China, which

⁴⁶ Communiqué of the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <http://ru.china-embassy.org/rus/ggl/t1832267.htm>

⁴⁷ Cimin, C. China intends to implement a new development plan in 2021-2025 / C. Cimin // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kitaj-v-2021-2025-godah-nameren-realizovat-novyi-plan-razvitija-7479/>

⁴⁸ Xiaoyun, S. Take the bull by the horns / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vzjat-byka-za-roga-sovety-posla-knr-kak-pravilno-vstretit-kitajskij-novyi-god-7657/>

are currently characteristic of only three countries – Russia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by the following figures. "The PRC is Belarus' second largest foreign trade partner after Russia, with an annual turnover of \$ 5 billion. <...> About 500 Belarusian exporters have already established themselves in this competitive market. \$More than 100 agricultural enterprises have been accredited. Thanks to Chinese resources, 24 projects worth almost \$4.5 billion have already been implemented in Belarus."⁴⁹ .

Undoubtedly, the flagship project in this context is the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone," which in less than six years of existence has already attracted \$650 million in investment, with 68 residents from 14 countries registered and \$1.2 billion in declared investments, of which about half have already started operations. As a result, "supercapacitors, truck cranes, laser equipment, unmanned aerial vehicles, Euro 6 engines and heavy-duty gearboxes, a 5G pilot communication zone and a multimodal container terminal are just a few examples of projects currently being implemented in the park"⁵⁰ . In 2021, there are plans to attract 17 new residents. High hopes are pinned on a project to create a multimodal railway terminal with the participation of Germany, China, and Switzerland, which will begin construction in the near future, as well as on the arrival of the American company Ivy Global, which is considering opening a "pharmaceutical plant in the Great Stone to produce a wide range of medicines, including for the fight against COVID-19."⁵¹ . In the same year, "when the second

⁴⁹ Yaroshenko: Belarus has built strong and open relations with China [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/yaroshenko-belarus-vystroila-prochnye-i-otkrytye-otnosheniya-s-kitaem-428410-2021>

⁵⁰ Investments in "Great Stone" during the project implementation amounted to \$650 million – Yaroshenko [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-v-velikij-kamen-za-vremja-realizatsii-proekta-sostavili-650-mln-yaroshenko-428432-2021/>

⁵¹ The American company Ivy Global is considering opening a pharmaceutical plant in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL:

phase of the park's development begins, there are also plans to build a second residential complex with 173 apartments and a second substation"⁵².

Continuing with the theme of construction, it should be noted that in 2021, the construction of a national football stadium and an international-standard swimming pool in Belarus will also come to the fore, thanks to free technical and economic assistance from China, with these projects due to be completed in 2023. as well as the start of the third phase of social housing construction in Belarus in the first half of 2021, again with Chinese grant assistance. It should be recalled that during the first two phases of this project, 38 houses with 3,286 apartments were built in six regions and Minsk, which enabled to improve the living conditions of more than 10,000 people. As part of the third phase, "it is planned to build 1,166 social housing apartments in 20 houses."⁵³The total construction area will be approximately 66,000 square meters. The apartments will be given to citizens who are registered as needing improved housing conditions and who are eligible for social housing.

Finally, with regard to the coronavirus pandemic, the two countries have joined forces from the outset to combat it, providing each other with assistance and support. As a result, "40 tons of humanitarian medical supplies have been sent from Belarus to China. China sent two shipments of emergency medical supplies worth about 32.6 million yuan, provided by the Chinese government, as well as 110

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amerikanskaja-kompanija-ivv-global-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-otkrytija-v-velikom-kamne-farnzavoda-426540-2021/>

⁵² The Great Stone Industrial Park expects to attract about 17 residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-rasschityvaet-v-2021-godu-privlech-okolo-17-rezidentov-423412-2021/>

⁵³ China plans to build 20 more social housing buildings in Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-sobiraetsja-postroit-v-belarusi-esche-20-sotsialnyh-domov-426882-2021/>

tons from sister regions and partner companies."⁵⁴ Given the current situation with repeated outbreaks of the epidemic, the parties intend to continue to actively cooperate in countering this global challenge, confirming with concrete actions the existing level of trust, comprehensive strategic partnership, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

As for cooperation between the regions of the two countries, back in January 2021, the parties "with a view to developing interregional cooperation, proposed to declare 2021-2023 the Year of Regions of Belarus and of China and to hold it over a three-year period, from 2021 to 2023"⁵⁵. A number of Belarusian and Chinese regions are already taking active steps to update these partnerships. For example, back in 2020, **the Belarusian Grodno region and the Chinese province of Hainan** signed an agreement on establishing sister city relations, which provides for a significant expansion of cooperation between the regions in the economic, trade, and cultural spheres. This is not the first partner in China for the Grodno region.

Back in 2007, Grodno established sister city relations with **Gansu** Province. In 2014, the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation on strengthening economic and trade cooperation and developed a Cooperation Program between the Grodno Region and Gansu Province for 2014-2020, which systematically addressed the most important aspects of the development of bilateral partnership and sister city relations.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Qiu, C. COVID-19 is no obstacle – trade between Belarus and China proves resilient / C. Qiu // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kovid-ne-pomeha-torgovlia-belarusi-i-knr-okazalas-stressoustoichivoi-7641/>

⁵⁵ Telephone conversation with Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/telefonnyy-razgovor-s-predsedatelem-kitavskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-si-czinpinom>

⁵⁶ Zalessky, B. Vector of Partnership – China. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. – Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. – P. 105.

One of the active participants in this interregional cooperation is the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, which has established multifaceted cooperation with 10 Chinese universities. Today, Chinese students study in Grodno "at all levels, from preparatory courses to postgraduate studies. Several joint scientific projects in the field of biochemistry are also being developed. A project in the field of mechanical engineering has already been implemented, and now we are also counting on a project in the field of logistics."⁵⁷ . In August 2018, a training center for workers from Gansu Province was opened in the building of the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno. And in 2019, four investment projects based on Chinese investments were implemented in Grodno. In particular, the former Grodno Hotel was renovated. A Chinese resident registered in the Grodno invest free economic zone, planning to implement a logistics project there. In addition, "a traditional Chinese medicine center and a trade and exhibition center showcasing products from the region's partners in China have also opened in Grodno."⁵⁸ .

In 2018, the Grodno region signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing friendly relations with **Fujian** province. Officially, "the document outlines important areas of interregional complementary cooperation, including trade, investment, logistics, and culture."⁵⁹ It should be added that the rapprochement between the regions was facilitated by the fact that the Chinese province has a well-

⁵⁷ Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno develops joint scientific projects with Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ergu-im-ianki-kupaly-razvivaet-s-kitajskimi-vuzami-sovmestnye-nauchnye-proekty-344391-2019/>

⁵⁸ Four investment projects with Chinese capital are being implemented in the Grodno region [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-grodnenskoj-oblasti-realizujutsja-4-investirovka-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-344505-2019/>

⁵⁹ On establishing regional ties between the Grodno region and the Chinese province of Fujian [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/generalnom_consultsv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html

developed industrial sector – electronics and machine building – while the Belarusian region specializes in agriculture. And this is "just one of the areas of complementary cooperation that can be established in the trade and economic sphere"⁶⁰. In addition, Belarusian flax and wood products are in demand on the Chinese market, and the Chinese side has expressed its readiness to increase investment in the Grodno region in a wide range of areas, from nuclear power plants to high technology. The parties are currently working to implement the agreements reached.

In short, the People's Republic of China has become a strategic partner for the western region of Belarus, as evidenced by the figures. In the first 10 months of 2020, enterprises in the Grodno region exported more than \$160 million worth of goods to the Chinese market. These are mainly food products and petroleum products. The emergence of new Chinese partners, namely Hainan Province, means that Grodno will be able to expand cooperation in other areas, such as high technology and electrical engineering, as well as implement more global and ambitious projects. These include "the construction of a logistics center at the Grodno airport and the launch of direct flights between Grodno and Hainan Province. This will, first, allow for more active development of tourism and cooperation in the humanitarian sphere and, second, facilitate mutual supplies of products,"⁶¹. At the same time, the logistics center could eventually become a transport hub and gateway for the promotion of Chinese goods not only in Belarus but also in neighboring European countries. In addition, it is safe to say that the establishment of sister city relations between the Grodno region

⁶⁰ Grodno Region and Fujian Province of the PRC will actively develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-knr-futszjan-budut-aktivnee-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-313085-2018/>

⁶¹ Grodno Region and China's Hainan Province signed a sister-region agreement [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hajnan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-421086-2020/>

and Hainan province will contribute to the development of cooperation between cities in the Belarusian and Chinese regions. Agreements between cities such as **Lida** and **Sanya**, **Ostrovets** and **Qionghai** are already being worked out. The administrative centers of **Grodno** and **Haikou** will not be left out of this process either.

Another interesting example in this regard is **the Gomel region**, which signed an agreement with the Chinese province of **Sichuan** in April 2021 to establish sister city relations, which provides for the expansion of cooperation in the economic, social, and cultural spheres. It should be recalled that the Belarusian and Chinese regions established friendly relations six years ago, when in May 2015 they signed a cooperation agreement providing for "the organization of interaction on the principles of partnership, equality, trust, and mutual benefit in areas such as the economy, agriculture, health care and culture, education, sports, and tourism"⁶², as well as direct contacts and twinning relations between cities in the region and the province. Three years later, in August 2018, the administrative centers of the regions, the cities of **Gomel** and **Chengdu**, signed an agreement on establishing twinning relations.

By this time, interregional cooperation between Gomel Region and China had developed in three other areas: with the autonomous regions of **Inner Mongolia** (2011) and **Xinjiang Uyghur** (2016), as well as with **Jiangsu** Province (2016). This allowed the region's enterprises to increase their exports to China by almost three and a half times in 2018, from \$3.9 million to \$13.5 million. The main export items at that time were dairy products, flax, wool, and sawn timber. At that time, five Gomel producers were already included in the list of

⁶² Zalessky, B. The potential of multivectorism. Chronicle of international cooperation / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. – P. 63.

accredited enterprises for the supply of dairy products to the Chinese market: Milkavita, Rogachevsky Milk Canning Plant, Turovsky and Kalinkovichsky Milk Plants, and Mozyrsky Milk Products.⁶³

The following two years saw even more impressive growth in exports from the Gomel region to China, convincingly demonstrating how much these products are in demand on the Chinese market. In particular, "in 2020, with a 32% increase, goods worth\$ 91 million were sent to this country"⁶⁴. These shipments were mainly made up of wood pulp, timber, meat and dairy products, and confectionery. It should be assumed that the current level of cooperation with Chinese regions is still far from reaching its full potential, as "Gomel manufacturers are ready to meet Chinese demand for flax, confectionery, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, carbon fibers, nonwoven carbon felt, sawn timber, and furniture."⁶⁵. In addition, there is considerable interest in expanding supplies of Gomselmash's grain harvesters and forage harvesters to China.

It should be noted that there is great potential for development for the Gomel region in cooperation with virtually every Chinese region – partner or sister region – with which agreements have been reached in the past and which now need to be updated. For example, in Sichuan Province, which has a population of over 90 million, in its administrative center, Chengdu, the Belarusian National Pavilion was opened in November 2019, divided into seven zones where Belarusian

⁶³ Enterprises in the Gomel region increased exports of goods to China by almost 3.5 times in 2018 [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-v-2018-godu-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-v-kitaj-pochti-v-35-raza-338253-2019/>

⁶⁴ Enterprises in the Gomel region increased exports to China by a third [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-tret-uvlechili-eksport-produktsii-v-434841-2021/>

⁶⁵ Gomel Region and Sichuan Province of China signed agreements on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-svchuan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

goods, including food and beverages, agricultural products, and handicrafts, are sold. At the same time, the Belarusian and Chinese sides announced their readiness to use the pavilion as a basis for "creating a comprehensive bilateral platform for cooperation covering such areas as the economy, culture, education, tourism, investment, and services."⁶⁶ . Let us hope that the agreement on establishing sister city relations between the Gomel region and Sichuan province, signed in April 2021, will become another real tool for achieving this goal.

Interesting opportunities may open up in 2021 in cooperation between the Gomel region and the Chinese autonomous region of **Inner Mongolia**. In 2019, the regions already adopted a cooperation program for 2020. This document was backed up by an agreement on intentions to establish sister city ties between the administrative centers of the region and the autonomous district—the cities of **Gomel** and Hohhot—which provides for cooperation in the areas of economics, trade, science, technology, ecology, culture, education, sports, tourism, and healthcare. Additional opportunities for expanding this cooperation are opened up by the fact that Inner Mongolia is a region rich in natural resources: forests in the east, iron ore in the west, livestock farming in the north, and grain cultivation in the south.⁶⁷ At the time, Hohhot named "machine building, in particular the production of agricultural machinery"⁶⁸ , as well as the food industry and construction, as priority areas for cooperation. The seriousness of the intentions of Gomel

⁶⁶ Mozgov, E. Belarusian National Pavilion opens in Chengdu, China / E. Mozgov // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/v-kitavskom-chendu-otkrvlsya-belorusskiv-natsionalnyy-pavilon.html>

⁶⁷ Agreement of Intent signed [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo

⁶⁸ The authorities of the Chinese city of Hohhot intend to develop relations with Gomel in the industrial sector [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vlasti-kitajskogo-goroda-huh-hoto-namereny-razvivat-otnosheniya-s-gomelem-v-promyshlennosti-366222-2019/>

enterprises to enter the Inner Mongolia market with their products is evidenced by their participation in the Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Hohhot in June 2019, where "separate presentations were made on the investment potential of the Gomel region,< ...> Gomel Meat and Dairy Company, OJSC Spartak⁶⁹. It is to be assumed that all these intentions of the parties to cooperate are now entering the phase of implementation of specific joint projects.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that all the facts presented above once again confirm the correctness of the course chosen in Belarus to establish and develop various twinning and partnership relations between Belarusian regions and their counterparts in other countries. The experience gained so far shows that this is an important and effective sector of international cooperation, characterized by openness, mutual trust, tolerance, and goodwill"⁷⁰, and through consistent and steady development, partners move on to encouraging mutual investment and expanding production cooperation in the creation of highly efficient industries.

⁶⁹ Grishkevich, A. Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Hohhot / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/belorusko-kitajskij-regionalnyj-forum-proshel-v-gorode-xux-xoto_i_99900.html

⁷⁰ Batura, B. Sister city movement – small links in a great friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoi-druzhbv-7603>

Regions as a factor in comprehensive strategic partnership

In January 2021, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China reached an agreement at the highest level to hold a Year of Regions between the two countries over the next three years, from 2021 to 2023. This decision once again underscores the enormous role played in the development of bilateral Belarusian-Chinese relations by the intensification of cooperation at the level of autonomous regions, provinces, and cities of the two countries, the potential of which is only just beginning to be realized by the parties. This is evidenced by the results of 2020, when trade turnover between Belarus and China exceeded \$4.5 billion, and exports of Belarusian products increased by almost 10 percent. At the same time, "agricultural and woodworking products became the driver of Belarusian exports to China, with supplies doubling"⁷¹. It is also important that more than 100 Belarusian agricultural producers have already been accredited in China, the vast majority of which are located in the regions of our country.

The facts show that the parties are currently taking a wide range of measures to unlock the full potential of bilateral Belarusian-Chinese cooperation. In this regard, particular attention is being paid to resolving issues related to ensuring access for Belarusian goods to the Chinese market. In particular, at the meeting of the Belarusian- Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation held in December 2020, a practical platform was created to address all issues related to market access to China, as well as veterinary, quarantine supervision, and logistics chains, in the form of a Commission on Customs and Quarantine Cooperation. A working group formed at the end of 2020,

⁷¹ On the results of bilateral trade with China in 2020 [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c603710a55ba783e.html>

comprising experts from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, will also work to simplify trade procedures and create a basis for active trade. With its help, an agreement on trade in services and investment should be developed, "the implementation of which will change the nature and depth of joint development, simplify the provision of mutual investments without restrictions and prohibitive lists. Simplifying trade in services at the present stage is the basis for active trade, since modern goods consist of 80% services"⁷². At the same December (2020) meeting of the intergovernmental committee on cooperation, the need was also noted to quickly involve the remaining Chinese credit resources in the amount of about \$4 billion in the economic turnover of Belarusian regions for specific projects to develop social and transport infrastructure.

As we can see, the tasks set at the intergovernmental level are ambitious and specific. Of course, it will be almost impossible to solve them without the active participation of the regions themselves. And this is where the regional media has a significant role to play in promoting the ideas of a comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between Belarus and China over the next three years. This is all the more important given that the media is currently facing equally ambitious tasks in terms of renewing both its form and content.

Let us recall that at the meeting of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus in February 2021, regional print media, which constitute a significant segment of the Belarusian media sphere and cover almost the entire territory of the country, were named among the

⁷² Belarus and China have created a platform for discussing issues of access to the Chinese market [Electronic resource]. — 2020. — URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-knr-sozdali-ploschadku-dlja-otrabotki-voprosov-dostupa-na-kitajskij-rynok-420487-2020/>

most important issues in the development of our country's information field that need to be addressed and resolved as a matter of priority. The priority direction of their activities should be the creation of high-quality media products. At the same time, they "must respond to the challenges of the times, be able to quickly adapt to the needs of readers"⁷³, and contribute to the formation of a positive image of Belarus. In this regard, the active participation of the Belarusian regional press in covering the implementation of the "three-year plan" of the regions of Belarus and China can and should become a very important step in the formation and development of its international segment. This is all the more so given that the thematic focus of publications devoted to cooperation between the regions of the two countries can and should already be quite diverse.

In particular, such forms of cooperation between the regions of the two countries as twinning and partnership relations should receive a particularly powerful impetus for development in the next three years. Their current level is eloquently demonstrated by the fact that every Belarusian region and Minsk have already become twinned or partnered with two or more Chinese regions, covering virtually all provinces in China. For example, the Brest region is twinned with Hubei Province (since 1994), Qinghai (2015), Anhui (2016), and Shanxi (2019); Vitebsk has Shanxi (2004), Heilongjiang (2005), Guizhou (2015), and Jiangxi (2018); Gomel – Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (2016), Sichuan (2011) and Jiangsu (2016) provinces; Grodno – Gansu (2007), Fujian (2018), Hainan (2019); Minsk – Chongqing (2002), Guangdong (2012) and Zhejiang (2015) provinces; Mogilev – Jiangsu (1997), Henan (2008), Hunan (2016),

⁷³ Igor Petrishenko: Today, journalists must be versatile media professionals, able to work on different platforms – in newspapers, on websites, on social media, and on messengers [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9758>

Shaanxi (2018), and Tianjin (2019); the Belarusian capital has partnerships with Changchun (1992), Beijing (1997), Shenzhen (2013), Shenyang (2016), and Shanghai (2018). In addition, "more than 20 agreements have been signed on the establishment and development of cooperation at the city level between regional centers and cities of Belarus and administrative centers and cities of central subordination of China"⁷⁴.

It is noteworthy that the process of expanding and updating twinning and partnership relations continues today. For example, in the plan for the development of twinning relations between the **Grodno** Region and **Hainan** Province, "agreements between cities such as Lida and Sanya, Ostrovets and Qionghai are already being worked out"⁷⁵. In April 2021, the **Gomel** region and **Sichuan** province decided to significantly expand their sister city ties in the economic, social, and cultural spheres. At the end of March 2021, the **Brest** region and **Hubei** province discussed the entire range of cooperation. As a result, "the parties agreed to approve a roadmap for the development of cooperation in the near future"⁷⁶.

As for the **Mogilev** region, in June 2021, it signed a roadmap for cooperation with the Chinese province of **Henan** to continue cooperation in trade and expand it in the investment sphere. In addition, according to the parties, "among the important issues that need to be worked on is the improvement of transport links and logistics between

⁷⁴ Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation and twinning relations [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral/regional/info/>

⁷⁵ Zaleski, B.L. Grodno Region: Chinese vector of interregional cooperation / B.L. Zaleski // Materials of the XVII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Key Aspects of Scientific Activity – 2021," Volume 4. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. – P. 8.

⁷⁶ China's Hubei Province and Brest Region step up cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskij-hubej-i-brestskaja-oblast-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-434998-2021/>

our countries."⁷⁷ . It should be recalled that the Mogilev region signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations with Henan province back in 2004. Ten years later, "in July 2014, the administrative center of this province, the city of Zhengzhou, became Mogilev's sister city"⁷⁸ . Perhaps for this reason, the development of cooperation with Chinese partners for this Belarusian region has been gaining momentum since then , as evidenced by the figures. In particular, since 2015, trade turnover between Mogilev and the People's Republic of China has increased 13-fold, reaching almost \$95 million in 2020.

It should be noted that, in addition to Henan Province, the Mogilev region has four other partners among Chinese regions. These are Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi provinces and the city of Tianjin. In addition, friendly relations have been established between partner cities: Mogilev – Nanjing, Bobruisk – Wuxi, Osipovichy – Yangzhou, Krichev – Lianyungang. In September 2019, during the first Belarusian-Chinese Regional Cooperation Week in Mogilev, it was noted that "relations with each of these partners are developing in several areas: the parties are interested in cooperation in the medical and educational spheres, industry and tourism, as well as in interregional exchanges."⁷⁹ . In July 2017, the same Henan province discussed opportunities for investment projects in the Mogilev Free Economic Zone (FEZ) and the south-eastern region, where there are significant business incentives. In particular, in the south-east of the Mogilev region, there are extensive vacant lands for "the creation of a

⁷⁷ Roadmap for cooperation signed by Mogilev Region and Henan Province, China [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dorozhnyu-kartu-po-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-444325-2021/>

⁷⁸ Zaleski, B. Real Multivectorism. Belarus in the System of Foreign Relations / Boris Zaleski. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2015. – P. 26.

⁷⁹ Over the past year, the Mogilev region has increased beef exports to China ninefold [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-poslednij-god-mogilevskaja-oblast-v-9-raz-uvelichila-eksport-govjadin-v-knr-360961-2019/>

joint venture for the production of beef, taking into account the culinary preferences and needs of the Chinese side, with subsequent delivery of products to China"⁸⁰.

As for **Shaanxi** Province, its Department of Commerce signed a memorandum of understanding in April 2019 with the Economic Committee of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee to promote economic development and friendly cooperation, in which the parties agreed "to provide active support and information assistance to enterprises interested in investing and establishing import-export relations"⁸¹. And in December 2020, an online meeting of more than 30 representatives of enterprises from both sides was held at the Mogilev Regional Development Agency, including SEZ "Mogilev", Krasny Pishchevnik OJSC, Bobruisk Meat Processing Plant, Oasis Group SOOO, Babushkina Krynka OJSC, Mogilev Ice Cream Factory, Servolux CJSC, and the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA). One of the concrete results of this meeting was the establishment of a partnership between the BGAU and the Northwest University of Agriculture and Forestry. There are already some developments in the testing of Chinese wheat and other grain varieties.

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The people of Mogilev saw concrete results of cooperation with the city of **Tianjin** back in June 2017, when a social housing building

⁸⁰ Kulagin, S. Mogilev Region and China's Henan Province intend to actively develop investment cooperation / S. Kulagin // [Electronic resource]. – 2017 – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-henan-namerenv-aktivnee-razvivat-investsotrudnichestvo-257928-2017/>

⁸¹ Mogilev Region and China's Shaanxi Province intend to develop economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-shensi-namerenv-razvivat-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-342757-2019/>

⁸² Emelyanova, O. Issues of trade and economic cooperation and education were discussed during an online meeting between representatives of the Mogilev Region and Shaanxi Province / O. Emelyanova [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/voprosy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-obrazovaniva-obsudili-vo-vremya-onlajn>

was commissioned in the regional center, with Tianjin Electric Construction Company acting as the general contractor for the construction. "The new 10-story building with 120 apartments is located in the Kazimirovka microdistrict under construction on Grunwaldskaya Street. This is one of three houses that were built in the Mogilev region thanks to the implementation of the first phase of the "Social Housing Construction" project with technical and economic assistance from the People's Republic of China. Similar facilities have appeared in Bobruisk and Osipovichy.⁸³ In May 2019, the parties signed a memorandum on establishing sister city relations. And in November 2020, companies from the Chinese city of Tianjin, such as Tianjin Constant Towards International Trade Co., Bonyum International Trading Co., Tianjin Mengdong International Trade Co., Zhonggong Huamu (Tianjin) Food Co., and others, took a very thorough look at investment projects in the Belarusian region in the fields of tourism, animal husbandry, and housing construction.

The Chinese province of **Jiangsu**, which signed a twinning agreement with the Mogilev region in 2015, became the first Chinese region with which Mogilev residents held a contact and cooperation exchange via videoconference in July 2020. The Chinese side was represented by more than 20 companies operating in the meat and dairy industries, flax processing, and the production of alcoholic beverages. Their interest in this event is understandable, as in 2020, Jiangsu entrepreneurs invested more than \$2 million in the further development of their enterprises through previously implemented projects alone. Today, Chinese investors are implementing and planning to implement

⁸³ Emelyanova, O. Social housing built with Chinese technical assistance commissioned in Mogilev / O. Emelyanova // [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/postroennvi-s-tehpomoschiju-kitaja-sotsialnyi-dom-sdali-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-mogileve-254650-2017/>

projects for the cultivation and processing of flax, the production of mushrooms and various medical products"⁸⁴. Finally, **Hunan** Province is interesting in this context because in January 2018 it donated two new electric buses to Mogilev. And Zoomlion is implementing a project here to produce special equipment.

Speaking of the **Minsk** region in this context, it should be noted that in July 2021, the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and China SAMCE Engineering Corporation signed a memorandum under which large healthcare facilities will be built in the Belarusian capital region with the assistance of the Chinese side. In particular, the document provides for "the construction of an infectious diseases hospital in Borisov and a surgical wing at the regional hospital, export-import trade in agricultural products, the creation of a baby food factory, and the resolution of waste management issues."⁸⁵. It should be recalled that in our country, SAMCE, a subsidiary of the Chinese National Machinery Corporation Sinomach from Beijing, owns shares in the Industrial Park Development Corporation CJSC, and was the general contractor for the construction of a sulfate bleached pulp mill at the Svetlogorsk Pulp and Paper Mill and at such facilities in the Velikiy Kamen Industrial Park as engineering and transport infrastructure, administrative management building, and the plants of Zumlion Bel-Rus LLC and MAZ-Weichai LLC.

It should be noted that China is playing an increasingly important role in the foreign economic activity of the Minsk region. At the end of

⁸⁴ Business circles of the Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Jiangsu discuss prospects for cooperation at a contact and cooperation exchange [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/delovye-krugi-mogilevskoy-oblasti-i-kitavskoy-provincii-czvasu-obsuzhdavut-perspektivy>

⁸⁵ Healthcare facilities to be built in the Minsk region with the participation of a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-pri-uchastii-kitajskoj-korporatsii-postrojat-objekty-zdravoohraneniya-449374-2021/>

2020, the People's Republic of China became the second largest trading partner of the Belarusian capital region in terms of trade turnover, accounting for 14.3 percent of the total foreign trade. There is every reason to believe that this figure will only grow in the coming years, as the Minsk region "pays special attention to the Chinese market, which is promising for food supplies"⁸⁶. In particular, all milk processing enterprises of the Myasomolprom holding have already received permission to export butter, cheese, whey, skimmed milk powder, and sterilized milk to China. As for meat processing plants and poultry farms in the Minsk region, they are actively working to obtain accreditation to supply their products to China. LLC Veles-Mit, Slutsky Meat Processing Plant and Stolbtsovsky Meat Canning Plant have received permission to export frozen beef, while Dzerzhinsky Agro-Industrial Complex and Smolevichi Broiler have received permission to ship poultry products. Permission to supply pasteurized milk, cream, and milk shakes to China was also granted to Nesvizhsky Baby Food Plant LLC.

Here, too, there is great potential for intensifying cooperation with Chinese partners based on existing twinning arrangements. In particular, back in June 2002, an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural fields was signed between the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and the People's Government of **Chongqing**, which is home to more than 30 million people today. In 2016, on the initiative of the Belarusian capital region, this cooperation was resumed. At the same time, a memorandum on the development of twinning relations between the Kopyl district of Minsk region and the Wanzhou district of Chongqing was signed. A year later, an agreement

⁸⁶ Foreign economic activity [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <http://www.minsk-region.gov.by/ekonomika-i-finansy/vneshneekonomicheskaya-devatelnost5898/>

on the establishment of twinning relations between the Belarusian region and the Chinese city was adopted.

In March 2019, Minsk Region Days were held in Chongqing, during which a Roadmap for Cooperation for 2019-2020 and cooperation agreements between the Chongqing International Chamber of Commerce and the Minsk Chamber of Commerce and Industry were signed at a business forum attended by more than 225 business representatives from both sides. Minsk Branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chongqing Education Committee, and the Main Education Department of the Chongqing Municipal People's Government, as well as a number of "product supply agreements between business representatives totaling US\$24 million."⁸⁷ . At the same time, the representative office of Veles-Mit LLC was opened in Chongqing. Just two months later, a representative office of the capital region itself appeared here to assist in the search for "potential partners for the promotion of products of Minsk region enterprises to the Chongqing market"⁸⁸ . And in August of the same year, the parties signed two investment cooperation agreements within the framework of the projects "A village with Chongqing flavor in Belarus" and "A village with Belarusian flavor in Chongqing," where the prototypes for the construction will be "rural dwellings of the Baiju culture of Chongqing and architectural features of eastern Sichuan"⁸⁹ ,

⁸⁷ A delegation from the Minsk region is visiting Chongqing [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/novosti/glavnye-novosti/v-g-chuntsin-prohodit-vizit-delegatsii-minskov-oblasti/>

⁸⁸ On the opening of the Minsk Region representative office in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a7ecb1467556d183.html>

⁸⁹ A village with Chinese flavor will be built near Minsk [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://www.belmir.by/2019/08/01/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D1%81-%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81/>

and in China, one of the dominant features of the future village will be an exact replica of the Nesvizh Castle.

However, the pandemic has somewhat slowed down the implementation of the project. In 2020, the cooperation between the parties took the form of humanitarian aid to each other at the most critical moments. In particular, in February last year, when the whole COVID-19 story was just beginning, a batch of medical masks was sent from the Minsk region to Chongqing in response to a request from the Chinese side. Now, opportunities are opening up to return to the projects of the "pre-coronavirus" era.

This is also characteristic of the cooperation between the Minsk region and another Chinese sister region, **Guangdong** Province, with which a roadmap for cooperation for 2020-2021 was signed in November 2019 and included "issues related to the supply of Belarusian agricultural products to China and the establishment of a joint milk processing enterprise"⁹⁰. Let's hope that the effective implementation of the cooperation plans between the Minsk region and this Chinese region is just around the corner.

There are also interesting developments in cooperation with Chinese partners in the Belarusian capital. In November 2019, **Minsk** and **Shanghai** signed an agreement on establishing sister city relations. Interestingly, before this document was signed, the Belarusian capital had already "signed 22 cooperation agreements with cities in the PRC, including three on twinning (Beijing, Changchun, Shenzhen)"⁹¹. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Chinese companies have already

⁹⁰ Minsk Region and Guangdong Province of China sign roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <http://belaruschina.by/ru/news/2019/November/12November-2087.html>

⁹¹ Minsk Days in Shanghai will be held on November 7-9 [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-minska-v-shanhae-projdu-7-9-nojabria-368252-2019/>

invested about \$30 million in Minsk. When signing the new twinning agreement, the parties "identified priority areas for cooperation: increasing mutual trade, infrastructure construction, and tourism."⁹² . Minsk residents are particularly interested in Shanghai's experience in a number of areas. In particular, they are interested in the organization of work processes in educational institutions, medical facilities, social service centers, and rehabilitation centers for people with disabilities. The Shanghai Free Trade Zone, , which is used for economic and social reforms in the People's Republic of China, also attracts the attention of Minsk's administrative and business circles.

The annual business forum of the business circles of the Belarusian and Chinese cities has already become one of the most effective forms of coordination of trade and economic cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai. For example, a similar forum held in Minsk in September 2018 brought together "more than 130 Belarusian and Chinese companies interested in cooperation in the fields of mechanical engineering, construction, information technology, the chemical industry, food, and jewelry manufacturing."⁹³ At the same time, Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothing and fabrics, packaging for medical equipment, cosmetics, toys, and jewelry, as well as importers of automobiles, electrical and welding equipment, and computer technology interested in finding business partners in Minsk visited the Belarusian capital.

The Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, held in November 2019, attracted an equally wide range of participants, bringing together over 100 Chinese and more than 30 Belarusian enterprises and companies.

⁹² Grishkevich, A. Minsk and Shanghai establish sister city relations / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-shanhaj-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svjazi-368815-2019/>

⁹³ Zalessky, B. Vector of partnership – China. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. – Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. – P. 149.

The forum program included discussions on topical issues of cooperation in three specialized sections: 1) Food products, food industry; 2) Tourism and hospitality in Minsk and Shanghai; 3) Industry"⁹⁴. The documents adopted at the end of the event testify to its high practical value. In particular, the Minsk City Executive Committee signed a Memorandum of Intent to establish cooperation with Lotusland Shanghai Corporation on the introduction of heat pump technologies and equipment in the construction of industrial and civil facilities in the Belarusian capital. The fact is that "the use of heat pump installations for Minsk's satellite towns would make it possible to abandon the laying of multi-kilometer heating networks." ⁹⁵

A memorandum of strategic partnership in the field of tourist exchanges was the result of negotiations between representatives of the Belarusian RUE "Centrkurort" and the Chinese group tourist company Shanghai Airlines Tours International (Group) Co., Ltd. An agreement on cooperation in the field of international exhibitions was signed by Minskexpo CJSC and Shanghai Industry and Commerce Exhibition Co. In addition, the Minsk Free Economic Zone and Shanghai Allyn Technology Co., Ltd., as well as OJSC "Confectionery Factory "Slodych" and Shanghai Teemo Foods, have formally confirmed their intentions to actively cooperate in the near future. SOJSC Kommunarka also plans to increase its supplies of confectionery products to the Shanghai market, having signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese company Trade and Economic Company Misier LLC.

The fact that the market of this Chinese city is attracting serious attention from manufacturers in the Belarusian capital is also evidenced

⁹⁴ Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, November 8, 2019 [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: https://www.tppm.by/announcement/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=23213

⁹⁵ Beluga, V. Minsk-Shanghai Business Cooperation Forum held in China / V. Beluga // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://minsknews.by/forum-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-minsk-shanghai-prohodit-v-kitae/>

by the fact that nine Minsk enterprises took part in the second China International Import Expo, held in Shanghai in November 2019. Among them were SOAO Kommunarka, Minsk Grape Wine Plant, Krynica, Slodych, Kristall, Minsk Bread Products Plant, Minsk Bread Industry, and Minsk Cold Storage Plant No. 2.

And there's more. The memorandum on establishing friendly ties between the Moscow district of the Belarusian capital and the Jiading district of Shanghai, signed in November 2019, also opens up interesting prospects for interregional cooperation. Just a month later, in December, a delegation from the Jiading District visited Minsk, where it discussed with the leadership of the Moscow District of the Belarusian capital ways to implement the memorandum in the context of "intensifying bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in the field of student exchanges between the two districts"⁹⁶. One of the concrete results of this visit was an invitation from the Chinese side to students from the Moscow district of Minsk to visit a summer camp in Shanghai. Judging by all appearances, friendly ties between the Soviet district of Minsk and another Shanghai district, Changning, will also be strengthened in the near future.

All these facts indicate that the topic of Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation should be firmly and permanently "established in the Belarusian regional press and reflect as fully as possible the experience already gained in this regard "⁹⁷. To this end, creative strategies specific to international regional issues will be

⁹⁶ On the visit of the delegation from the Jiading District of Shanghai to Minsk [Electronic resource]. — 2019. — URL: http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consultv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html

⁹⁷ Zalessky, B.L. Information sovereignty and international journalism / B.L. Zalessky // Regional Media of the Republic of Belarus in the Digital Age: Local Issues and Information Security of the State: Materials of the Republican Scientific and Practical Conference, Minsk, May 5, 2020 / Belarusian State University; ed. by V.M. Samusevich (chief ed.) [and others]. — Minsk: BSU, 2020. — P. 114.

needed in the near future, and representatives of this segment of Belarusian journalism should begin developing them today.

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Development of the industrial park and regional cooperation

Directive No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China," adopted in December 2021, lists the strengthening of trade, economic, financial, and investment cooperation and the expansion of interregional ties among the priority tasks for 2025. As part of the announced course to raise the status of Belarusian-Chinese relations to the level of iron brotherhood, exemplary comprehensive strategic cooperation, and all-weather partnership, an important component is the activities of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone," one of whose main tasks is to ensure the effective operation of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovative activities, start-ups, cluster cooperation, and involve Belarusian enterprises in the Great Stone projects. A specific goal has been set: "To ensure that by 2025, the park has at least 170 residents..."⁹⁸.

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to achieve this goal were taken in Great Stone back in 2021. In particular, over the first three quarters of this year, residents of the industrial park increased their investment in fixed assets by more than a third. At the same time, "industrial production grew more than 2.5 times to Br222.6 million. <...> Exports of products and services by residents grew by more than 16% and are carried out in 20 countries around the world"⁹⁹. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020 [in the park] there were 68

⁹⁸ Directive of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China." – Minsk, 2021. – P. 6.

⁹⁹ In the "Great Stone" project, investments in fixed assets increased by more than a third in nine months [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-za-9-mesjatsev-bolee-chem-na-tret-uvelichilis-investitsii-v-osnovnoj-kapital-470611-2021/>

companies from 14 countries registered"¹⁰⁰ , then by mid-November 2021, 81 companies from 15 countries were already listed as residents. Work on the expansion of "Great Stone" continues.

For example, in October, the Belarusian-Latvian LLC SMD Bai was registered here, which "plans to create a high-tech production of small and medium-sized electronic products (boards)"¹⁰¹ , widely used in telecommunications, medicine, the automotive industry, and instrument making, for supply to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. In November, several more businesses joined the list of residents of the industrial park. One of them is LLC "Rufais." The new resident's investment project is related to the production and application of the latest polymer materials in construction. The innovative approach here is that "the composite material is the company's own development and differs from its counterparts in its higher performance properties. It has a wide range of applications, including the production of roofing and other elements of buildings and structures,"¹⁰² , which gives good reason to hope that these products will be sold not only on the domestic market, but also in Russia and other European Union countries.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian company InKata LLC, which was previously registered in Veliki Kamen as an investor to build facilities here to support innovative businesses in the industrial park. "The project will provide design, prototyping, and technical

¹⁰⁰ Zaleski, B. Towards sustainable development. Collection of articles / Boris Zaleski. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. – P. 13.

¹⁰¹ New resident of "Big Stone" will produce electronic boards [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platy-465743-2021/>

¹⁰² New resident of the Great Stone will produce composite materials [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-469205-2021/>

documentation services, as well as workplaces and equipment," said¹⁰³. Another November resident of Veliki Kamen is the Chinese-Belarusian Center for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies, which intends to cooperate closely with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "The company will produce reagents for the diagnosis of coronavirus and certain other diseases, as well as for food safety diagnostics,"¹⁰⁴, which are expected to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union, as well as to China.

In the first half of December, a new innovative company, Needle Med LLC, was registered in the industrial park. It plans to implement a project in Veliki Kamen to create the perfect simulator for training practical manual skills for workers in various specialties, including surgeons, tattoo artists, and students of medical specialties. Interestingly, this project was created in 2019 by a group of students. "The idea is to create a simulator that is as close as possible to real human tissue in order to prepare specialists for practical work"¹⁰⁵. Thanks to the opportunities that the industrial park provides to innovators, the development of young specialists will, presumably, find wide application in real life. In the second half of December, another resident was registered in Veliki Kamen – Tianyu Changying (MSK) Scientific and Technical Company LLC, founded by one of China's leading companies in the development and production of intelligent

¹⁰³ InKata LLC has become a resident of Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ooo-inkata-stalo-rezidentom-velikogo-kamnja-471320-2021/>

¹⁰⁴ New resident of Veliki Kamen to produce reagents for disease diagnosis [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-reagenty-dlja-dagnostiki-zabolevanij-471849-2021/>

¹⁰⁵ A new company in Veliki Kamen will create simulators for practicing manual skills in surgery [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaja-kompanija-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazhery-dlja-otrabotki-manualnyh-navykov-v-hirurgii-474239-2021/>

unmanned systems, Beijing Tianyu Changying UAV Science and Technology Company. The goal of this investment project in the industrial park is to "create high-tech production of universal logistics systems for unmanned aerial vehicles and equipment for them." ¹⁰⁶

Speaking about the development of cluster cooperation in Great Stone, it should be recalled that back in June 2021, a decree was adopted in the Republic of Belarus that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Great Stone. In particular, this document provides for: 1) granting greater autonomy to the park administration by transferring additional powers from local authorities in the implementation of administrative procedures; 2) expanding the types of activities of the industrial park; 3) support for start-ups; 4) the creation of preferential conditions for large investment projects with an investment volume of more than \$50 million.

Among the new areas of activity for Veliki Kamen, the creation and development of production facilities in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, medical products, and medical services should be mentioned first and foremost. A particularly attractive innovation in this regard is the special conditions for the development of medical activities in the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services using medicines, medical equipment and devices, and treatment methods from foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a license for medical services. For manufacturers, the time required for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as for conducting clinical trials, will be significantly reduced and the

¹⁰⁶ New resident of "Great Stone" to start producing unmanned aerial vehicles [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-nachnet-proizvodit-bespilotnye-letatelnye-apparaty-476043-2021/>

procedures simplified. In other words, all these changes "open up wide opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine"¹⁰⁷.

The focus on developing Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of medicine in the context of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic is very timely. After all, traditional Chinese medicine "has unique advantages in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of diseases. <...> It not only has a good therapeutic effect on mild cases of COVID-19, but also has obvious advantages in the treatment of critically ill patients, thanks to which the mortality rate in severe cases has decreased from 21% to 5%."¹⁰⁸. The use of the Great Stone platform to realize the existing potential of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of healthcare can have a significant positive impact in terms of preventing new waves of the coronavirus epidemic.

It should be noted that the Great Stone Industrial Park has 12 residents operating in the medical sector. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia, and the US,"¹⁰⁹. An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be the company "Novoera Biotech," which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include the Jintai Institute of Culture and Economics, Sishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic

¹⁰⁷ Koroteev, K. Support for startups, investor incentives, simplification of land relations – innovations in the decree on the development of the Great Stone park / K. Koroteev // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/podderzhka-startapov-preferentsii-investoram-uproschenie-zemelnyh-otnoshenij-koroteev-o-novatsijah-ukaza-po-7805/>

¹⁰⁸ Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: growth of business cooperation and interaction in the production of drugs for the treatment of coronavirus / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-i-kitai-rost-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-i-vzaimodejstvie-v-vypuske-lekarstv-pri-lechenii-koronavirusa-7873/>

¹⁰⁹ The Center for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare and the Great Stone Park have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-ekspertiz-i-ispytaniy-v-zdravookhraneni-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

(Beijing), and Sishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company (Beijing). The new resident will implement a project related to traditional Chinese medicine. "The medicines, supplements, and that are planned to be produced are based on environmentally friendly natural materials. They will be in demand not only to help treat coronavirus, but also to treat colds, flu, and asthma,"¹¹⁰. In particular, the production of the drug "Linlan Yicin" will be organized, aimed at the effective treatment of coronavirus infection. It was assumed that in the first stage, the drugs produced, the release of which was planned to begin in 2021, would be exported to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and India.

In March 2021, plans were also announced to establish the Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Great Stone Industrial Park. Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine, which will provide medical services to residents of the industrial park, its Chinese and foreign employees, and will also interact with research institutions and healthcare institutions in Belarus and neighboring countries to exchange experience in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Industrial Park Development Company CJSC and the Center for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. And in July, an agreement was signed in Great Stone to create a Chinese-Belarusian zone of in-depth cooperation and an international park of traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare, which implies a new model of interaction between Belarus and China in this area.

All these facts testify to active steps to develop an extensive cluster in the industrial park, which will bring together achievements in

¹¹⁰ New resident of "Great Stone" launches project in the field of Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-meditiny-433283-2021/>

the field of Chinese medicine. <...> It is expected that a medical center for diagnostic services will appear in the future. This direction is already in progress"¹¹¹ . In addition, there are plans to develop medical tourism, for which a unique medical village will be built near the Volmyansky Reservoir, featuring clinics and various medical facilities in the field of rehabilitation. It should also be recalled that, as part of the measures to develop a national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" has been designated "as a site for the organization of innovative production"¹¹² . Judging by the above facts, this platform is developing quite successfully, confidently, and dynamically in the current five-year period.

Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations, we can note the successful experience of Belarusian regions such as Minsk and the Gomel region in addressing this issue. Speaking of the Belarusian capital, suffice it to say that "in January-May of this year [2021], Minsk's trade turnover with China amounted to \$ 730.6 million, and last year for the same period – \$ 613.8 million"¹¹³ . The main exporters were RUE "Bellesport," LLC "Best Meat Company," CJSC "Meat and Dairy Company," CJSC "Mobiora," and OJSC "Integral" – UKH "Integral." The main exports from Minsk to China were timber, meat and poultry by-products, milk and condensed cream, rapeseed oil,

¹¹¹ Kryzhevich, I. Two new residents of the "Great Stone" will be engaged in the development of artificial intelligence and the design of equipment for data processing and storage / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/zvanvy-biznes.html>

¹¹² Measures to develop the national innovation system until 2025 have been defined [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opredeleny-meropriiatiia-po-razvitiu-natsionalnoi-innovatsionnoi-sistemy-do-2025-goda-475735-2021>

¹¹³ Kukharev and Chinese ambassador discuss cooperation between Minsk and Chinese cities [Electronic resource] – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kuharev-i-posol-kitaja-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-minska-s-gorodami-kr-453612-2021/>

integrated electronic circuits and microassemblies, tanned or dressed fur skins, measuring or control instruments, zoological collections and collectors' pieces, apparatus for measuring or controlling electrical quantities, and ready-made sound recording media. In order to consolidate this trend in the future, it seems important to strengthen the ties between the Belarusian capital and its four Chinese sister cities: Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

A special place in this list of sister cities is occupied by Changchun, the administrative center of Jilin Province, located in northeastern China, where science, automobile manufacturing, and optical instrument manufacturing are well developed and where about eight million people live. May 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of Sister City Relations between Changchun and the Belarusian capital. In 2010, a Belarusian-Chinese technology park was opened in the high-tech production zone of this Chinese city to serve as a platform for joint projects and further promotion of products not only to the Chinese market but also to neighboring countries. It was based on about 15, d enterprises located in the zone and having long-standing stable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovative enterprises. At that time, the joint projects planned in the technopark included "the creation of an enterprise for the production of medical laser equipment and an agreement on the establishment of a joint venture for the production of high-precision electric motors."¹¹⁴In the first stage, about 30 hectares of land were allocated for the construction of office and production facilities, with the possibility of allocating another 30 hectares in the

¹¹⁴ Polezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese technology park opens in Changchun / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. – 2010. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorusssko-kitajskij-tehnopark-otkrylsja-v-gorode-chanchun-134192-2010>

future. More specifically, the technology park is divided into six functional zones: a research and development center, a project incubator, a museum, and three complexes for international cooperation, regional interaction, and services. In addition, there are plans to create an art gallery, a bookstore, and exhibition and concert halls on the site. But the main thing is that here, "the development is based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"¹¹⁵.

Today, "a complex of technopark buildings has already been constructed, and one of the most pressing issues at present is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"¹¹⁶. Three residents have already been accepted: the Chinese-Belarusian Center for Research and Development of Precision Medical Equipment of the BNTU "Polytechnic" Technopark and Belarusian-Chinese Technopark in Changchun; The Belarusian-Chinese Center for the Joint Development and Application of Carbon-Carbon Composite Materials between SvetlogorskHimvolokno OJSC and Jilin Leng kai Company; Belarusian-Chinese Center for the Development of Functional Berry Crops between the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences, Polesskie Zhuraviny LLC, and the Northeast Institute of Geography and Ecology of Agriculture of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. To support this growing momentum of bilateral cooperation, the Belarusian and Chinese sides have set the task of "focusing on improving conditions for mutually beneficial cooperation, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"¹¹⁷. Today, the

¹¹⁵ Chinese-Belarusian Technopark under construction in Changchun [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-stroyat-kitajsko-belorusskij-tehnopark-08-07-2019-05-00-12>

¹¹⁶ Technopark in Changchun will make a significant contribution to the development of relations between Belarus and China – Shumilin [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tehnopark-v-chanchune-vneset-suschestvennyj-vklad-v-razvitiye-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-shumilin-405335-2020/>

¹¹⁷ About 300 applications submitted for Chinese-Belarusian youth competition for innovative projects [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL:

main thematic areas of the technology park already include such areas as "photoelectronics, laser technology, new materials, construction and energy, agricultural technology and biotechnology, and information technology"¹¹⁸.

The Belarusian-Chinese technology park in Changchun is not the only area of cooperation between Minsk and its sister city. Back in June 2014, the parties agreed to develop business cooperation and planned to hold business forums for this purpose. "During such events, businesspeople will have the opportunity to agree on the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will contribute to further strengthening the economic basis of our cooperation,"¹¹⁹. In June 2017, with the aim of expanding sister city ties, the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Changchun People's Government signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism and the development of cultural ties. And within the framework of the bilateral business forum held at the same time in the Chinese city, memoranda of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by SOAO "Kommunarka," KUP "Minskhlbprom," KUP "Melkooptovaya Baza na Zapadnaya," OJSC Belryba, and OJSC Minotel.¹²⁰ So, there are definitely some cool opportunities for the two sister cities to work together more. We just need to jump on them and make it happen for both sides.

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-300-zajavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-molodezhnyj-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/>

¹¹⁸ Belarusian-Chinese Science and Technology Park in Changchun [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <http://changchun.park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/>

¹¹⁹ Minsk and Changchun, China, plan to develop business cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2014. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-planirujut-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

¹²⁰ Minsk and Changchun, China, sign agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kultury-250871-2017/>

As for the Gomel region, it has already signed bilateral cooperation agreements with four Chinese regions: the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016), and the provinces of Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016). Mentioning Sichuan Province in this list, we note that in April 2021, the parties upgraded their friendly relations by signing an "agreement on the establishment of sister-city relations, which provides for the expansion of cooperation in the economic, social, and cultural spheres"¹²¹.

Such a variety of partnerships and sister city relations could not but have an impact on the overall interaction between Gomel and China. Suffice it to say that over the past three years, exports from this Belarusian region to the Chinese market have grown 20(!) times. And "exports from Gomel enterprises to China in January-November last year [2021] exceeded \$ 100 million. The main export items to China are wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionery products"¹²². This level is not considered to be the maximum in the region, as there is significant potential for increasing supplies of beef, poultry meat and by-products, whole milk products, milk, condensed and dried cream, and dry milk whey to this East Asian country. To this end, 16 enterprises in the region have already been accredited in China: six meat processing plants, seven milk processing plants, two distilleries, and one confectionery plant. Three Chinese-owned enterprises have already been registered in the Belarusian region itself: a hydroelectric power plant, a concrete plant, and a restaurant business.

¹²¹ Zaleski, B.L. Gomel Region: Chinese Partnership Vector / B.L. Zaleski // Materials of the XVIII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Effective Tools of Modern Science – 2021." Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science." – P. 16.

¹²² Gomel Region increased exports to China 20 times in three years [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-za-tri-goda-uvlechila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-raz-481090-2022/>

An important detail: Gomel Region continues to actively expand ties with Chinese regions in 2022. In January, a round table on multifunctional cooperation with Hebei Province was held here, whose economic entities have been cooperating with Gomel partners in the field of production cooperation for quite some time. In particular, back in September 2015, a joint venture, Chongqing Agricultural Machinery Manufacturing Company Zongsheng – Gomel, LLC, was established in Hebei Province to assemble corn harvesters, forage harvesters, and grain harvesters. The Belarusian investor is Gomselmash OJSC, and the Chinese investor is Zongsheng Industrial Corporation LLC. This cooperation project has enabled the Belarusian manufacturer to strengthen and expand its presence in the Chinese market. "In 2016, the value of machine sets delivered to China amounted to about US\$2.6 million, in 2017 – US\$10 million, and in 2018 – US\$7 million,"¹²³.

To develop this project, in March 2017, construction began on a new plant in Weixian County, Handan City, Hebei Province, to produce corn, grain, and rapeseed harvesters for the Belarusian-Chinese joint venture Chongqing Agricultural Machinery Manufacturing Company Zongsheng – Gomel." At the same time, "the first contracts were signed with agricultural companies in Hebei and Heilongjiang provinces for the purchase of Belarusian-Chinese-made combines," according to¹²⁴. And in June 2019, a new contract was signed for the supply of another batch of feed harvester machine kits to China worth more than one and

¹²³ Interregional ties between Belarus and China: status, problems, and prospects for development / T.S. Vertinskaya [et al.]. – Minsk: Belarusian Science, 2020. – pp. 221–222.

¹²⁴ Grishkevich, A. Construction of a new Belarusian-Chinese combine harvester plant has begun in Hebei Province / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. – 2017. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-belorussko-kitajskii-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-kombainov-nachali-stroit-v-provintsii-hebei-237889-2017>

a half million dollars. By mid-2019, "the enterprise had produced 500 combines"¹²⁵.

A logical continuation of these partnerships was the signing in October 2019 by the cities of Gomel and Handan of a memorandum of intent to establish sister city relations in order to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. In particular, the issue of increasing exports of food products, such as beef, was very relevant for the Gomel side in this context. It was also stated that "the parties should develop industrial cooperation on a partnership basis, in particular between Gomselmash and the Hebei agricultural machinery manufacturing enterprise Zongsheng-Gomel. There are prospects for the implementation of joint ideas in the fields of tourism, culture, and education."¹²⁶.

In this regard, it should be noted that the twinning relations between the cities of the Gomel region and their Chinese partners complement the entire range of interregional cooperation between this Belarusian region and China. As of the beginning of 2022, seven bilateral documents had been signed between the administrative-territorial units of the Gomel region and China. The eighth was an agreement signed in January 2022 on the establishment of sister city relations between the Svetlogorsk district and the city of Baoding, located in Hebei province and with a population of over ten million. This document "provides for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields – economy, trade, and humanitarian affairs."¹²⁷. The necessary potential for the development of effective

¹²⁵ Gomselmash to supply China with machine sets for forage harvesters worth over \$1.5 million [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://export.by/news/gomselmash-postavit-v-kitav-mashinokomplekti-kormouborochnih-kombaynov-na-summu-bolee-15-mln-dollar>

¹²⁶ Gomel and Han Dan, China, intend to develop sister city relations [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-handan-namereny-razvivat-pobratimskie-svjazi-366580-2019/>

¹²⁷ Svetlogorsk District and Baoding, China, sign agreement on sister city relations [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svetlogorskij->

cooperation between the parties certainly exists. We hope that the next step in the development of the Gomel region's foreign economic relations with China will be the establishment of sister city relations with the entire Hebei province.

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Prospects for cooperation defined

In May 2022, the sixth meeting of the Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held, at which participants discussed the state and prospects of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, transport and logistics partnership, as well as the implementation of a joint project – the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone." It should be recalled that at the end of 2021, the volume of mutual trade in goods and services between the two countries came close to six billion dollars, and the share of Belarusian supplies to China more than doubled. At the same time, "the capabilities of Belarusian manufacturers allow them to ship Belarusian-made goods worth almost \$\$ 2 billion to the Chinese market by the end of this year [2022]. This requires the consolidation of efforts by both sides to accelerate the opening of the Chinese market for new Belarusian producers, the creation of joint trading companies, and the development of China's largest electronic trading platforms."¹²⁸ .

During the commission meeting, the Belarusian side proposed deepening trade cooperation in five promising areas. The first is expanding direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries. The second is increasing the range of products supplied to China from Belarus. The third is to promote new mechanisms for expanding bilateral trade with an emphasis on the creation of joint export-import companies and the positioning of Belarusian goods on Chinese e-commerce platforms. The fourth is to develop logistics

¹²⁸ Chervyakov: Friendly and partnership relations with China are particularly important for Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervyakov-druzhestvennye-i-partnerskie-otnosheniia-s-kitaem-osobo-znachimv-dlia-belarusi-504062-2022>

through the prompt delivery of goods by rail.¹²⁹Fifth, increasing investment cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral projects and joint work on the creation of new import-substituting enterprises "through the prism of the development of the Great Stone Industrial Park and the deepening of interregional cooperation."

The results of the first quarter of 2022 show that work in these areas is progressing quite actively. In particular, Belarusian-Chinese trade turnover for this period amounted to \$1.2 billion. The fact that Belarus is among the top ten suppliers of potash fertilizers, whey, meat products, and rapeseed oil to China speaks volumes. The agreements reached during the commission's work should contribute to the successful implementation of the planned areas of cooperation. For example, the Belarusian Ministry of Industry intends to work closely with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for the Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products. The memorandum signed by the parties is "aimed at strengthening Belarusian-Chinese partnership in industry"¹³⁰. A memorandum of cooperation in the import and export of woodworking products was also signed by the Bellesbumprom concern and the China Timber and Forest Products Association. The document aims to enhance the effectiveness of partnership relations, "analyze problems in mutual trade and seek mutually acceptable ways to resolve them"¹³¹ by holding joint exhibitions, fairs, business

¹²⁹ Trade turnover between Belarus and China in the first quarter amounted to \$1.2 billion [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-i-kvartale-sostavil-12-mlrd-504056-2022/>

¹³⁰ Belarus and China strengthen partnership in industry [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-ukrepilajut-partnerstvo-v-promyshlennosti-504071-2022/>

¹³¹ Bellesbumprom to cooperate with Chinese association for the export of woodworking products [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-budet-sotrudniczat-s-kitajskoi-assotsiatsiej-po-eksportu-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-504024-2022>

meetings, and exchanging economic, legal, and scientific and technical information in all areas of cooperation.

As part of a set of measures to develop a national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" has been designated as a platform for the organization of innovative production. One of the main tasks set for it for the next five years is "to ensure the effective operation of its residents, attract new ones, and actively develop innovative activities, start-ups, and cluster cooperation..."¹³². The record increase in residents in 2021 – 21 – testifies to how this task is being solved here. More precisely, at the end of 2021, there were 85 residents registered here. By the beginning of 2022, "more than \$718 million had already been invested in the park, with 37 companies manufacturing products, conducting research and development, and providing services. The enterprises of "Great Stone" have created more than 1,700 jobs <...>. The volume of exports has also grown by almost 17% compared to 2020. Deliveries are made to 20 countries around the world"¹³³. In the last days of 2021, the Belarusian company SinRubEnerg LLC became the 85th resident with a research project in the field of creating digital energy facilities and a smart city. "The company will develop integrated automation and dispatching systems"¹³⁴.

With the arrival of 2022, the industrial park continued its active work to expand the number of residents and increase the volume of their

¹³² Zaleski, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": New Projects Bring the Future Closer / B.L. Zaleski // Materials of the XVIII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Key Aspects of Scientific Activity – 2022," Volume 1. Industry: Science and Studies. – P. 3.

¹³³ Yaroshenko: Great Stone enterprises supply products to 20 countries around the world [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-predpriyatija-velikogo-kamnja-postavljajut-produktsiju-v-20-stran-mira-479114-2022/>

¹³⁴ New resident of "Big Stone" to engage in the creation of digital energy facilities [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novji-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-sozdaniem-tsi-frovyh-energoobjektov-477402-2021/>

economic activities. Thus, by mid-April 2022, "89 residents from 15 countries around the world had already been registered here. The volume of declared investments amounts to\$ 1.24 billion. Of this amount, more than\$ 750 million has already been invested in the development of the park. Residents have created more than 1,800 new jobs. In addition, almost half of the companies have started economic activities in the park"¹³⁵.

In March 2022, the 86th resident of the industrial park became Bel Samoyed Cloud Scientific and Technical Company, which "will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems. There are also plans to establish an e-commerce center in Belarus and provide services in this area to Belarusian and Chinese companies."¹³⁶ An important detail: the initiator of this project is one of the largest providers of cloud solutions in China, Samoyed Cloud Technology Group Holdings Limited.

April 2022 was a particularly fruitful month for the Great Stone in terms of registering new residents. At the beginning of this month, the 87th resident became YUZYU Scientific and Technical Company LLC from Hong Kong, whose founder works in the field of product targeting and branding and has branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hangzhou, and Wuhan. The new resident "plans to create a digital product promotion center for e-commerce using internet marketing technologies"¹³⁷, will cooperate with

¹³⁵ Yakimov, P. "Great Stone" opens up broad opportunities for strengthening cooperation between Belarus and China / P. Yakimov // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikij-kamen-otkryvaet-shirokie-vozmozhnosti-dlja-ukreplenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kitaja-8150/>

¹³⁶ New resident of the "Great Stone" will focus on digital technologies and mobile payment systems [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-zajmetsia-tsifrovymi-tehnologijami-i-sistemami-mobilnyh-platezhei-490657-2022/>

¹³⁷ New resident of the "Big Stone" will engage in digital promotion of goods [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-zajmetsia-tsifrovym-prodvizheniem-tovarov-493650-2022/>

Belarusian manufacturers to promote their products in China, and intends to provide training on e-commerce.

A little later, the industrial park registered its 88th resident, Belarusian company KUBY RND, with an investment project to produce equipment and components for modular construction of smart homes. "The production is based on the innovative Cuby technology, which is the company's own development. It allows the production of high-tech structures with high environmental performance," said¹³⁸. It is expected that 90 percent of the products manufactured in Veliki Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

Another Belarusian company, HomeLand Group LLC, has become the 89th resident. It plans to produce multifunctional soundproof cabins called Aerocapsula with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things, a data transmission concept. Interestingly, this project took second place in the national competition for innovative developments in 2021. Aerocapsules, created using smart technologies and equipped with innovative built-in features, "can be widely used in open-plan offices, airports, shopping centers, and manufacturing facilities, and allow for the creation of optimal conditions for rest and work," according to¹³⁹.

By mid-May 2022, the number of residents had grown to 90, with a declared investment volume of \$1.24 billion. In May 2022, a new resident of the industrial park became the Chinese company Transport Complex – AF LLC, which will create a transport monitoring center here using Internet of Things technology. At the same time, an

¹³⁸ New resident of the "Big Stone" will begin producing equipment for smart homes [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-nachnet-vypuskat-oborudovanie-dlja-umnyh-domov-495324-2022/>

¹³⁹ New resident of the "Big Stone" will produce innovative air capsules [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-budet-proizvodit-innovatsionnye-aerokapsuly-495913-2022/>

agreement of intent was signed for the entry into the park of JSC "Hongzhu Corporation," which "plans to engage in biotechnology activities in Veliki Kamen."¹⁴⁰ According to the results of the first quarter of 2022, the industrial park managed to achieve "an increase in revenue from the sale of goods by 1.8 times compared to the first quarter of last year (Br123.4 million), industrial production by residents by 1.7 times (Br95.4 million), exports of goods – 1.4 times (\$ 22.6 million), and investments in fixed assets – 1.1 times (Br30.4 million),"¹⁴¹.

An important area of activity for the "Great Stone" is the creation of sub-parks, which are understood to mean the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of leading companies under the management of a separate management company, which opens up broad prospects for large corporations. Cooperation with the Chinese province of Guangdong is developing particularly well in this regard. It should be recalled that "back in January 2017, in its administrative center, Guangzhou, a ceremony was held to sign an agreement on the creation of a Chinese (Guangdong) sub-park for LED products in the Great Stone Industrial Park, as well as five other documents on the intention of specific companies to join this sub-park"¹⁴². Today, there are already 15 residents in this sub-park, specializing in areas such as LED product manufacturing, integrated logistics, electric transport, unmanned

¹⁴⁰ New resident of the "Big Stone" will create a center for monitoring cross-border transportation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-sozdast-tsentr-monitoringa-transgranichnyh-perevozok-501098-2022/>

¹⁴¹ The number of residents of the Great Stone Industrial Park has increased to 90, with a declared investment volume of \$1.24 billion [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-vozroslo-do-90-s-zajavlenym-obъемom-investitsij-v-124-mlrd-502265-2022/>

¹⁴² Zaleskiy, B.L. "The Great Stone": prospects for development – subparks / B.L. Zaleskiy // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilization – 2020", January 30 – February 7, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. – C. 21.

systems, and research and development. They will soon be joined by a joint innovation center established by the Guangdong Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which will engage in research and development in the fields of industrial and digital technologies, as well as new materials, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals. So, in this area too, we see the successful implementation of plans that were drawn up several years ago.

The further disclosure of the potential of innovative areas of the Great Stone should also be facilitated by the emerging cooperation between the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park and similar preferential economic zones in other countries. In particular, in Cuba and Uzbekistan. Thus, back in January 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Cuban Special Development Zone (SDZ) Mariel, which provides for cooperation "in the field of attracting investment, strengthening ties between the business communities of Belarus and Cuba, as well as providing for information exchange"¹⁴³. The priority areas of activity of the Cuban ZOR, established in November 2013 and located 45 kilometers from Havana, where at the end of 2021 there were more than 60 residents from 21 countries, are electronics, logistics, pharmaceuticals, energy, as well as the financial and banking sectors. In January 2022, the parties already began discussing specific areas of cooperation, "in particular, in the field of attracting residents and developing interaction with Cuban pharmaceutical companies"¹⁴⁴. Considering that the pharmaceutical

¹⁴³ "The Great Stone" and the Cuban Special Development Zone "Mariel" will cooperate in attracting investments [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiia-mariel-budut-sotrudnicat-v-privlechenii-investitsij-426316-2021/>

¹⁴⁴ "Great Stone" intends to develop cooperation with Cuban pharmaceutical companies [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kubinskimi-farmpredpriatijami-487548-2022/>

sector in Veliki Kamen is currently on the rise, it is not difficult to imagine that concrete results from this cooperation will not be long in coming.

Another interesting example in this context is the Uzbek free economic zones (FEZ) "Jizzakh" and "Syr Darya." In early April 2022, the administration of the Great Stone discussed with their representatives areas of possible cooperation, including "establishing cooperation between residents of the park, free economic zones, and enterprises in the field of import and export of components and finished products"¹⁴⁵. The parties agreed to sign a memorandum of cooperation, which will confirm their commitment to implementing joint projects. The specialization of Uzbek SEZs indicates that such projects are entirely possible.

In particular, the Jizzakh SEZ was established in March 2013 in the Jizzakh region to attract direct investment in the creation of high-tech and innovative industries. Today, there are already several interesting examples in this regard. For example, in March 2020, an agreement was signed here to establish a production facility for Volkswagen light commercial vehicles on the basis of Jizzakh Automobile Plant LLC. The implementation of this project is divided into two stages. In 2020-2021, German cars were delivered here in finished form for market research and marketing analysis.¹⁴⁶ Starting in 2022, "full production will begin, including welding, painting, and assembly." The dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded.

¹⁴⁵ "Great Stone" and the SEZ of Uzbekistan intend to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-sez-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-493658-2022/>

¹⁴⁶ Volkswagen car production in Uzbekistan to start in 2022 [Electronic resource]. – 2020. – URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/>

Another interesting example is the Uzbek company ADM Jizzakh, located in the Jizzakh SEZ, which manufactures KIA and Lada models there. In October 2021, it announced that it would start small-scale assembly of these cars in early 2023. In total, "it is planned to organize the production of 314 parts and components, as well as to launch welding and painting shops"¹⁴⁷. This will allow the company to reach an annual production of 100,000 of these models, create 3,000 new jobs, and bring localization of production to 30 percent. It seems that this experience could be very interesting for the Belarusian side.

As for the Syrdarya SEZ, it was established on the basis of a branch of the Jizzakh SEZ in the Syrdarya region in April 2018. One of its main tasks is to ensure the comprehensive and effective use of the production and resource potential of this Uzbek region "based on the deep processing of mineral resources, expanding the production of products in demand on foreign markets, as well as import-substituting products with high added value."¹⁴⁸ The main areas for attracting investment and advanced technologies are identified as deep processing, storage, and packaging of fruit, vegetables, and other agricultural products, textiles, footwear, leather goods, chemicals, food, electrical engineering, agricultural machinery, and construction materials. With the help of the SEZ, it is intended to significantly strengthen the export component of the region, where "more than 80 exporting enterprises already operate, supplying more than 50 types of products abroad"¹⁴⁹. So here too, the range of common interests with

¹⁴⁷ The plant in Uzbekistan producing KIA and Lada cars will increase localization to 30% in 2023 [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20211022/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povysit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

¹⁴⁸ A new free economic zone is being created in Syr Darya [Electronic resource]. – 2018. – URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/94899784?q=%2Fru%2F94899784>

¹⁴⁹ Mirzaev, G. Syr Darya opens its doors to investors / G. Mirzaev // [Electronic resource]. – 2019. – URL: <https://rg.ru/amp/2019/08/29/v-syrdarinskoj-oblasti-uzbekistana-gotovy-k-millionnvm-investiciiam.html>

"Great Stone" could be quite extensive. All this indicates that the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park retains its strategic importance as a point of growth on a national scale for Belarus.

As for interregional cooperation, in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, adopted in September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China positively assessed the expansion of in-depth trade and economic cooperation between Belarusian regions and cities and provinces of China. Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, "which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian- Chinese relations"¹⁵⁰ , we can note the successful experience of its implementation in 2022 by such Belarusian regions as the Vitebsk, Grodno, and Brest regions.

Thus, in October 2022, **the Vitebsk region** and **the Chinese province of Jiangxi** signed an agreement on cooperation in the fields of economy, education, healthcare, and sports, and will establish contacts in trade, science, and technology. The parties will cooperate in a comprehensive manner. For example, there are plans to organize video conferences to introduce Chinese partners to leading enterprises in the Vitebsk region, their developments, and technologies that may be useful and interesting to companies in Jiangxi. In particular, this concerns joint projects in the development of agriculture, mechanical engineering, as well as science parks and university developments. It should be noted that the two regions – Belarusian and Chinese – have already held events in the past: a conference on vocational education and training for engineering and technical specialists, as well as on combating COVID-19. In addition, "container trains, which are formed

¹⁵⁰ Zaleskiy, B. Time for concrete decisions. Chronicle of international cooperation / Boris Zaleskiy. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. – P. !00.

by a logistics company from Orsha, among others, regularly run to Nanchang, the urban district where the Jiangxi authorities are located. Nanchang and Orsha have established partnership ties, and another city in the province, Fuzhou, has ties with Polotsk¹⁵¹ ." The agreement, it seems, will help the northern region of Belarus and the Chinese province of Fujian, located in southeastern China, take their relations to a new level. In the context of this topic, it is interesting to note that in September 2022, as part of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China, the Days of the Vitebsk Region were held in another Chinese province, **Heilongjiang**, where the "potential for cooperation between sister regions in the trade, economic, manufacturing, tourism, and investment spheres" was presented.¹⁵² Incidentally, this region of China is home to more than 30 million people.

And in October 2022, an agreement on friendly exchanges and cooperation was also signed between the cities of **Grodno** and **Lanzhou** , the administrative center of the Chinese province of Gansu, where the parties envisaged "deepening bilateral interaction, expanding exchanges and cooperation between the regions in trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, tourism, and other spheres. The document also aims to strengthen friendly ties between the residents of the two cities."¹⁵³ . It should be recalled that a memorandum on establishing sister city relations between **Gansu Province** and the **Grodno Region** was signed in 2007. Over the past 15 years, more than 10 different

¹⁵¹ Pushnyakova, A. Trade, Science, Sports: Vitebsk Region Signs Cooperation Agreement with Jiangxi Province, China / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlia-nauka-sport-vitebskaia-oblast-podpisala-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kitajskoj-tsudzansi-532401-2022>

¹⁵² Days of the Vitebsk Region are held in the Chinese province of Heilongjiang [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-vitebskoj-oblasti-prohodiat-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-heiluntszian-525147-2022/>

¹⁵³ Grodno and Chinese Lanzhou signed an agreement on establishing friendly exchanges [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodno-i-kitajskij-lanchzhou-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-obmenov-532444-2022/>

agreements have been concluded between the regions, with trade and economic cooperation developing particularly dynamically. In April 2022, Gansu and Grodno signed a Cooperation Program for 2022-2023, which is filled with specific joint projects. It " further elaborated on areas where cooperation is not yet so active< ...> . These include agriculture, tourism, technology exchange, and traditional Chinese medicine."¹⁵⁴ . The Novogrudok district and the Chinese city of Dunhuang in Gansu province have agreed to "conclude an agreement on the establishment of cooperation."¹⁵⁵ . For reference, the Grodno region has also signed a twinning agreement with **Hainan province**.

Another interesting example is **the Brest region and Hubei province**. In May 2022, the parties signed an Action Plan for the Development of Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation for 2022-2024, which outlines the development of international interregional cooperation in four main areas: mutual trade, investment, medicine, and education. In particular, food products and wood products from Brest region manufacturers have been supplied to the Chinese province for several years. However, there are plans to significantly expand this cooperation, including by establishing direct business ties between economic entities. For example, there are plans to establish investment cooperation between the Brest Free Economic Zone and automotive companies in Hubei Province, as well as between the Berezovsky Motor Repair Plant and , a manufacturer of diesel engines in that region of China. In addition, "the possibility of Chinese investors participating in projects in the Brest region to organize the

¹⁵⁴ Grodno Region intends to expand cooperation with China's Gansu Province [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-namerena-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-gansu-498323-2022/>

¹⁵⁵ Novogrudsky District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang intend to sign an agreement on establishing cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogrudskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-gorod-dunhuang-namerenv-zakljuchit-soglasenie-ob-ustanovlenii-495725-2022/>

production of electric vehicle charging stations, the production of powder and liquid detergents at Barkhim OJSC, technical re-equipment of the Baranovich Cotton Production Association, production of clinker products at the Gorynsky Building Materials Plant, and development of the Gorodnoye glass sand deposit,¹⁵⁶ . As for the medical sector, the prospects for cooperation between the Brest region and Hubei province are linked to the joint production of ultrasound diagnostic equipment and the organization of the production of disposable blood transfusion and medical solution systems. There are also plans to establish a center for traditional Chinese medicine at the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital, for which the physiotherapy building may be renovated.

All these facts are a good illustration of how multifaceted Belarusian-Chinese interaction is today reaching the level of comprehensive strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, as stated in Directive No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China," signed in December 2021.

¹⁵⁶ Brest Region and Hubei Province signed a roadmap for cooperation for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-hubei-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-2024-gody-503065-2022/>

Priorities for the new stage of partnership

In September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted a Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which contains Belarusian-Chinese agreements to intensify scientific and technical cooperation, expand practical cooperation between research institutes, higher education institutions, and enterprises, and encourage the creation of platforms such as joint applied research centers and laboratories. At the same time, it is noted that the development of bilateral relations has entered a new stage, when "cooperation between research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in the field of innovation is continuously strengthening. The areas of scientific and technical cooperation are constantly expanding, mechanisms are being improved, and methods are being enriched"¹⁵⁷. In this regard, three priority components can be identified. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of large joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation, where a network of joint innovation centers and scientific laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships for specialists, teachers, and students are being conducted."¹⁵⁸.

In particular, the National Academy of Sciences [NAS] of Belarus alone has already established more than 20 international research centers and laboratories in cooperation with Chinese partners, which are engaged in the development and adaptation of advanced

¹⁵⁷ Se Xiaoyun: Cooperation between Belarus and China in science and technology is continuously strengthening [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-sjaojun-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-sfere-nauki-i-tehnologii-nepriervno-ukrepljaetsja-534171-2022>

¹⁵⁸ Zalessky, B. Facets of Multivectorality. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. – P. 471.

technologies, as well as their promotion in the markets of Belarus, China, and third countries. "Contractual documents have already been signed between the NAS of Belarus and leading scientific organizations in China – the Chinese Academy of Sciences, academies of sciences of a number of provinces of the PRC, and large Chinese manufacturing corporations – Huawei, AVIC..."¹⁵⁹ . In particular, in April 2022, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with the Chinese company SAMCE. Environmental Technologies, which specializes in environmental protection issues. The agreement, which aims to promote scientific and technical cooperation and the practical implementation of joint scientific and technical developments in the field of environmental protection, primarily concerns soil restoration technologies, which are of particular interest to Chinese partners. The fact is that the Chinese company, bringing together designers, scientists, equipment manufacturers, investors, and operators in the field of ecology, is currently focusing its efforts on expanding its activities in the areas of municipal water supply and wastewater disposal, industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, energy conservation, and management of the cyclical use of waste as a resource raw material. At the same time, OJSC "China Engineering Corporation SAMC" was established, which also signed a cooperation agreement with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. This document identifies the priority areas for cooperation as "energy conservation and environmental protection, new energy sources, new materials, optics, precision instruments, semiconductors, and biomedicine, as well as the

¹⁵⁹ More than 20 joint centers and laboratories have been established at the National Academy of Sciences with partners from China [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-nan-sozdano-bolee-20-sovmestnyh-tsentrov-i-laboratorij-s-partnerami-iz-kitaja-494752-2022/>

expansion of the commercial application of the results of joint scientific activities." ¹⁶⁰

In terms of cooperation between higher education institutions in the two countries, the parties will develop cooperation "based on the development of joint educational programs with the subsequent creation of joint educational structures (faculties, institutes) between leading higher education institutions, including the use of distance learning technologies..."¹⁶¹ . Suffice it to say that Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct cooperation agreements. "Today, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in the PRC, and the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000. The parties have developed more than 30 joint educational programs..."¹⁶² . Among Belarusian universities actively developing cooperation with China in the field of science and education, the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Brest State Technical University, and the Polessky State University should be mentioned.

For example, the first agreement between Belarusian State University (BSU) and Chinese partners was signed in 1990 with Chengdu University of Science and Technology. Today, BSU has more than 80 agreements with over 50 Chinese institutions. Its partners

¹⁶⁰ Biomedicine and new energy sources. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement with a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/biomeditsina-i-novye-istochniki-energi-nan-belarusi-podpisala-soglasenie-s-kitajskoj-korporatsiej-498676-2022/>

¹⁶¹ China and Belarus published a Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/16/kitaj-i-belarus-opublikovali-sovmestnuii-deklaraciiu-ob-ustanovlenii-otnoshenii-vseporodnogo-i-vsestoronnogo-strategicheskogo-partnerstva.html>

¹⁶² Belarus and China held a video conference on cooperation in the field of education [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-proveli-videokonferentsiju-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-526453-2022/>

include Harbin University of Science and Technology, Henan University, East China Normal University, and Foshan University. "In 2019, bilateral partnership documents were signed with Peking University and Shanghai University of Transportation."¹⁶³ . BSU was granted the honorary right to host a Confucius Institute on its premises. The Chinese partner in this endeavor is Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU), with which cooperation has been developing since 2007. A significant result of this cooperation was the opening of two joint institutes at BSU and DPU. Today, there are 244 Chinese students enrolled at the Chinese-Belarusian institute. Two graduating classes have already taken place. "In 2021, 78 Chinese graduates and five Belarusians received diplomas from BSU and DPU, and in 2022, 74 Chinese and two Belarusian citizens will graduate. ¹⁶⁴There are 142 Belarusian students studying at the Belarusian-Chinese joint institute. The first graduation will take place in 2023.

In May 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSU and Tsinghua University, which is ranked 17th among the world's best universities. The memorandum "provides for the exchange of students, the invitation of teachers and scientists, the implementation of joint research and educational projects, the exchange of publications, information, and teaching materials, and the organization of scientific, educational, and cultural events."¹⁶⁵ . This university was founded in 1911. It is located in the northwestern part of

¹⁶³ Kreytnina, O. BSU on developing cooperation with leading Chinese universities / O. Kreytnina // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/bgu-o-razviti-sotrudnichestva-s-veduschimi-universitetami-kitaja-8187/>

¹⁶⁴ Cooperation between BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University immortalized in bronze tetrahedron [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotrudnichestvo-bgu-i-dalianskogo-politehnicheskogo-universiteta-zapechatleli-v-bronzovom-tetrapode-514967-2022/>

¹⁶⁵ BSU and Tsinghua University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. – 2021. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-universitet-tsinhua-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-441298-2021/>

Beijing in the student district of Haidian. Today, Tsinghua University has about 53,000 students, including more than 3,200 foreigners. The educational process is provided by more than 3,600 teachers. The university structure includes 21 institutes and 59 faculties.

In September 2022, another partner of BSU appeared in China – the University of Huzhou in Zhejiang Province. The memorandum of understanding between the two universities "provides for the implementation of joint research projects, educational programs, student exchanges, and other areas of cooperation."¹⁶⁶ Huzhou University has a history of more than 100 years. Currently, the university specializes in a wide range of academic disciplines and has achieved internationally recognized results in research and teaching in mathematics, clinical medicine, and engineering. In 2017, the university established an Intercultural Research Center, which is involved in international projects, including with Belarus.

As for the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), in February 2022, the Belarusian university signed an agreement with Shenyang University of Technology (SUT) on scientific and technical cooperation to establish a Chinese-Belarusian innovative educational, scientific, and production center for strengthening, restoration and corrosion strengthening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts, within which new technologies and equipment will be concentrated in one place, prototypes of parts for testing at Chinese enterprises and trial batches of parts for Chinese enterprises will be manufactured quickly, students and Chinese specialists will be trained in new technologies for strengthening and restoration, corrosion protection of machine parts, and contracts will be signed with Chinese

¹⁶⁶ BSU and China's Huizhou University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-kitajskij-universitet-huchzhou-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-524518-2022/>

enterprises for the supply of technologies and equipment. "The center will focus on all new methods of hardening, restoration, and corrosion protection of machine parts. There is no other center of this kind in China,"¹⁶⁷. At the request of the STU, the center will include such Belarusian technologies as gas-flame spraying of thermoplastic polymer powders; hypersonic metallization; deformation cladding with flexible tools; gas-flame spraying of metal, ceramic, polymer, and composite powders; laser cleaning of material surfaces from organic and inorganic contaminants, rust, scale, and paint coatings; application of plasma coatings with metal, ceramic, and composite powders; restoration of working surfaces of machine parts by laser surfacing; surface laser hardening and laser alloying. And in October 2022, this center was opened at Shenyang Technological University.

In addition, in October 2022, a scientific exchange conference between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was held in Changchun. It should be recalled that in December 2019, the parties signed an agreement on the establishment of a joint Chinese-Belarusian laboratory for promising materials and production "One Belt, One Road", which began its activities in February 2020. This structure "is engaged in the development of high-performance sodium-ion and potassium-ion batteries, catalysts for water electrolysis, hydrogen production, and research in the field of solid oxide electrolysis for the efficient production of green hydrogen and green ammonia"¹⁶⁸. During the conference, Belarusian experts

¹⁶⁷ Kravchuk, M.A. Opening of the Chinese-Belarusian Innovative Educational, Scientific and Production Center for the Strengthening, Restoration and Corrosion Protection of Machine Parts / M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11923-otkrytie-kitajsko-belorusskogo-innovacionnogo-uchebno-nauchno-proizvodstvennogo-centra>

¹⁶⁸ Shele, V.K. Conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences / V.K. Shele, M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11931-konferenciya-po-nauchnomu-obmenu-bntu-i-institut-prikladnoj-himii-an-kitava>

drew attention to the experience of the Belarusian National Technical University in modifying the surfaces of machine parts using high-energy methods and studying their structure and properties, which in the future will expand the scope of scientific research and the application of its results in Chinese industry.

Speaking about the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), it has already signed 17 cooperation agreements with universities and organizations in China, located in many regions of the country, including Guangdong Province. "In cooperation with Chinese partners, joint educational programs have been created and are successfully operating in such areas as 'Machines and equipment for chemical production and construction materials enterprises,' 'Automation of technological processes and production,' and 'Mechatronics,'"¹⁶⁹. In addition, in March 2022, BSTU signed memoranda: with the Guangzhou City of Knowledge – Technological Industrial Service Company – on strategic cooperation in the field of energy conservation and environmental protection to promote the construction of a "carbon-free community"; with Guangzhou Hanyun Group Co., Ltd. on hydrogen technologies for the joint construction of a hydrogen energy industrial park.

Another example in this context is Brest State Technical University (BrSTU), where a joint Belarusian-Chinese project in the field of information technology began in 2022, which is funded by the Belarusian Republican Fund for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. In April 2022, it was announced that a joint educational program between BrSTU and

¹⁶⁹ Belarusian State Technical University and Belarusian companies signed memoranda of cooperation with Guangzhou [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bgtu-i-belorusskie-kompanii-podpisali-memorandumy-o-sotrudnichestve-s-guanchzhou-489362-2022>

Xinyang University had begun, which will train students in the field of mechanical engineering. "The training will be conducted in person in China using materials provided by the Brest university. A large part of the program will be taught to Chinese students directly by BrSTU lecturers,"¹⁷⁰ . In October 2022, the Brest university also established cooperation with the Guangdong Construction Vocational and Technical College to create long-term conditions for training qualified personnel in Belarus for the benefit of the Chinese construction sector and to cooperate in organizing a joint educational program for training specialists in the field of architecture and construction. It should be noted that BrSTU's Chinese partner is "the only state college in Guangdong Province that trains highly qualified specialists in the field of construction. The college was founded in 1979 and has graduated more than 200,000 highly qualified personnel over the past 43 years."¹⁷¹ .

As for the cooperation between Polesky State University and its Chinese counterparts, in September 2022, the Belarusian university hosted the first international scientific conference entitled "Pinsk Readings." The participants discussed current issues in economics, banking, biotechnology, engineering, healthy lifestyles, and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage with their Belarusian and foreign partners. At the conference, Polesie State University signed a cooperation agreement with the Shanxi Institute of Science and Technology, which "specializes in environmental management, engineering, and biotechnology. The aim is to build a strong

¹⁷⁰ BrSTU and Xinyang University have launched a joint program [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-i-sinsjanskij-universitet-nachali-realizatsiju-sovmestnoj-programmy-496937-2022/>

¹⁷¹ BrSTU and Guangdong Construction Vocational College agree to establish cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/brgtu-i-guandunskij-stroitelnyj-proftekholledzh-dogovorilis-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-530263-2022/>

partnership."¹⁷² . In addition to joint scientific projects, the universities see prospects for cooperation in academic mobility.

Another testament to the high level of scientific, technical, and innovative cooperation between Belarus and China is the fact that at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, the largest exhibition event in China, which in 2021 was attended by almost 3,000 companies from 127 countries, in November 2022, the Belarusian national pavilion "High-Tech Equipment and Information Technologies" presented 126 scientific and technical developments by scientists from 32 organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and institutions of the Ministry of Education of Belarus. In particular, the exhibition of the Ministry of Education included such areas of cooperation as "digital information and communication technologies and interdisciplinary technologies based on them; biological, medical, pharmaceutical, and chemical technologies and production ; energy, construction, ecology, and rational nature management; mechanical engineering, machine-building technologies, instrument-making and innovative materials; agro-industrial and food technologies; ensuring human and social security." .¹⁷³

Among the new products presented are ultra-small orbital spacecraft created by the Belarusian State University (BSU). The first nanosatellite was launched into orbit four years ago. Under the state program "Science-Intensive Technologies and Equipment," a second nanosatellite has already been created, "the design of which implements an innovative modular layout of the onboard subsystems of a small

¹⁷² Polesky State University will cooperate with a Chinese institute of science and technology [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/polesgu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-institutom-nauki-i-tehnologii-iz-kitaja-524605-2022/>

¹⁷³ Belarusian universities at the 5th China International Import Expo [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11970-vuzy-belarusi-na-v-china-international-import-expo>

spacecraft. BSU also presents the anticancer drugs Temodex, Prospidelong, and Cisplatcel.¹⁷⁴ Another interesting innovation is an electric scooter produced by the Optron Instrument-Making Plant of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Its maximum speed is 60 kilometers per hour, and its load capacity is 200 kilograms. In addition, such advanced developments as the Burevestnik unmanned aerial vehicle (Scientific and Production Center for Multifunctional Unmanned Systems of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), an automated welding process registration system (Belarusian-Russian University), heat-resistant impact-resistant coatings (Gomel State University named after F. Skorina), and bread with increased nutritional value (Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies)...¹⁷⁵

And more. In November 2022, at the IX Belarusian-Chinese Youth Innovation Forum "New Horizons – 2022," which took place in Minsk, it was noted that this year the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, together with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, held a competition for Belarusian-Chinese scientific and technical projects. "As a result, 35 projects will receive state support from both countries."¹⁷⁶ . All these facts show that the multifaceted scientific, technical, and innovative cooperation between the two countries, with systematic and targeted work by partners to develop ties, is yielding fruitful results.

¹⁷⁴ More than 120 Belarusian developments presented at the China International Import Expo [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/bolee-120-belorusskih-razrabotok-predstavleny-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-533702-2022/>

¹⁷⁵ New products in the food industry and spacecraft: what Belarus will present at the import exhibition in China [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novinki-pischeproma-i-kosmicheskie-apparaty-cto-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-533240-2022/>

¹⁷⁶ Young scientists from Belarus and China develop cooperation in the field of innovation [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/molodye-uchenye-belarusi-i-kitaja-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-innovatsij-534160-2022/>

Strategic partnership enters a new era

In March 2023, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted a **joint statement** on the basic principles for the development of exemplary relations of an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries in a new era, which include mutual support for each other's national policies and on issues affecting each other's core interests. In addition to this joint statement, "Belarus and China signed 27 intergovernmental, interdepartmental, and interregional agreements and more than 10 commercial agreements in various fields during the state visit,"¹⁷⁷, and the total economic effect of this visit is estimated at more than three and a half billion dollars.

Among the documents signed, it is worth noting **the Belarusian-Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation Program for 2023-2024**, which aims to establish joint innovative production facilities in both countries. After all, "a developed engineering base, a modern system for training highly qualified personnel, and many years of advanced experience of leading Belarusian design bureaus all form the basis for future high-tech industries"¹⁷⁸. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that in 2022, Chinese investors invested over \$100 million in projects in Belarus. In addition, more than forty projects were implemented with the participation of Chinese companies, and about twenty promising initiatives are being developed this year. In this context, it is worth noting the Great Stone Industrial Park, where in

¹⁷⁷ MFA: Belarusian President's state visit to Beijing was a significant event in relations with China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid-gosvizit-prezidenta-belarusi-v-pekina-stal-znachimym-sobvtiem-v-otnoshenijah-s-kr-557851-2023/>

¹⁷⁸ Belarus and China aim to create joint innovative production facilities [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-natseleny-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-innovatsionnyh-proizvodstv-556688-2023/>

2022 Belarusian resident companies launched the production of glass for all types of ground transport, innovative photographic printing products, and automated process control systems for industry and energy. The InKata science and technology park has been put into operation, housing companies engaged in scientific research and experimental development"¹⁷⁹.

It should be recalled that in the last days of 2022, the number of residents in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" reached 100. For reference, "at the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"¹⁸⁰. In particular, the 99th resident was Yunchengbel LLC, founded by the large Chinese company SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform for the import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment."¹⁸¹. The Belarusian company Human Kraft will manufacture medical products – customised bone prostheses based on 3D printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and the treatment of oncological diseases. Also, at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent were signed to join the industrial park as residents by Information Technologies Forju LLC and Information Technologies Tontun LLC (People's Republic of China).

In addition, at the end of 2022, resident company IPD Group signed a lease agreement for a 5,500 square meter universal production facility in the industrial park. This deal was one of the largest in 2022

¹⁷⁹ Abramenko: "The Great Stone" is a huge opportunity for doing business on the Belt and Road platform [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-velikij-kamen-eto-kolossalnye-vozmozhnosti-dlja-vedenija-biznesa-na-platforme-pojas-i-put-556679-2023/>

¹⁸⁰ Zalessky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Features of the Eurasian cooperation dialogue in the context of global threats / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. – P. 5.

¹⁸¹ The number of residents of the "Great Stone" has reached 100 [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-dostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

on the Belarusian industrial real estate market. "The space will be used to develop and mass-produce high-tech data processing and storage devices. Specifically, the company will make computer hardware, server equipment, monitors, and interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand its range of import-substituting products,"¹⁸². In total, 19 residents were registered in Veliki Kamen at the end of 2022. And there's more. Last year, the park's residents exported more than \$100 million worth of products to 20 countries.

In 2023, Veliki Kamen plans to attract at least 20 residents. In January alone, several investors from Belarus have already registered. In particular, " has very interesting projects in the field of veterinary products. The second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy,"¹⁸³. At the end of January, a new resident was registered in Veliki Kamen: BaikalGroup LLC. "The Chinese-owned company will create a transport and logistics center in the park< ...> . The park resident plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging, tracking, labeling..."¹⁸⁴. Goods will be delivered to countries in the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. LLC "Heprotrade" will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, which will be widely used in sales and services. "Production capacity will be up to 300 tons per month. The implementation of the project will make it possible to supply the domestic market with such products

¹⁸² The Great Stone ended the year with its largest deal [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejshej-sdelkoi-542635-2022/>

¹⁸³ Veliki Kamen plans to attract at least 20 residents this year [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-privlech-ne-menee-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

¹⁸⁴ A new resident of "The Great Stone" will create a transport and logistics center [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskij-tsentr-547574-2023/>

and reduce imports, as well as export them," said¹⁸⁵. The second February resident, Riveks LLC, will produce innovative dressing materials and sterilization products for both the domestic market and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, founded by a Chinese international logistics company that is one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, plans to "develop logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introducing a wide range of services in this area."¹⁸⁶ In addition, road transport of goods will be organized on the China-Europe route. This initiative will also help to solve the most important strategic task – expanding the presence of Belarusian products on the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already registered in Veliki Kamen. Overall, during the industrial park's operation, there are already 107 residents with a planned investment volume of \$1.3 billion¹⁸⁷. In order to create additional conditions for attracting new investors, work will continue in 2023 to further improve the park's special legal regime, with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemicals, biotechnology, instrument engineering, and research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that at the Great Stone sites, "it is possible to quickly increase the level of localization in the production of medical and technological

¹⁸⁵ Two more residents with Belarusian capital are registered in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-beloruskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovany-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

¹⁸⁶ New resident of Great Stone to develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

¹⁸⁷ This year, "Great Stone" registered seven new residents [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistriroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

equipment, transport and other areas, and quickly replace lost imports with these products. In order to fully utilize the existing potential, it is necessary to continue actively developing the park, building infrastructure, and promoting the project on a global scale."¹⁸⁸. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for residents of the industrial park, in particular, and also create additional competitive advantages for the promising development of the Belarusian economy as a whole.

Another important document adopted in March 2023 is **the Comprehensive Strategy for Joint Industrial Development**, implemented by the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China, which provides for the creation of mechanisms to encourage Belarusian and Chinese enterprises to intensify and strengthen technological cooperation. A roadmap with specific projects and initiatives has been prepared to implement this strategy. "There are plans to establish joint ventures in China, use Chinese technologies and expertise to modernize Belarusian production facilities, and attract Chinese investment for projects in Belarus"¹⁸⁹ in key areas such as mechanical engineering, electronics, woodworking, optical-mechanical, pulp and paper, and chemical production.

In particular, **the Minsk Tractor Plant** is ready to intensify cooperation with the Chinese side. A project is currently underway in China to organize the assembly of BELARUS tractors with a capacity

¹⁸⁸ Chervyakov: Current economic challenges are a window of opportunity for residents of the Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervyakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-550498-2023/>

¹⁸⁹ Abramenko, A. On the peculiarities of doing business in the KNO, joint projects, and prospects for cooperation / A. Abramenko // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ob-osobennostjakh-vedenija-biznesa-v-knr-sovmestnyh-proektah-i-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-8633/>

of 350 horsepower. The first prototype was tested in 2020-2021. Last year, two more BELARUS 3523 tractors were delivered to China for certification, after which a decision will be made on the localization of the assembly of Belarusian tractors. In Minsk, testing of the BELARUS 3523 model with a diesel engine from the Chinese corporation Weichai continues. It is expected that 100 such engines will arrive at the plant in the near future. "Another area is related to the supply of components from China. Last year, imports from China amounted to \$ 1.8 million, and in the first two months of this year [2023] – \$ 400 thousand."¹⁹⁰ . So the parties are interested in joint investment projects.

During the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to China, several documents were signed concerning the development of production **in the agro-industrial complex**. In particular, "the largest pig breeding complex in Belarus with a capacity of 300,000 heads will be built in the Minsk region. <...> And we will modify our beef cattle breeding in the Mogilev region. First of all, a separate slaughterhouse will be built. About a thousand lightweight sheds will be built for keeping Aberdeen Angus and Limousin cattle."¹⁹¹ .

Belarus also plans to almost double its food supplies to China in 2023. Last year, these exports exceeded \$500 million. At the same time, Belarusian supplies "increased in poultry meat (3 times), rapeseed oil (3.1 times), milk and cream (1.4 times)" < ... > . Currently, 148 Belarusian producers of 171 categories of goods are accredited to supply China"¹⁹² . By the beginning of 2024, the goal is to reach \$900

¹⁹⁰ MTZ CEO talks about intensifying cooperation with China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ob-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-kitaem-rasskazal-gendirektor-mtz-553348-2023/>

¹⁹¹ Belarus expects to almost double food supplies to China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschitvvaet-pochti-v-dva-razo-narastit-objemy-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-553023-2023/>

¹⁹² In 2022, Belarusian exports to China almost doubled [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/za-2022-god-eksport-belorusskih-tovarov-v-kitaj-prakticheski-udvoilsja-556681-2023/>

million in food exports. Overall, in trade and economic cooperation with Chinese partners, Belarus has every chance of increasing its exports to \$2.2 billion this year.

Two other interesting documents signed in Beijing in early March 2023 concern **regional cooperation**. The first is the **Belarus-China Year of Regions Plan for 2023**, which "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives"¹⁹³ to attract at least \$150 million in direct Chinese investment to each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026. The second is **an agreement between the Belarusian Ministry of Economy and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce on deepening trade and economic cooperation between the regions of the two countries**, in which the parties focus on three Chinese regions. First, **Tianjin** is a city under central government control, where manufacturing and logistics predominate. Second, **Qingdao**, located in **Shandong** Province, where manufacturing and medical enterprises are particularly well developed and where **the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's** free trade zone is actively used. Thirdly, **Chongqing** is another city under central government control. "It is the heart of logistics and transit. It is mainly e-commerce, with an emphasis on transport and logistics, including green corridors. This is when trains are not checked at the border but are controlled at their destination, which is a big plus in terms of cost and time,"¹⁹⁴.

Also, in early March 2023, Belarus and China signed **a plan to develop cooperation in the field of healthcare for 2023-2025**, which states that "the parties will develop cooperation in the fields of

¹⁹³ Abramenko: Belarus and China seek to deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-belarus-i-kitaj-stremjatsja-k-uglubleniju-dvustoronnego-vzaimodejstvija-vo-vseh-oblastjakh-556675-2023/>

¹⁹⁴ Nikolai Snopkov: The total economic effect of the Belarusian-Chinese agreements is estimated at more than \$3.5 billion [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10547>

healthcare, science, and education, based on the principles of national legislation of the countries, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance."¹⁹⁵ . The two countries will give priority to cooperation in areas such as: organizing joint scientific research in the field of medicine, exchanging experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organizing seminars and master classes for experts; cooperation in the field of epidemiology and microbiology and the exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; interaction in the field of surgery, transplantation, and hematology; participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus. It is important to note that back in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, published in September 2022, Belarus and China agreed to develop cooperation in the field of high-tech medicine, vaccines, and medicines and "identified as a priority the formation of a joint pharmaceutical cluster, the commercialization of new pharmaceutical products and technologies, and the creation of a high-quality center for traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus."¹⁹⁶ .

For reference: the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on cooperation in the field of healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese ministries of health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, the Belarusian government adopted a resolution "On the state registration of strategically important medicinal products," which allows for their accelerated registration to combat the pandemic. At the same time, the

¹⁹⁵ A plan for the development of cooperation in the field of healthcare for 2023-2025 has been signed between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobytiva/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-gody-mezhdu-bela/>

¹⁹⁶ China and Belarus adopt Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://zviazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-kitav-i-belarus-prinyali-sovmestnuvu-deklaraciju>

Ministry of Health conducted the first state registration of a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) product, the soft capsules "CINY." Today, 810 medical devices, 502 medical products, and 480 medicines produced in China are registered in Belarus. From April 2020 to the present, the PRC has provided free assistance equivalent to \$30 million. Personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment, and COVID-19 vaccines have been transferred to Belarus.¹⁹⁷

In our country, TCM centers and the necessary conditions for doing business to set up pharmaceutical production have already been created. In particular, for residents of the Great Stone Park, the Belarusian Ministry of Health has developed a compilation of "Key aspects of access to medical devices and medicines" in Russian and Chinese to provide information on opportunities and preferences. In addition, work has been completed on the architectural design "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the Great Stone Park with a view to creating a regional center for the promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine" has been completed, and work is nearing completion on the inclusion of the specialty "traditional Chinese medicine practitioner" in the nomenclature of positions, which will give an additional impetus to the promotion of this topic in Belarus.

At the end of February 2023, the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China announced that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM issues, which should address the establishment of a TCM center in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster, and the development of traditional Chinese medicine in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park " " in Great Stone. It should be noted that "reflexotherapy, diagnostic methods, therapeutic

¹⁹⁷ The Ministry of Health of Belarus and Weigao signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompanija-weigao-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552445-2023/>

gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies – electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, and ultrasonic acupuncture< ...>. Centers for traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centers in Belarus. Cooperation has been established with a number of universities, including Tianjin, Changchun, and the Zhejiang University of Traditional Chinese Medicine...¹⁹⁸ . In addition, the educational process in this specialty is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexotherapy. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained annually. The department's staff have repeatedly undergone training in Beijing, Taiyuan, and Tianjin. These methods have proven effective, including in the treatment of post-COVID syndrome. Every year, reflexology doctors in Belarus perform about 900,000 reflexology procedures.

In 2023, the parties will continue to actively cooperate in this area. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of cooperation agreements with Chinese partners. First, in Weihai, Shandong Province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies Chinese-made medical devices and spare parts . Second, in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, with North China Pharmaceutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been selected as a strategic partner that will represent the interests of the Belfarmprom holding company in the procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as perform market research functions and submit proposals to the holding

¹⁹⁸ Belarus and China are preparing a memorandum on traditional Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-knr-gotoviat-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoj-kitajskoj-meditiny-552902-2023/>

company's management for the supply of substances and raw materials in accordance with orders¹⁹⁹.

As for the development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the new era in **the field of education**, in February 2023, the China Education Expo international education exhibition was held in Beijing, which included a thematic exhibition "Education in Belarus," where leading Belarusian universities presented their educational programs: Belarusian State Economic University, Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, Minsk State Linguistic University, Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, Gomel State Technical University named after P.O. Sukhoi, Belarusian National Technical University, Polotsk State University named after Euphrosyne of Polotsk, and Mogilev State University named after A.A. Kuleshov. It should be noted that the Belarusian exhibition was the only foreign one presented at this educational forum, which was attended by more than two thousand young men and women from China interested in studying in Belarus.

In addition, during the negotiations held in the Chinese capital at the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, the possibility of Belarusian higher education institutions joining the International Engineering and Architectural Consortium of Educational Institutions was discussed. Overall, "following the meetings between representatives of Belarusian universities and Chinese universities and consulting companies, 17 cooperation agreements in the field of educational services were signed, and 16 agreements were finalized for

¹⁹⁹ Cooperation agreement signed by Belarusian Ministry of Health and Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-552543-2023>

signing," according to²⁰⁰ . For reference, "Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct cooperation agreements. Today, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in China, and the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000."²⁰¹ . In addition, the creation of joint educational structures is being actively promoted in Belarus and China. For example, seven joint projects are already in operation: three laboratories, two centers, and two institutes. Forty joint educational programs of the first and second levels of higher education are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed over the past two years.

In this context, an important participant in international cooperation with the People's Republic of China in the field of education is **the Belarusian State University** (BSU), which already cooperates with more than 50 Chinese universities, and more than 3,000 Chinese citizens are currently studying in its classrooms. In March 2023, BSU identified new directions and forms of cooperation with leading Chinese universities to strengthen, activate, and expand areas of partnership.

In particular, BSU is entering a new level of cooperation with Peking University, which is the oldest university in China, founded in 1898, with a library containing more than eight million books and over 46,000 students, including more than 4,000 foreigners. It should be recalled that the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019. In March 2023, the parties initiated cooperation in the field of mathematical sciences. "The development of joint

²⁰⁰ Belarus – China: 17 new agreements signed in the field of education [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-kitaj-podpisano-17-novyh-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-553144-2023/>

²⁰¹ Zalesky, B. Route of Interaction – Asia. Intensification of Belarus' Multifaceted Relations with Key Economic Partners on the Continent / Boris Zalesky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. – P. 19.

scientific projects and academic exchanges for lectures on modern achievements in the field of probability theory, mathematical statistics, and data analysis are considered promising,"²⁰² . In addition, cooperation in the joint training of master's and doctoral students will be expanded. To this end, this topic will be analyzed in detail in the near future to determine the specialties and scientific fields of knowledge in which cooperation is planned.

Another partner of BSU in China is Beijing Foreign Studies University, one of the country's leading universities in the field of linguistics. In March 2023, BSU signed an agreement on student exchange with the university to develop academic mobility for students and master's students studying Chinese, Belarusian, and Russian, building on the agreements reached in 2017 . The parties will also develop joint innovative teaching methods.

Following meetings held in March 2023, the Chinese University of Political Science and Law became a new partner of BSU. The universities signed a memorandum of understanding that will enable cooperation in the field of law in a number of areas. "This includes student exchanges, the launch of joint educational programs, joint research and educational projects, the exchange of information, teaching materials and scientific reports, the organization of conferences, seminars, workshops and courses, and the preparation of joint publications,"²⁰³ .

Among the active Belarusian universities developing cooperation with Chinese partners is **the Brest State Technical University**

²⁰² BSU enters a new level of cooperation with Peking University [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bgu-vyhodit-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-s-pekinskim-universitetom-557082-2023/>

²⁰³ Student exchange, joint programs: BSU and leading Chinese universities have identified new areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-sovmestnye-programmy-bgu-i-veduschie-vuzy-kitaja-opredelili-novye-vektory-557224-2023/>

(BrSTU). In January 2023, BrSTU signed a cooperation agreement in the field of education, science, and culture with the Guangdong Construction Vocational and Technical Institute to combine the efforts of the two educational institutions for the joint training of qualified specialists in the interests of the economies of both countries. The parties plan to create a joint educational program for the training of Chinese students. The idea is to recruit study groups where students will spend the first two years studying in China and then in Belarus. The Chinese side is particularly interested in the specialty of architecture. "These joint educational programs are very popular because they allow students to obtain two diplomas in one cycle of study,"²⁰⁴ .

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

Finally, another set of documents signed in early March 2023 in Beijing concerned cooperation in **the media and information sphere**. This includes **a cooperation agreement between the Belarusian and**

²⁰⁴ Brest University and Guangdong Institute to jointly train architects and builders [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-universitet-i-guandunskij-institut-budut-sovmestno-gotovit-arhitektorov-i-stroitelej-543128-2023/>

Chinese news agencies BELTA and Xinhua. In this regard, it should be noted that the first cooperation agreement between BELTA and Xinhua was signed back in January 1993 and then re-signed in June 2018. The new document, which is already the third of its kind, "provides for the exchange of text news, photos, and videos, mutual support, and promotion on the Internet and social networks."²⁰⁵ . The agencies agreed to exchange experience and train journalists, editors, and technical staff to improve their professional skills.

All these initiatives and projects, adopted in the spring of this year in the relevant documents, indicate that cooperation between Belarus and China as a whole is tending to strengthen in all areas, but there is still great untapped potential that will be realized in the new era of exemplary relations and an all-weather, comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

²⁰⁵ BELTA and Xinhua signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation and intensify news exchange [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belta-i-sinhua-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ukreplenii-sotrudnichestva-i-aktivizatsii-obmena-novostiami-553192-2023/>

On the foundation of new ideas

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation (IGC) was held, during which a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China was formed and unique opportunities and mechanisms were created to deepen practical cooperation across the entire spectrum of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that "our common goal should be a new growth point for trade turnover of at least 120% compared to the previous [2022] year"²⁰⁶. Speaking more specifically about the most important areas of Belarusian-Chinese economic cooperation, four key issues should be highlighted in this regard.

First, the expansion and diversification of trade, the systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers, and the launch of channels for the procurement of important goods through Chinese operators. Second, increasing rail container transport for the delivery of Belarusian goods to China and Chinese equipment to Belarus, ensuring the operation of green rail corridors, and organizing subsidized reverse trains from Belarus to major logistics centers in China and back. Thirdly, "deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed car manufacturing, electric vehicle assembly, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, and the development of bio and digital technologies"²⁰⁷. Fourth, financing strategic investment projects within

²⁰⁶ Snockkov: A new model of strategic partnership between Belarus and China has been formed [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-sformirovana-novaja-model-strategicheskogo-partnerstva-belarusi-i-kitaja-576417-2023/>

²⁰⁷ Chervyakov highlighted important areas of cooperation for strengthening relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-vydelil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlja-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

the framework of China's preferential credit lines, their effective implementation, and the expansion of credit, financial, and technical and economic cooperation, including the procurement of necessary equipment. It should be recalled that "at the end of 2022, the trade turnover between the two countries [Belarus and China] reached a record high of \$ 5.8 billion. The first five months of this year saw a 1.5-fold increase in trade turnover. Exports of Belarusian goods to China are growing at record rates: in 2022, they increased 1.8 times, and in the first five months of 2023, they increased 1.6 times."²⁰⁸ .

During the fifth meeting of the JPC, the parties agreed to focus their efforts on the implementation of major development and cooperation projects, including the provision of grant assistance by the Chinese government. In this context, it should be emphasized that 15 important socially oriented projects worth a total of more than 1.5 billion Chinese yuan have already been implemented in Belarus. "About a dozen new strategic projects are in the works, including infrastructure development of the Great Stone Industrial Park and the supply of necessary technological equipment with total financing from the of over 900 million Chinese yuan,"²⁰⁹ . At the same time, the parties plan to accelerate the implementation of these projects, including two international-class sports facilities – a stadium and a swimming pool – by September 2024.

As for other production cooperation projects, in July 2023, the Belarusian Ministry of Industry and the Chinese corporation China

²⁰⁸ Snippkov: Belarus and China are showing the world an exemplary model of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-belarus-i-kitaj-demonstrirujut-vsemu-miru-obraztsovyi-primer-sotrudnichestva-576412-2023/>

²⁰⁹ Belarus and China agree on implementation of major development and cooperation projects [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-dogovorilis-o-realizatsii-krupnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiia-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach) signed an action plan to develop cooperation "in priority areas of cooperation in the production of agricultural and municipal equipment, machine tool building, and the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises."²¹⁰ They even discussed the creation of separate models of agricultural machinery, the possibility of organizing the production of various equipment, the participation of Sinomach subsidiaries in the modernization of industrial enterprises in Belarus, and the supply of components for Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural machinery.

In the same month, July 2023, the Chinese company Baimen and OJSC Slutsk Cheese Factory signed a strategic commercial agreement to establish a joint venture for the production of dairy products this year in the administrative center of Liaoning Province, Shenyang. It should be noted that this Chinese company is a major exporter of Belarusian dairy products (in 2022, it exported products worth about\$ 50 million. It is implementing a project for the processing of colostrum and the production of whey protein at the Great Stone industrial park²¹¹ . By establishing a joint venture in Shenyang, Baimen and Slutsk Cheese Factory intend to further scale up the project, systematically expanding the range of dairy products manufactured for Chinese consumers.

And here's another interesting fact. In July 2023, Bobruiskagromash Holding Management Company held talks with YTO Group Corporation, a Chinese manufacturer of agricultural and construction equipment that is part of the Sinomach comprehensive

²¹⁰ The Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese company Sinomach signed an action plan for the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-i-kitaiskaja-kompanija-sinomach-podpisali-plan-meroprijatij-po-razvitiyu-576228-2023/>

²¹¹ A Belarusian-Chinese dairy production enterprise will be established in China this year [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-kitajskoe-predpriatie-po-proizvodstvu-molochnoj-produksii-sozdatut-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

machine-building conglomerate, "on the organization of joint production of self-propelled mowers and municipal vehicles, as well as the supply of components for Bobruiskagromash equipment from China."²¹² . The parties will prepare the necessary documents for this project in the near future.

A separate topic in this context is the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone." It should be recalled that 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the announcement by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), of the Belt and Road Initiative, which marked a new era in economic relations between countries and brought together more than 100 countries around the world. The Republic of Belarus was among the first participants in this mega-project, where the Great Stone Park is actively developing, serving as a hub for the initiative and already uniting more than 100 residents from 15 countries. Suffice it to say that "the actual investment in the park has already exceeded \$ 830 million, and the volume of declared investments amounts to \$ 1.34 billion"²¹³ . In the first quarter of 2023 alone, 11 new companies with investment projects in logistics, e-commerce, medicine, biotechnology, instrument engineering, research and development, and design work were registered here. More precisely, "the number of residents of the Veliky Kamen industrial park has now reached 108 < ...>. Production volume [for the first three months of 2023] increased by 1.3 times, revenue from sales of goods by 1.8 times,

²¹² Bobruiskagromash and Chinese company YTO Group Corporation discussed prospects for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-yto-group-corporation-obsudili-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-575895-2023/>

²¹³ The declared investments of residents of the "Big Stone" are estimated at more than \$1.3 billion [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajavlenye-investitsii-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-otsenivaiutsia-bolee-chem-v-13-mlrd-568784-2023/>

exports of goods by 1.2 times, net foreign direct investment by 2 times, and tax payments by 3.5 times"²¹⁴ .

One of the priority areas for Great Stone today is machine building. It should be noted that the cluster of enterprises operating in this field is the largest in the park and includes more than 20 projects. In particular, there are joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprises producing internal combustion engines and gearboxes for passenger and freight transport. Some of the Chinese residents of the " " produce construction equipment based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant, while a Belarusian resident manufactures glass for all types of ground transport, which is in high demand in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Another relevant area for Great Stone is high-tech and competitive manufacturing, with companies engaged in research and development. Currently, more than 25 such companies are registered in the park.

Speaking of new residents, it should be noted that in March 2023, another company was registered in the Veliki Kamen industrial park – IRBI LLC, whose investment project is innovative and import-substituting in nature. "The park resident will produce monoblocks, mini-computers for offices and industrial computers, as well as components for computer equipment. In addition to production, the company will implement its own application software complexes,"²¹⁵ . These products will be intended for the domestic market of Belarus, as well as exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

²¹⁴ Ministry of Economy: 11 new companies registered in the "Great Stone" in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minekonomiki-za-i-kvartal-v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrirovano-11-novyh-kompanij-567541-2023/>

²¹⁵ New resident of Veliki Kamen to manufacture computers and components [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompjutery-i-komplektujuschie-558151-2023/>

In April 2023, another resident was registered in the industrial park – Sinobelmedica LLC, initiated by the Chinese company Shanghai Electric Medical Group, part of the largest manufacturer of energy and industrial equipment, Shanghai Electric Group Company Limited. The new resident "will implement a project to create a modern high-tech production facility for X-ray tubes in the industrial park. The sale of products on the Belarusian market will contribute to import substitution."²¹⁶

In May 2023, during negotiations between the park's management and a delegation from Gansu Province, issues related to the development of traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus were discussed, as well as "the possibility of creating a center for traditional Chinese medicine and developing pharmaceutical production in the park," according to²¹⁷. And in June 2023, an agreement was reached on cooperation between the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei on exploring "the possibility of creating a biotechnology cluster in the Great Stone Industrial Park for the production of medicines, vaccines, insulin, CAR-T technologies<...>. Work is underway to determine the prospects for localizing the range of drugs produced by Jifei"²¹⁸.

And in the same June 2023, the Belarusian and Chinese sides announced that they would continue to attract investors with large projects to the Great Stone Industrial Park, with a special focus on the

²¹⁶ New resident of the "Great Stone" plans to manufacture X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskih-trubok-560903-2023/>

²¹⁷ A delegation from China's Gansu Province will explore the possibility of developing pharmaceutical production in "Big Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsija-kitajskoi-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiia-farmproizvodstv-v-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>

²¹⁸ The Ministry of Health and Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei intend to sign a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-dzhifei-namereny-podpisat-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-569796-2023/>

development of traditional Chinese medicine at the park site. In addition, "the ministries of economy of the two countries and the largest shareholder companies of the Industrial Park Development Company agreed to continue active work to attract anchor investors with large projects to Great Stone, organize new production facilities in high demand, particularly in the fields of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, and increase the localization of existing production facilities of residents,"²¹⁹ . The parties will systematically and pragmatically improve the investment environment, consistently eliminate emerging development risks, and bring the park to a new level of development, strengthening its position as a central Belarusian-Chinese project and an international industrial cluster with an eye on the Eurasian Economic Union market.

At the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, which took place in July 2023, the parties discussed, among other things, the dynamics of mutual contacts in the field of education in order to strengthen direct inter-university ties and implement a number of large-scale joint educational and scientific projects. Among the promising areas of cooperation, the meeting participants noted the following: training of personnel and expansion of the practice of implementing joint educational programs in innovative specialties by leading universities in Belarus and China; cooperation in the creation of digital platforms providing access to educational resources for the population; joint efforts to develop norms and standards for the digitalization of education; exploring the possibility

²¹⁹ Belarus and China will continue to attract anchor investors with large projects to "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. — 2023. — URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-prodolzhat-privlekat-v-velikij-kamen-jakornyh-investorov-s-krupnymi-proektami-569986-2023/>

of establishing an association of higher education institutions in the two countries.

It should be noted that, to date, more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have been signed between educational institutions in Belarus and China, accounting for about 10 percent of the total number of inter-university agreements in force between Belarusian higher education institutions. "Nine joint educational and scientific structures (three laboratories, four centers, and two institutes) are also operating on the basis of educational institutions in the two countries, and 40 joint educational programs are being implemented, 10 of which were developed in the last two years, with six of them scheduled to start in the 2022/2023 academic year. The possibility of implementing 20 more joint educational programs and organizing joint training of highly qualified scientific personnel is being explored."²²⁰ . In the fall of this year, the educational authorities of the two countries plan to approve a plan for the development of academic and scientific exchanges for 2023-2025, within the framework of which new concrete steps will be taken for constructive interaction between Belarusian universities and Chinese partners.

The Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) is among the active participants in this cooperation. Back in April 2023, the Belarusian university discussed promising areas of partnership with members of the Guangdong Union for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, BSTU signed an agreement on cooperation and the creation of a joint laboratory for applied technologies with the Guangdong

²²⁰ Bahanovich: Education ensures intellectual, cultural, and linguistic rapprochement between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bahanovich-obrazovanie-obespechivaet-intellektualnoe-kulturnoe-i-iazvkovoe-sblizhenie-belarusi-i-kitaia-576391-2023/>

Vocational and Technical College of Light Industry. "The parties agreed to organize academic exchanges and summer schools, and discussed the prospects for contacts in the fields of polymers, functional coatings, paper production technology, and other areas,"²²¹. Documents were also signed on the implementation of joint educational programs with the Guangdong Professional College of Industry and Trade in Nanhu and the Guangdong Vocational and Technical College of Communications. A bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was signed with the Ningbo International Science and Innovation Center to jointly develop modern polymer composite materials, elastomers and plastics, and additive technologies.

In May 2023, BSTU signed a cooperation agreement with Kunshan Institute of Industrial Technology to establish joint Belarusian-Chinese transfer centers in the field of high technologies and 3D modeling. The agreement stipulates that "every year, the Belarusian side will select at least 10 projects to be financed by the PRC in order to develop cooperation in the field of high technology"²²². In addition, the parties agreed to establish a joint university, "Kunshan-Minsk," based at the Belarusian State Technical University, so that students can study part of the time in China and part in Belarus, ultimately receiving two degrees. Another interesting idea is to establish a biomedical center in the Minsk City Technopark in cooperation with Chinese companies, where testing technologies and drugs for the treatment of human and animal diseases will be developed.

²²¹ The educational and scientific potential of BSTU presented in Guangdong Province, China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obrazovatelny-i-nauchny-potentsial-bgtu-prezentovan-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-563887-2023/>

²²² Investments, creation of a joint university and biomedical center. Kunshan delegation visits BSTU [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-universiteta-i-tsentra-biomeditsiny-delegatsija-kunshanja-posetila-569539-2023/>

In short, an agro-industrial complex related to vaccines will be developed.

Another Belarusian university that will continue its close cooperation with Chinese partners in 2023 is the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSURI). In July this year, BSUIR opened a Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory for external electromagnetic effects in Minsk in cooperation with the North China Research Institute of Electromagnetic Protection. One of the key tasks of the new laboratory is to develop a finished product that is of practical interest and in demand on the global technology market, "conduct fundamental and applied research, implement its results, facilitating training and professional development, and organizing internships for engineering and scientific personnel from BSUIR and its partner institute, ²²³ , as well as strengthening international cooperation between scientists and specialists for joint scientific research within the framework of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

As for Chinese universities, Liaoning University, which became a partner of Brest State University named after A.S. Pushkin in July 2023, and Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) are highly interested in cooperation with Belarusian partners. In particular, the agreement between BrSTU and Liaoning University "provides for academic exchanges, joint educational programs, the implementation of scientific projects, and socio-cultural interaction. We plan to fill the agreement with real activities and develop a roadmap in the future," said²²⁴ . For example, Chinese students will be trained in "Smart

²²³ Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory opened at BSUIR [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-kitajskaja-nauchno-issledovatel'skaja-laboratorija-otkrylas-v-bguir-576810-2023/>

²²⁴ Brest universities signed cooperation agreements with Liaoning University [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vuzy-bresta-podpisali-soglasheniya-o-sotrudnichestve-s-liaoninskim-universitetom-576902-2023/>

Transport" at the faculties of mechanical engineering and information technology.

Returning to the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, we note that the participants in this discussion proposed to take scientific and technical cooperation to a new level and considered the possibilities of creating joint high-tech production facilities in a number of areas. "Such areas <...>²²⁵. By creating a complete innovation cycle – from idea to high-tech production – the parties will expand promising areas of partnership, interacting on the educational foundation of new ideas, which ensures the intellectual rapprochement of Belarus and China. In addition, all these facts indicate that the new model of strategic partnership between the two countries, including trade, economic, scientific, technical, and educational cooperation, formed during the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation, is beginning to take shape in the form of concrete innovations for the benefit of both nations.

²²⁵ Shlychkov: Joint projects with China will enable the creation of new high-tech industries [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shlychkov-realizatsiya-sovmestnyh-proektov-s-kitaem-pozvolit-vyjti-na-sozdanie-novyh-576315-2023/>

Interaction between regions is reaching a new level

In March 2023, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted a joint statement at the highest level on the basic principles for developing exemplary relations of an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries in a new era. At the same time, the parties signed a plan for the Year of Belarusian and Chinese Regions in 2023. This document "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives to attract at least \$150 million in direct Chinese investment to each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026"²²⁶. In September 2023, the third meeting of the working group on interregional trade and economic cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission was held in the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone," the third meeting of the working group on interregional trade and economic cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, at which current issues of cooperation between the regions of the two countries and prospects for its development were discussed. The parties noted that certain economic indicators of cooperation between Belarus and China have reached a fairly high level. "In the first half of 2023, mutual trade turnover exceeded \$ 4 billion, with Belarusian exports approaching the milestone of \$ 1 billion"²²⁷.

The Minsk region is one of the active participants in deepening trade, economic, scientific, technical, and social and cultural

²²⁶ Zalessky, B. New realities for partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation in the context of economic mobilization / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. – P. 13.

²²⁷ Chebotar: Belarus aims to expand trade and economic cooperation with regions of the PRC [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-belarus-natselena-na-rasshirenie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-regionami-knr-590444-2023/>

cooperation between the regions of the two countries. In 2022, trade turnover between the Belarusian capital region and China exceeded \$2 billion, with exports from the Minsk region accounting for almost \$1 billion. As of early 2023, the list of products supplied to China from the Minsk region already exceeded one hundred items. "Products from milk processing enterprises and other municipal enterprises in the region are in particularly high demand. All milk processing enterprises of the Minoblmyasomolprom holding company, as well as the Slutsk and Stolbtsy meat processing plants, have export licenses,"²²⁸. In the first five months of this year, the capital region has already provided export supplies to China worth more than \$500 million.

Among the interesting partners of the Minsk region in China, it is worth noting **Guangdong Province**, which has a population of over 127 million and is attractive not only as a market for products but also as a supplier of technology in the fields of mechanical engineering and agriculture. This province is one of the most developed in China, with powerful machine-building and processing companies operating there. In 2022, the parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the cooperation agreement. In May 2023, the Belarusian region and the Chinese province agreed on prospects for cooperation. Currently, the roadmap for the development of bilateral relations is being supplemented and updated. It should be noted that "in the first half of 2023, trade turnover between the regions grew by 20%."²²⁹ Exports reached Br646.2 million. Poultry meat, beef, and flax fiber are supplied to China from the Minsk region. Imports are mainly automatic data

²²⁸ What products from the Minsk region may appear on the Chinese market in the near future [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://mlvn.by/01032023/kakava-produkcziva-minskoj-oblasti-v-blizhajshee-vremya-mozhet-povavitsva-na-rynke-kitava/>

²²⁹ The Minsk Regional Executive Committee discussed a roadmap for cooperation with the Chinese province of Guangdong [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskom-oblispolkome-obsudili-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-guandun-583608-2023/>

processing machines, textiles, and auto parts. In addition, the parties are discussing the issue of attracting investment from Guangdong Province to the economy of the Minsk region, as well as options for cooperation between the largest companies in the production of household appliances and automobiles, including electric vehicles, ²³⁰at production sites located in preferential zones of the Minsk region, such as the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone," where "12 new residents were added" in the first nine months of 2023.

As for another partner of the Minsk region in China, **Zhejiang Province**, the parties intend to expand cooperation in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. As is well known, a corresponding center has been established on the basis of the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital. In June 2023, during negotiations between delegations from the Zhejiang Provincial Health Committee and the Main Health Department of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, the directions for the development of this center were discussed, including "the supply of medicines from China and the possibility of training doctors from the capital region in new methods." ²³¹The Belarusian side also proposed to consider the organization of joint production of biologically active additives and herbal medicines. In addition, there is a task to expand the capabilities of the aforementioned Traditional Chinese Medicine Center, which already offers procedures such as acupuncture, manual therapy, and massage.

²³⁰ The Ministry of Industry and Trade explained why Guangdong Province is of interest to the region's economy [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minoblispolkome-rasskazali-chem-dlja-ekonomiki-oblasti-interesna-kitajskaia-provintsija-guandun-593552-2023/>

²³¹ Minsk Region and Zhejiang Province intend to develop cooperation in the field of traditional medicine [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaia-oblast-i-provintsija-chzhetszjan-namerenv-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-traditsionnoi-574675-2023/>

Finally, one of the promising partners of the Minsk region among Chinese regions is **the city of Chongqing**, the only municipality in China under central government control, which is also the economic center of the upper Yangtze River basin, home to more than 32 million people. This city is a stronghold of China's development strategy in the western part of the country and a key point of the Belt and Road Initiative. Logistics hubs, ports, and customs infrastructure are being built here to participate in the development of the China-Europe Express logistics network. Chongqing is a modern manufacturing base in China, with a complete chain of electronic and information industries and automobile manufacturing. Suffice it to say that in 2022, more than two million cars were produced here, and 284,000 units were exported.

As for interregional ties, Chongqing and the Minsk region established sister city relations in 2017. With the launch of the regular China Railway Express "Chongqing-Minsk" service, trade between the two sides has been growing every year. "In 2022, imports and exports between Chongqing and Belarus exceeded 500 million yuan, an increase of 54.8% year-on-year. Belarus is an important supplier of meat products and butter to Chongqing. Belarusian dairy products and confectionery are very popular among the city's residents,"²³². In 2023, the parties are taking new concrete steps to further deepen trade and economic cooperation and establish humanitarian and cultural contacts. In particular, as part of the 2023 China Goods and Services Exhibition, which took place in late June and early July this year in the Great Stone Industrial Park, where about 180 Chinese companies presented their products, a thematic exhibition of the Chongqing Export Goods

²³² More than 20 enterprises from Chongqing will participate in the Chinese Goods and Services Exhibition in "Big Stone" [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bole-20-predpriyatij-iz-chuntsina-primut-uchastie-v-vystavke-kitajskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-velikom-kamne-573747-2023/>

Exhibition Pavilion was also held. More than 20 city enterprises displayed their machine-building products, including cars, motorcycles, and components, on an area of about 300 square meters. In addition, official representatives of the Minsk region and Chongqing "discussed cooperation in the field of machine building, food supplies to the Chinese region, and logistics."²³³

The Vitebsk region is also among the active participants in Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation. In 2022, it almost doubled its exports to China, which amounted to more than \$55 million. Back in 2006, the Belarusian region's exports to China consisted of only 12 large items, 97 percent of which were synthetic yarns. "By the end of 2021, the export basket of the Vitebsk region had expanded to 28 items, with agricultural products (meat, milk, and dairy products) accounting for about 70 percent,"²³⁴. Today, these supplies also include dry confectionery, rapeseed oil, polyethylene, acrylic yarn, glass fiber, flax processing and woodworking products, peat, and alcoholic beverages.

However, recently, cooperation between the Vitebsk region and China has gone beyond trade, as the parties are moving to the next level—technology exchange, assistance in refining technologies, research, and developing new types of products"²³⁵ in order to attract investors, invest Vitebsk funds in China, and master new technologies.

²³³ Machine building, medicine, tourism: Minsk Region and Chongqing discuss areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-meditsina-turizm-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-574541-2023/>

²³⁴ Mishin, A. What are the prospects for cooperation between the Vitebsk region and the provinces of China? / A. Mishin // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/analitik-obvasnit-kakovy-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-vitebskov-oblasti-i-provintsiv-kitava/>

²³⁵ Subbotin: Cooperation with China goes beyond trade and into investment projects [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitaem-vyhodit-za-ramki-kupli-prodazhi-v-ploskost-investproektov-598640-2023/>

In addition, the focus of development is on the educational, scientific, and cultural segments. It should be noted that the Vitebsk region has signed eight bilateral documents – agreements, protocols, and programs – on cooperation, and regular contacts have been established and are maintained at the level of executive authorities, organizations, and companies with four provinces and one city in China. In addition, 19 bilateral documents on cooperation between cities and districts of the Vitebsk region and Chinese partners have been signed.

The most intensive interaction in the northern region of Belarus is with **Heilongjiang Province**, located in northern China, where rice is grown and agriculture is generally well developed. Over the past 18 years, the parties have created a solid legal basis for their relations: 1) Agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian, cultural, and other areas (2005); 2) Agreement on the establishment of sister city relations (2011); 3) Program for the Development of Cooperation for 2016-2020. "Twin city agreements with cities in this region of China were signed by Polotsk, Novopolotsk, and Vitebsk,"²³⁶. In May 2023, at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovation. Investment. Prospects" in Vitebsk, enterprises from Heilongjiang Province expressed interest in partnership ties with Vitebsk meat producers, and also "look forward to establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with Orsha and Dubrovno flax processors in the near future, share their experience and discuss opportunities for supplying modern equipment,"²³⁷. And in June of this

²³⁶ Pushnyakova, A. Food products, MDF boards: Vitebsk region to present its potential in Harbin in June / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/prodovolstvennye-tovary-mdf-plity-vitebskaja-oblast-predstavit-v-ijune-v-harbine-potentsial-regiona-567209-2023/>

²³⁷ Pushnyakova, A. Chinese industrialists intend to establish cooperation with enterprises in the Vitebsk region / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskie-promyshlenniki-namereny-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-s-predpriyatiyami-vitebskoj-oblasti-567149-2023/>

year, at the international trade and economic exhibition in Harbin, the administrative center of Heilongjiang Province, a memorandum of intent was signed to establish friendly ties between the Vitebsk-based Meat and Dairy Products concern and an enterprise from the city of Suichang in the same province. In addition, the Belarusian side is interested in cooperation in the field of electrical equipment and instrument engineering, as Chinese partners have extensive expertise in this area. So, new promising projects in this regional cooperation may appear in the near future.

Another new partner for the Vitebsk region in China is **Jiangxi Province**, with which the Belarusian region signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, logistics, investment, economy, education, healthcare, sports, and tourism in October 2022. "As a further practical step, it has been decided to establish direct cooperation between the Vitebsk FEZ and the special economic zones of Jiangxi Province and their residents in order to explore the possibility of setting up joint production facilities in Belarus and the use of cross-border trade mechanisms by Belarusian exporters to China,"²³⁸. They also discussed expanding the supply of Belarusian products to China via the Orsha-Nanchang reverse container train and exchanging practical experience in the investment sphere. The city of Orsha has established cooperation with the administrative center of this province, Nanchang, in the field of innovative and traditional medicine at the level of individual medical institutions. In December 2022, a document of intent on cooperation was signed by Orsha Central Polyclinic Hospital No. 2 and the Hongdu Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, which "provides for the

²³⁸ SEZ "Vitebsk" and special economic zones of Jiangxi Province will establish direct cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-osobve-ekonomicheskie-zony-provintsii-tszjansi-naladajat-prjamoe-vzaimodeistvie-566987-2023/>

exchange of practical and scientific experience, ²³⁹medical technologies, mutual internships and advanced training for medical workers, as well as the implementation of projects in the field of traditional Chinese medicine at the Orsha Central Polyclinic, including physiotherapy, reflexology, electroacupuncture, acupuncture, and qigong."

As for the third Chinese partner of the Vitebsk region, **Shandong Province**, the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation back in 2005, and in October 2019, they adopted an Agreement on the Establishment of Friendship and Cooperation Relations, in which they "identified the development of an effective mechanism for interaction in the field of trade and investment and the development of cooperative ties as priorities for the development of partnership relations..."²⁴⁰ . In February 2023, an agreement was signed on the establishment of friendly relations between Novopolotsk and the city of Liaocheng in Shandong Province. The parties noted the importance of developing interregional ties as one of the key links in bilateral cooperation. The implementation of a number of joint projects was also discussed. It should be noted that in order to strengthen Belarusian-Chinese ties, the Vitebsk region and Shandong province regularly hold joint events and sign bilateral documents. "Agreements on establishing friendly relations at the municipal level between the cities of Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao, Polotsk and Dezhou, and Glubokoe and Jining have been signed,"²⁴¹ . In September 2023, three

²³⁹ Orsha and Nanchang, China, agree to exchange medical expertise [Electronic resource]. – 2022. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/orsha-i-kitajskij-nanchan-dogovorilis-ob-obmene-meditsinskim-opytom-540364-2022/>

²⁴⁰ Zaleski, B. From regions to innovation. Features of the Belarusian-Chinese strategic partnership / Boris Zaleski. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. – P. 11.

²⁴¹ Novopolotsk and Liaocheng, China, establish friendly ties [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novopolotsk-i-kitajskij-liaochen-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svazi-550863-2023/>

more memoranda of cooperation were signed: in innovation, education, and youth policy. "Based on these and the results of the negotiations, roadmaps for cooperation on specific projects and areas of activity will be developed."²⁴² .

Finally, in November 2023, as part of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, which was attended by more than 10 enterprises from the northern region of Belarus, including the Vitebsk Meat and Dairy Products Concern, the Polotsk Dairy Plant, the Verkhnedvinsk Butter and Cheese Factory, the Lepel branch of the Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant, the Vitba Confectionery Factory, the Naftan Plant, the Polotsk-Steklovolokno enterprise, and the Orsha Linen Combine textile manufacturer, The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a memorandum of cooperation with Zonghai Business Management (Jinan) on the creation of a Chinese Industrial Park in Vitebsk and a Belarusian Industrial Park in Shandong Province, Qingdao, where companies will be able to showcase their products and work out issues related to their sale in various regions of China. This will be one of the leading platforms from which Vitebsk goods will be distributed . It will be a growth point for exports from the Vitebsk region, which they want to "maximize, and not only for the sale of goods. <...> This is probably one of the most recent and promising projects"²⁴³ . All this suggests that in 2024, the Vitebsk region intends to further develop cooperation with Chinese regions in a

²⁴² Kochetov, S. Vitebsk Region and China's Shandong Province intend to develop and expand partnership in innovation, education, and youth policy / S. Kochetov // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: https://www.vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/vitebskaya_oblast_i_kitavskaya_provintsija_shandun_namereny_razvivat_i_rasshirvat_partnerstvo_v_inno/

²⁴³ Subbotin: Import exhibition in Shanghai helps companies promote themselves and find partners in China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-vvstavka-importa-v-shanhae-pomogaet-predpriyatijam-zajavit-o-sebe-i-najti-partnerov-v-kitae-598641-2023/>

wide range of areas, including the economy, trade, science, technology, and education, healthcare, and sports.

Now let's return to the 6th China International Import Expo 2023 in Shanghai, where **Brest Region** Day was held in November this year, showcasing the economic, cultural, tourism, education, and healthcare potential of the Belarusian region, with a focus on the export of goods and services to China. It should be noted that "more than 150 countries representing regions of Asia, Africa, and Europe" participated in this exhibition forum²⁴⁴, where various thematic sections were presented, including the automotive industry, high-tech equipment and information technology, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, trade in services, food and agricultural products. In this regard, the participation of Belarusian companies in the import exhibition in Shanghai is of strategic importance. After all, China is one of the largest and most dynamically developing markets in the world and "provides an opportunity for Belarusian companies to broaden their horizons and establish business ties with potential partners and buyers, including Chinese state-owned corporations"²⁴⁵. An important detail: while 27 organizations from the food industry, logistics, science, and education participated in the Belarusian exhibition at the 5th China International Import Expo 2022 in Shanghai, this time more than 70 representatives from Belarus took part in the exhibition.

As for **the Brest region**, it is among the leaders among Belarusian regions in terms of trade and economic relations with China. Suffice it to say that "in the first eight months of this year [2023], the

²⁴⁴ What will Belarus' national exhibition look like at the international import exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kakoi-budet-natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-v-shanhae-582374-2023/>

²⁴⁵ International Import Expo opens in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnaja-vystavka-importa-otkrylas-v-shanhae-597935-2023/>

volume of trade [with China] amounted to almost \$280 million and increased by almost one and a half times. Thanks to contacts with businesses, Chinese direct foreign investment has already grown by 40%.²⁴⁶ . At the import exhibition in Shanghai, Brestchina demonstrated a wide range of goods and services that attracted consumers not only from China but also from other countries. In particular, the Brest Meat Processing Plant, the Berezovsky Meat Canning Plant, the Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, the Luninets Dairy Plant, and the Pruzhany Dairy Plant presented their products for tasting at the collective stand of the Brest Meat Processing Plant. The educational potential of the region was presented by Brest State Technical University, and the medical potential by Brest Regional Clinical Hospital.

²⁴⁷As a result, representatives of the Belarusian region signed 18 bilateral documents at the exhibition: seven agreements, four memoranda, six commercial contracts, and one action plan. They cover various areas, including trade and economic cooperation, cooperation in education, healthcare, and tourism. For example, agreements were signed between the Brest Regional Executive Committee and two corporations involved in the creation of transport and forwarding centers and the development of e-commerce, and between Brest State Technical University and the Hubei Institute of International Business and Economics. As for memoranda on the development of cooperation, they were signed by: the Brest Free Economic Zone and the Brest

²⁴⁶ Chinese partners are interested in setting up manufacturing and logistics companies in the Brest region [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitaiskim-partneram-interesno-sozdanie-proizvodstv-i-logisticheskikh-kompanij-v-brestskoj-oblasti-598059-2023/>

²⁴⁷ Gorodetsky, D. Commercial contracts and new cooperation agreements signed in China / D. Gorodetsky // [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/v-kitae-zakljuchili-kommercheskie-kontrakty-i-novye-soglasheniia-o-sotrudnichestve-8970/>

branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the administration for the management of the Coastal Park of the Comprehensive Bonded Zone in Shenyang, which is the administrative center of Liaoning Province; the Brest Regional Executive Committee's Department of Sports and Tourism and the Belarusian-Chinese Center for Culture and Development of the PRC. Commercial contracts primarily concern the supply of Brest food products, mainly meat and dairy products, and are estimated at more than \$20 million.

A separate conversation is about the sister city relations between the Brest region and its Chinese partners. The Brest region has four sister regions in China: Liaoning, Shanxi, Anhui, and Hubei provinces. In November 2023, representatives of the Belarusian region, in addition to participating in an import exhibition in Shanghai, held active negotiations in **Anhui province**. An agreement on establishing friendly relations with the province was signed back in September 2017. This time, the parties adopted an action plan for the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation for 2023-2025. In addition, agreements were signed to establish sister city relations between Brest and Hefei, Berezovsky District and Benbu City, and the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital agreed to cooperate with Anhui Medical University. We would like to add that Brest and Hefei already intend to draw up a roadmap for cooperation. The main areas for finding common ground are "manufacturing, transport and logistics, education, healthcare, and culture."²⁴⁸ .

Speaking about the economic aspect of cooperation between the sister cities, the Chinese partners are particularly interested in setting up manufacturing and logistics companies in the Belarusian region. In

²⁴⁸ Brest and China's Hefei intend to draw up a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-kitajskij-hefei-namerenv-sostavit-dorozhnyu-kartu-dlja-sotrudnichestva-599168-2023/>

turn, the Belarusian side is "ready to offer services for the conversion of narrow-gauge European railcars to broad gauge, as well as the implementation of a project to create a transport and logistics hub in the Brest region."²⁴⁹ . The thing is, Brest is a key spot on China's "Silk Road" and an important part of the cross-border corridor for the "Freight Trains from China to Europe" project. In addition, Brest is ready to provide the Chinese side with a site for the construction of an educational center. And this is only the beginning of new mutually beneficial joint projects.

All these facts indicate that Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation is gradually reaching a new level of cooperation in the context of an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership. So, in the near future, the parties will demonstrate even more innovative approaches to make it much easier and simpler for the regions to work on joint projects and programs.

²⁴⁹ Brest and Bereza have gained sister cities in the Chinese province of Anhui [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-bereza-obzavelis-pobratimami-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-anhoi-598126-2023/>

Supporting domestic exporters and assisting foreign importers

Back in early March 2023, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of Belarus adopted a Joint Statement on the Further Development of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in a New Era, in which the parties agreed to promote the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation and steadily increase the volume of bilateral trade. One of the tools for expanding and diversifying Belarusian-Chinese trade today is the use of an exchange mechanism, which has been actively developing since 2019.

At the end of 2022, the total value of transactions made by Chinese companies at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) increased by almost 15 percent and amounted to about \$53 million. At the beginning of 2023, the number of participants in trading sessions from China also increased significantly, from 67 to 113, two of which had the status of exchange brokers. "Last year, sawn timber, rapeseed oil, dry milk, wet-bleached leather, and synthetic fibers were supplied to China through the exchange platform. In turn, Belarusian enterprises purchased Chinese-made ferrous metal products and soybean meal on the BUBE,"²⁵⁰.

The positive dynamics of Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade volumes was achieved thanks to active efforts to attract Chinese residents to exchange trading, as well as by creating favorable conditions for representatives of Chinese businesses. In particular, the procedure for accreditation on the exchange was simplified, the possibility of settling transactions in Chinese yuan was provided, and consulting support in Chinese was organized. In addition, special export

²⁵⁰ The total value of deals made by Chinese companies on the BUTB increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-sdelok-kitajskih-kompanij-na-butb-vozroslo-na-14-551264-2023/>

trading sessions focused on the Chinese market were held regularly throughout 2022, enabling Chinese importers to purchase Belarusian sawn timber products with delivery to convenient locations in China. In 2023, BUTB planned to further increase supplies of a range of domestic products to this country. In particular, sawn timber, vegetable oils, and meat and dairy products.

For example, in March 2023, the Chinese company **SUMEC International Trading**, which accounts for about three percent of all imports of wood and sawn timber to China, expressed interest in cooperating with BUTB. The parties considered "two forms of cooperation: the company's participation in exchange trading as a visitor, concluding transactions on its own behalf and at its own expense, or obtaining the status of an exchange broker, allowing it to attract new buyers from China to the Belarusian trading platform"²⁵¹. Currently, SUMEC International Trading's procurement geography is quite diversified. Wood products are imported from Brazil, Canada, Congo, Russia, Finland, and other countries, including Belarus, where the company recently opened a subsidiary. At the same time, the Chinese side is ready to purchase Belarusian sawn timber through the BUAT on a regular basis, provided that the price offers of domestic wood processors are competitive and the regularity of deliveries is guaranteed. It should be recalled that in March 2023, at a special session of the BUHT focused on the Chinese market, Belarusian traders placed orders for the sale of more than 100,000 cubic meters of sawn timber.

In April 2023, the Chinese corporation **Xiamen Xiangyu Group Corporation (XMXYG)**, which is included in Fortune magazine's list

²⁵¹ BUTB has agreed to cooperate with one of the largest Chinese importers of forest products [Electronic resource]. — 2023. — URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-dogovorilas-o-sotrudnichestve-s-odnim-iz-krupnejshih-kitajskih-importerov-lesoproduktsii-553935-2023/>

of the 500 largest companies in the world, and since March 2022, its subsidiary, **Xiamen Xiangyu Superchain Supply Chain Development Co., Ltd.**, has been regularly participating in timber auctions on the Belarusian exchange platform. "During this time, XMYG has purchased almost 10,000 cubic meters of sawn timber worth about \$2 million through the BUTB," said²⁵². Thanks to the exchange, the company has already purchased four trains of sawn timber and is determined to continue cooperation in the same vein, steadily increasing the volume of purchases. XMYG is also interested in expanding the list of goods that the corporation purchases on the BUTB, and not only in the forestry segment. This involves the possibility of participating in tenders on with agricultural products, primarily rapeseed oil, which is in stable demand in China and was already supplied to the Chinese market through the BTB in 2022. At that time, more than \$42 million worth of rapeseed oil was sold, including through import deals made by Chinese participants. So, given the significant production capacity of Belarusian oil extraction plants, this area could become a new growth point for the Chinese corporation in Belarus.

In May 2023, another partner of the BSE interested in cooperation with the Belarusian exchange platform was the Chinese company **Beijing Huibaocheng Technology**. This importer purchases dairy products and vegetable oils, which are widely used in the Chinese food industry. The company plans to "purchase about 10,000 tons of rapeseed oil on the exchange every month, with the possibility of

²⁵² Chinese corporation ready to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaiskaja-korporatsija-gotova-naraschivat-zakupki-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-cherez-butb-560768-2023>

increasing supplies in the future"²⁵³. The Chinese importer is interested in Belarusian dry milk, so it will actively participate in the auction.

In June 2023, another large Chinese importing company, **Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology**, announced its intention to increase purchases of sawdust products on the BUTB. The fact is that in the first five months of 2023, the company has already purchased about 53,000 cubic meters of this product through the exchange, which is almost twice as much as last year's figure for the same period. But this is far from the limit. By the end of 2023, "it is planned to purchase at least another 20,000 cubic meters. Thus, Belarus may become one of the three main markets from which Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology imports wood products"²⁵⁴. Interestingly, in 2022, the company's strategic partners for sawn timber supplies were Russia, Canada, and Sweden, with Belarus ranking only fourth.

Just to remind you, at the start of 2023, there were already 113 Chinese participants in BUTB trading sessions. And as of November 27 of the same year, 152 had already been accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform. "Based on the results of 10 months [of 2023], China became the largest export destination for Belarusian exchange trading participants. <...> As a result, compared to January–October last year, the volume of export transactions increased two and a half times"²⁵⁵ and amounted to almost \$60 million.

²⁵³ BUTB expects to increase supplies of sawn timber, vegetable oils, meat, and dairy products to China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-v-kitaj-pilomaterialov-rastitelnih-masel-mjasa-i-molochki-567273-2023/>

²⁵⁴ A major Chinese importer intends to increase purchases of sawdust products on the BUTB [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyi-kitaiskij-importer-nameren-narashivat-zakupki-piloproduktov-na-butb-571701-2023/>

²⁵⁵ Osmolovsky: BUTB will provide comprehensive support to Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/osmolovskij-butb-okazhet-kompleksnuju-podderzhku-belorusskim-eksporteram-599485-2023/>

One of the primary tasks that the BUTB will tackle in 2024 with its Chinese partners is to expand the range of goods from Belarus and China involved in mutual exchange trading. It should be noted that "Belarusian sawn timber, rapeseed oil, meat products, and milk powder are exported to China through the exchange. At the same time, the exchange mechanism is becoming increasingly popular among Chinese businesses, ensuring high positive dynamics in terms of the total amount of transactions,"²⁵⁶. To further develop these processes in Belarus and China, it is planned to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, primarily producers of import-substituting goods. In addition, further diversification of the product range is expected through targeted work by the BTC with industry associations and chambers of commerce and industry in various regions of China, which "will allow us to establish cooperation with both manufacturers of products in demand in Belarus and potential consumers of Belarusian goods"²⁵⁷.

In particular, in July 2023, the BTB and the **Xinjiang Asia-Europe International Trade Center (AEEX)**, the operator of the **Asia Europa Exchange** electronic trading platform, agreed to increase exports to China. The AEEX will directly attract Chinese importers to Belarusian stock exchanges. At the same time, attention will be focused on "the regions through which the New Silk Road passes. First and foremost, these are Shanghai, Taicang, and Xinjiang,"²⁵⁸, where AEEX

²⁵⁶ BUTB and the Chinese Embassy have identified priorities for cooperation in the trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-posolstvo-kitaja-opredelili-prioritety-vzaimodeistvija-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoi-sfere-594539-2023/>

²⁵⁷ Prospects for the development of exchange trading between Belarus and China were discussed at a business forum in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/perspektivy-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-kitaja-obsudili-na-biznes-forume-v-shanhae-597700-2023/>

²⁵⁸ Xinjiang Asian-European Trade Center to help increase exports to China through the BRI [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL:

has offices that are already establishing cooperation with Chinese business representatives interested in working through the BTB.

In August 2023, the **China National Forestry Industry Corporation** announced its intention to expand cooperation with the BUET, planning not only to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber, but also to sell Chinese-made goods through the Belarusian import substitution platform. The parties also agreed to explore the possibility of importing Belarusian rapeseed oil and dry milk to China as the most liquid commodity items. "In this context, the issue of accrediting the corporation as an exchange broker is also being considered, which will allow it to attract economic entities from other sectors of the economy to the BUTB,"²⁵⁹.

Another fact: in September 2023, the **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region**, which "has four main features: a vast territory, huge reserves of natural resources, highly developed agriculture, and a powerful energy industry," expressed its interest in developing cooperation with the BTB.²⁶⁰ The Chinese side is confident that exchange trading can play a key role in creating favorable conditions for companies from this region of China to do business in Belarus. In this regard, the BTB, with its extensive import and export capabilities, is well placed to facilitate the activities of companies from Inner Mongolia in the Belarusian market.

Finally, in November 2023, as part of the 13th China International Timber Trade Conference, which was held in Nanning,

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sintzjanskij-aziatsko-evropeiskij-torgovji-tsentr-pomozhet-narastit-eksport-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-576501-2023/>

²⁵⁹ China National Forestry Corporation intends to expand cooperation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaiskaja-lesopromyshlennaja-korporatsiia-namerena-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-butb-581070-2023/>

²⁶⁰ Belarus and China discussed prospects for the development of exchange trading [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitiia-birzhevoj-torgovli-590151-2023/>

the administrative center of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a memorandum of cooperation in the field of electronic exchange trading was signed by the BUET and the **China Timber and Forest Products Trading Association (CTWPDA)** to assist Chinese enterprises in entering the Belarusian market. It should be noted that in less than 11 months of 2023, over 467,000 cubic meters of Belarusian sawn timber products were sold on the Chinese market. This is almost five times more than in January-November last year. At the same time, working with domestic suppliers, Chinese importers are actively using the mechanism of exchange-traded targeted transactions, the volume of which has already reached 237,000 cubic meters in just a few months,²⁶¹ . In this regard, the establishment of partnership relations between the BUTB and the CTWPDA will not only help find new buyers for sawn timber produced in Belarus, but will also provide an additional incentive for the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the exchange sector.

In January 2024, a total of 162 Chinese residents were accredited on the BUTB, which is 51 more than in January 2023. "At the same time, the total value of transactions made by Chinese traders increased 2.7 times, from \$\$ 30.4 million in 2022 to \$\$ 80.6 million in 2023,"²⁶² . This was mainly due to exports of Belarusian products. These were mainly supplies of sawn timber, rapeseed oil, dry milk, and petrochemical products. As for imports from China, "Belarusian traders mainly purchased ferrous and non-ferrous metal products through the

²⁶¹ BUTB and the China Timber Trade Association signed a memorandum of cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskaja-assotsiatsija-torgovli-lesom-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-602012-2023/>

²⁶² New broker BUTB to supply import-substituting goods from China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvj-broker-butb-zajmetsja-postavkami-importozameschajuschih-tovarov-iz-kitaja-611688-2024/>

BUET²⁶³. For this reason, the BUTB plans for 2024 include not only further increasing export sales, but also expanding the range of Chinese-made goods. This is especially true given that in 2023, about a quarter of the transactions on the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform were for products of Chinese origin.

Continuing on the topic of import substitution, it should be noted that in January 2024, **Shanghai Duxia Industry and Trade Co. Ltd** became the first exchange broker from China to specialize in the supply of import substitution products on the BUTB and to attract manufacturers of industrial and consumer goods in demand in Belarus to the exchange platform. It should be noted that this Shanghai-based company traditionally manufactures printing machines and equipment for the production and processing of plastic packaging, which are sold not only in China but also exported abroad, mainly to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe. As a broker, BUTB's Chinese partner intends to attract import-substituting goods manufacturers that are in high demand on the Belarusian market to the exchange. These are primarily electrical equipment, household appliances, video and audio recording equipment, measuring instruments, industrial tools, as well as components and spare parts for machines and mechanisms. As a result, the purchasing opportunities of Belarusian participants in the auctions will be significantly expanded, and the appearance of Chinese manufacturing plants on the Belarusian electronic platform will provide more favorable conditions for concluding deals. And one more fact in this regard: the new broker was accredited on the BUTB with the assistance of the exchange's

²⁶³ BUTB and the administration of Shenyang, China, have agreed to cooperate in the field of exchange trading [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-administratsiia-kitaiskogo-shenjiana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-606169-2023/>

representative office in Shanghai, which opened in 2023 to expand the pool of Chinese users of the exchange platform, promote Belarusian goods on the Chinese market, and organize supplies of import-substituting products in demand on the Belarusian market. With the participation of the representative office, 19 new Chinese residents have already been accredited on the BTB.

Incidentally, in the new year, 2024, BUTB has established a partnership with the Chinese holding company **Osell Group**, which brings together a number of electronic trading platforms for Chinese manufacturers and helps them enter foreign markets. The fact is that "the Osell Group's digital ecosystem is used by thousands of companies from various industries and agriculture, and the goal of cooperation with BUTB is to involve Chinese business representatives in cross-border trade on the Belarusian exchange platform"²⁶⁴. And in January of this year, BUTB and Osell Group organized a round table in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, for the business community of this region, given the high level of economic development and significant export potential of this province. It is to be expected that the results of this event will appear in the near future.

Returning to the topic of Belarusian exports to China through the BUGB, it should be noted that this trend will continue to dominate in 2024. This is especially true in terms of successful deliveries of Belarusian woodworking products to the Chinese market. This is evidenced by figures showing that "in 2023, Chinese companies purchased 501,000 cubic meters of sawn timber on the exchange, which is four times more than in 2022. Over 53% of total sales were made through targeted exchange transactions. At the same time, about 30

²⁶⁴ BUTB has begun cooperation with a major Chinese trading platform [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-nachala-sotrudniczat-s-krupnoj-kitajskoj-torgovoj-platfornoj-612305-2024/>

buyers from China regularly participated in the auctions."²⁶⁵ . This year, BUTB will further expand the range of buyers for these supplies in China.

For example, on the eve of 2024, as part of its efforts to diversify sales markets and increase exports of the Belarusian timber industry, BUTB agreed on accreditation with **BNBM Group Forest Products**, a subsidiary of one of the largest construction holding companies in the country – **China National Building Materials Group**, which is one of the leading importers of round timber and sawn timber. Shortly after the first trial purchase, BNBM Group Forest Products plans to gradually increase volumes in line with demand dynamics in China and deliver to warehouses in Changshin (Zhejiang Province) and Chengdu (Sichuan Province), and then ship to end users.

Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology, mentioned above, which became the largest foreign buyer of sawn timber on the BUHT in 2023, plans to scale up its business in Belarus. Last year, the company purchased more than 140,000 cubic meters of sawn timber on the exchange, which is almost four times more than in 2022. In 2024, the company will continue to increase its purchases. "This involves not only increasing imports of sawn timber through the BUTB, but also purchasing other Belarusian goods that are popular in China,"²⁶⁶ . These include milk powder, rapeseed oil, and sugar. In order to further deepen cooperation in the field of exchange trading, the parties also agreed to work on the integration of the BUET platform and the Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology, which already includes banking and logistics

²⁶⁵ . BUTB expands its circle of buyers of sawn timber from China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-krug-pokupatelej-pilomaterialov-iz-kitaja-607633-2023/>

²⁶⁶ The largest foreign buyer of sawn timber on BUTB is ready to scale up its business in Belarus [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnejshij-inostranyj-pokupatel-pilomaterialov-na-butb-gotov-masshtabirovat-biznes-v-belarusi-610932-2024/>

services, will enable Belarusian exporters accredited on the BUTB to better and more effectively promote their products on the Chinese market by interacting with end consumers.

All these facts indicate that in 2024, the use of the exchange mechanism will reach a qualitatively new level of expansion and diversification of Belarusian-Chinese trade and will give a powerful impetus to the all-weather and comprehensive partnership between the two countries in a new era.

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The Forum of University Rectors as a joint platform for innovative approaches

In November 2023, at the First Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China in Minsk, an agreement was signed on the establishment of a Chinese-Belarusian association of universities, which includes more than 80 universities in Belarus and China. At that time, there were more than 560 direct university agreements between the two countries. A plan for the implementation of flagship projects between universities was being prepared for signing. In July 2023, this plan included 35 items, and now there are more than 70. They are constantly being added and expanded. This fact indicates that the new association is truly a new level of quality in Belarusian-Chinese relations in the field of education and scientific research. After all, the parties ultimately aim to "create joint associations of universities with high-tech enterprises in our countries, which will commission scientific research, experimental design work, and commercialization by our university scientists for the economy"²⁶⁷.

Speaking in general terms about humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and China, this association has already become a hallmark in areas such as inter-university cooperation, joint training of specialists, and joint scientific work. In addition, "such an association is of great importance for training even more Sinologists and Belarusian studies specialists who are fluent in the languages of our two countries, who understand Chinese and Belarusian culture,"²⁶⁸ and open up many

²⁶⁷ Belarus and China sign agreement on the creation of a university association [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sozdanii-assotsiatsii-universitetov-600861-2023/>

²⁶⁸ Se Xiaoyun: Chinese-Belarusian university association to become a hallmark of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-siaojun-kitajsko-beloruskaja-assotsiatsija-vuzov-stanet-vizitnoj-kartochkoi-gumanitarnogo-600900-2023/>

opportunities for further development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the field of education. Many Belarusian universities that promote joint educational structures with Chinese partners are among the active participants in the new association. In particular, at that time, seven joint projects were already in operation: three laboratories, two centers, and two institutes. Forty joint educational programs of the first and second levels of higher education are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed over the past two years"²⁶⁹. In this context, we would like to highlight three Belarusian universities: Belarusian State University (BSU), Grodno State University named after Yanka Kupala (GSU), and Brest State Technical University (BSTU).

Let's start with BSU: as of November 2023, "more than 80 cooperation agreements had been signed with 55 Chinese educational institutions, with Chinese citizens accounting for 72% of the total number of foreign students at BSU"²⁷⁰. Since 2007, Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU) has been a strategic partner of the Belarusian university. The most significant project in recent years has been the opening of joint institutes between DPU and BSU. In June 2023, the parties discussed the prospects of holding mirror summer schools at the two universities and opening a new specialization in "Photonics" at DPU-BSU in the 2024/2025 academic year.

In April 2023, Xi'an International Studies University became a new partner of BSU in China. The memorandum of understanding provides for cooperation "in the field of regional studies and country studies of the Eurasian continent, history and ethnic issues of the

²⁶⁹ Zalessky, B. Hope for a positive future. Dynamics of partnership relations in conditions of economic realism / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. – P. 103.

²⁷⁰ "Photonics" and summer schools. BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/fotonika-i-letnie-shkoly-bgu-i-dalianskij-politehnicheskij-universitet-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-571808-2023/>

peoples of Central Asia, and Russian-Soviet Oriental studies."²⁷¹ The Chinese university began operating in 1952 as the Northwest Russian Language College, one of the first institutions to teach foreign languages. It now comprises 23 faculties and educational institutions, with about 20,000 students, master's and doctoral students from 37 countries, and teaches 20 foreign languages, including Belarusian.

In November 2023, BSU signed two new documents with Chinese partners. The first is a memorandum of understanding with Sichuan University of Foreign Languages, which provides for prospects for cooperation in the fields of regional studies, linguistics, and Belarusian studies. After all, a Center for Belarusian Studies has been operating at this Chinese university since 2019. Second, it is an agreement on student exchange with the Chinese University of Political Science and Law, which develops "partnership within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the universities, effective since March 2023, and concerns the training of Chinese university graduates in legal specialties at the BSU master's program,²⁷² and the provision of grant support for the implementation of academic mobility programs." At the same time, the issue of the Chinese university joining the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Research Center, established by BSU in cooperation with Qingdao University, was also considered.

Cooperation with China in the field of education is one of the strategic areas of international cooperation for another Belarusian university, Grodno State University, which signed its first agreement

²⁷¹ BSU and Xi'an International Studies University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-sianskij-universitet-inostrannyh-jazykov-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-563650-2023/>

²⁷² BSU expands partnership with China, signs two new agreements [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirjaet-partnerskie-svjazi-s-kitaem-podpisany-dva-novyh-soglashenija-598631-2023/>

with Chinese partners back in 2001 with the South-Central University of Economics and Law. Today, the Grodno university has 14 partners from different provinces of China. Cooperation is carried out in a wide range of areas: joint educational programs, academic exchanges, and joint research projects. In October 2023, GrSU signed an international cooperation agreement with Shijiazhuang Engineering Vocational College, which provides for long-term cooperation in the implementation of scientific developments in the educational process, the development of scientific potential, and the provision of high-quality professional training for specialists in the field of academic mobility and the development of network-based learning. It remains only to add that over the past five years, more than 500 Chinese citizens have received bachelor's and master's degrees at GrSU, and two postgraduate students from China have successfully defended their doctoral dissertations. Today, more than 100 students from the PRC are studying at the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno²⁷³. And there's more. GrSU is the first Belarusian regional university to offer a three-year Chinese language course. Over the past five years, more than 600 people have completed the course.

As for Brest State Technical University, in November 2023, it signed a cooperation agreement with the Anhui Wenda Institute of Information Engineering. This university, located in the Chinese city of Hefei, became the 15th educational institution in China to sign a cooperation agreement with BrSTU. The partners have outlined initial priorities for mutually beneficial cooperation. In particular, graduates of the Chinese institute will be able to continue their studies at the master's level at the Brest University. In addition, Belarusian and

²⁷³ GSU and Shijiazhuang Engineering College have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grgu-i-shitsziachzhvanskij-inzhenernyi-kolledzh-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-595101-2023/>

Chinese teachers will conduct joint scientific research and develop teaching materials. A more long-term prospect is the creation of joint educational programs. It should be noted that BrSTU has already signed 170 cooperation agreements with universities in 35 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Cooperation with China is one of the priorities. For example, "for more than 15 years, joint training of specialists in the field of road construction, accounting, and automation has been carried out with the Hohhot Professional Institute. Last year, a pilot program for training mechanical engineers was launched with the Hebei Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering () and Xingxiang University (²⁷⁴). The Hebei Institute of International Business and Economics plans to establish a joint program with BrSTU to train students in e-business. In addition, the Brest university has undertaken scientific work in the field of information technology, which is funded by the Belarusian Republican Fund for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. All these facts show that the creation of the Chinese-Belarusian University Association is an important step in the development of inter-university cooperation and serves the interests of the economies of both countries and the development of the Belarusian and Chinese peoples.

In June 2024, the second Forum of Rectors of Belarusian and Chinese Universities was held in Minsk, attended by more than 40 university leaders from both countries, including 18 rectors of Chinese universities. They discussed the prospects for inter-university cooperation, primarily inter-university ties. This includes not only

²⁷⁴ Brest Technical University will cooperate with an institute in Anhui Province, China [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/brestskij-tehnicheskij-universitet-budet-sotrudnichat-s-institutom-kitajskoj-provintsii-anhoi-602188-2023>

training personnel in innovative specialties, but also a wide range of scientific and technical cooperation and youth exchanges.

For reference, there are currently more than 700 bilateral agreements between universities in Belarus and China. Over the past two years alone, more than 200 agreements have been signed. Currently, 40 joint higher education programs are being implemented, 12 of which were launched in the current academic year. Another 20 joint educational programs are being developed, including programs for training highly qualified scientific personnel"²⁷⁵. In addition, 13 joint educational and scientific structures are already operating at higher education institutions in the two countries, including six laboratories, five biological centers, and two institutes.

Speaking about the second Forum of Rectors of Belarusian and Chinese Universities, we would like to note that the discussion of topical issues in the field of promising scientific research and the introduction of innovative teaching methods for training competitive and professional specialists in the context of the current globalization took place within the framework of two sections – "Innovative models of cooperation between universities in China and Belarus" and "Chinese-Belarusian cooperation in the field of fundamental sciences." Eight documents were also signed at the forum, which "provide for assistance in organizing the exchange of scientific information and students, work on joint educational and research projects, as well as information on training programs, scientific and educational events..."²⁷⁶. These include agreements on academic and scientific

²⁷⁵ International Innovative Youth Forum to be held in Minsk in 2025 [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezhdunarodnyi-innovatsionnyi-molodezhnyi-forum-proidet-v-minske-v-2025-godu-643825-2024/>

²⁷⁶ Eight documents on cooperation between Belarusian and Chinese universities were signed at the Rectors' Forum [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vosem-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-mezhdu-vuzami-belarusi-i-kitaja-podpisano-na-forume-rectorov-643857-2024/>

cooperation between the Belarusian State Medical University and Peking University, on cooperation between Minsk State Linguistic University and Shanghai International Studies University; memoranda of understanding between the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Chongqing Polytechnic University, the Belarusian State Technological University and Liaoning University, the Belarusian State Economic University and Zhejiang University of Foreign Languages.

New opportunities for cooperation have also been achieved between Belarusian State University (BSU) and Peking University (PKU). Incidentally, this Chinese university was founded in 1898 and is a leader among universities in China. It ranks 12th in the world according to the QS international ranking. "The structure of Peking University includes faculties of natural sciences, information and engineering, humanities, social sciences, economics and management, as well as a Center for Medical Sciences, Interdisciplinary Divisions, and Shenzhen Graduate School."²⁷⁷ . In 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed between BSU and PKU, and in May 2022, an agreement on cooperation on a joint educational program was signed.

As for BSU, it already has 112 agreements and contracts with 73 Chinese partners, including universities and research centers. Currently, more than 3,500 students, master's and doctoral students from China are studying at BSU. This is about 70 percent of all foreign students at BSU. Over the past year and a half, the Belarusian university has done a lot to strengthen its partnerships with China. Here are a few interesting examples. First, in 2023, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

²⁷⁷ Inter-university holiday established in Belarusian and Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezhuniversitetskij-prazdnik-uchrezhden-v-belorusskom-i-kitajskom-vuzah-643681-2024/>

Research Center was opened at the Faculty of International Relations of BSU as a platform for research in the fields of international activities, history, law, trade, economics, and culture. Second, in November last year, as part of the first International Congress on Scientific and Technical Exchanges "One Belt, One Road," BSU became one of the founders of the new University Network for Scientific and Research Cooperation (iUNRC). Third, a joint training program in biotechnology is being successfully implemented with PKU.

Fourth, in March 2024, BSU signed an agreement with the Hainan Center for Advanced Experience in International Education to implement the Belarusian-Chinese project "Institute of Innovative Education" under the auspices of BSU in Sanya. It is planned to use the institute as a base for training citizens of countries neighboring China and countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. "This is a unique ecosystem that involves not only training students and preparing specialists, but also developing business initiatives within the framework of Belarusian-Chinese economic and industrial relations through the creation of high-tech products,"²⁷⁸. This initiative has already received support from 14 leading universities in China. The new project will develop in several directions: the development of teaching and methodological documentation, the preparation of Chinese citizens for admission to BSU, career guidance events, and the organization of joint training in Russian as a foreign language and English using information and communication technologies. At the same time, BSU signed a memorandum of international cooperation with Sanya Yachou Bei Science and Technology Development and Construction Co. This

²⁷⁸ Innovation, high-tech cooperation, and export of services. BSU on new projects with China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/innovatsii-vysokotekhnologichnoe-sotrudnichestvo-i-eksport-uslug-bgu-o-novyh-proektah-s-kitajem-622125-2024/>

agreement was one of the first in the implementation of the "Institute of Innovative Education" project under the auspices of BSU and provides for scientific and scientific-technical cooperation between the parties in modern areas, including space.

Fifth, in March of this year, BSU expanded its cooperation with China in the field of language training for students by signing two agreements with the Second Beijing Foreign Studies University. The first regulates the launch of joint educational programs, the implementation of joint research and educational projects, the exchange of information and teaching materials, and the organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, courses, and joint publications. The second agreement provides for academic exchanges of students, master's students, and doctoral students. It is clear that these agreements will contribute to the development of partnerships in the field of education and science, as well as deepen and expand existing cooperation. This is especially true given that the Second Foreign Language University of Beijing has extensive potential for international cooperation. Suffice it to say that this university offers "14 faculties with 48 bachelor's degree programs. ²⁷⁹There are also master's and postgraduate programs and 15 research institutes. So, BSU came to the 2nd Forum of Rectors of Belarusian and Chinese Universities fully prepared to develop new multifaceted ties with Chinese partners.

And at this forum, BSU and PKU established a joint initiative – "Days of Friendship and Unity," which will be celebrated annually on June 25 and 26 and "will demonstrate effective and reliable cooperation in various areas, including the involvement of students and teachers in

²⁷⁹ BSU to expand cooperation with China in language training for students [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitaem-v-jazykovoju-podgotovke-studentov-622894-2024/>

various scientific, educational, and cultural exchange processes."²⁸⁰ . One of the central events of these "Days" will be the International Innovative Youth Forum, which will be held in 2025. Also, within the framework of this forum, universities in Belarus and China put forward an initiative to create a Belarusian-Chinese Center for Fundamental Research, which is a fundamentally new step in scientific cooperation, since it is fundamental research in the field of production transformation that will allow Belarus and China to reach a qualitatively new level.

Summing up the results of this forum, it should be noted that the new stage of technological and innovative development, based on the in-depth development of industrial transformation, the development and technology of artificial intelligence, requires the implementation of specific measures to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation between Belarus and China. In this regard, the Forum of Rectors of the two countries is becoming an effective platform for multilateral and bilateral interaction to focus efforts on the further development of joint Belarusian-Chinese platforms for the creation of innovative developments and the search for new opportunities to increase the effectiveness of educational and scientific and technical approaches.

²⁸⁰ The Forum of Rectors of Leading Universities of Belarus and China has begun work in Minsk [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/rukovoditelej-bolee-40-vuzov-belarusi-i-kitaja-obiedinil-forum-rektorov-veduschih-universitetov-643761-2024/>

From in-depth plans to project implementation

In August 2024, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Li Keqiang, during which a number of documents were signed revealing the potential of Chinese-Belarusian cooperation in trade, investment, the development and deepening of industrial cooperation, scientific and technical interaction, as well as in-depth plans for the joint development of Chinese provinces and Belarusian regions.

Among the participants in this interregional cooperation, **the Minsk region** and **the city of Chongqing** are particularly noteworthy. This city is one of the four largest Chinese cities under central government control, with a population of over 30 million. The in-depth plan includes projects such as "the production of reagents and equipment for diagnostics, unmanned aerial vehicles, car seats, traditional Chinese medicine, industrial robot assembly, and integrated logistics"²⁸¹.

It should be recalled that the capital region of Belarus signed a cooperation agreement with this Chinese city back in 2002. In March 2017, the regions established sister city relations. In June last year, at the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" during the opening of an exhibition of Chinese goods and services, where a thematic exhibition of the Chongqing Export Goods Exhibition Pavilion was presented and where "more than 20 city enterprises displayed their machine-building products, including cars, motorcycles, and

²⁸¹ From trade and investment to science and cinema. Belarus and China sign a significant package of cooperation documents [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-torgovli-i-investitsij-do-nauki-i-kino-belarus-i-kitaj-podpisali-vesomyj-paket-dokumentov-o-656104-2024>

components, on an area of about 300 square meters,"²⁸², the parties reached an agreement to intensify cooperation in various fields.

A month later, the Minsk region and the city of Chongqing signed a roadmap for 2023-2024 to develop cooperation in the production of reagents, education, tourism, and logistics. "Another promising area is the creation of a joint venture for the production of electric vehicles with any degree of localization,"²⁸³. Moreover, Chongqing's powerful industrial base in the field of mechanical engineering is of interest to Belarusian enterprises in the context of modernizing production using modern Chinese technologies, creating new joint car assembly plants, and importing components and auto parts. "The parties identified cooperation in the field of healthcare development, including the creation of a research center and production facilities in the field of traditional Chinese medicine at the Great Stone industrial park," as an equally promising area for cooperation.²⁸⁴, as well as cooperation at the level of medical institutions.

The development of twinning contacts between the Belarusian capital region and the Chinese city continued in May 2024 in Chongqing, where several important events took place:

- 1) The 6th Western China International Trade and Investment Fair;
- 2) Chongqing Sister Cities Economic Cooperation Forum;
- 3) Belarus-Chongqing Business Forum.

²⁸² Zalessky, B. Potential for implementation of the agreements reached / Boris Zalessky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. – P. 36.

²⁸³ From medicine to economics and sister city relations. Minsk Region and Chongqing sign roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ot-meditsiny-do-ekonomiki-i-pobratimskih-svyezaj-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-581301-2023/>

²⁸⁴ Brankevich announced positive dynamics in trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Chongqing [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/brantsevich-zajavila-o-pozitivnoj-dinamike-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve-belarusi-i-581186-2023/>

As for the trade and investment fair, the central stage was given to guests of honor – the Minsk region and the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone," located in the Belarusian capital region. Enterprises from the Minsk region producing meat and dairy products, bakery products, confectionery, alcoholic beverages, and cosmetics were invited to participate in the fair. In addition, this pavilion showcased the multifaceted tourism potential and modern educational opportunities of the Minsk region and the Republic of Belarus as a whole.

Speaking of the Chongqing Economic Cooperation Forum, it should be noted that it was attended by representatives of 48 cities from 31 countries with which this Chinese city has established twinning relations. The motto of this year's forum was "Deepening Regional Cooperation and Promoting Common Development." Participants discussed investment opportunities and new areas of inter economic and technological cooperation, as well as green policies.

Finally, at the Belarus-Chongqing Business Forum, "13 cooperation agreements and commercial contracts were signed for the supply of meat and dairy products, confectionery products worth a total of about \$31 million,"²⁸⁵ and mutual projects were outlined for investment cooperation in the fields of robotics, auto components, and medical equipment.

More specifically, these investment projects include, for example, Chongqing Qiteng Robot, a manufacturer of wheeled and suspended inspection robots and machines for working in extreme conditions, such as high temperatures, toxic and flammable

²⁸⁵ Belarus and Chongqing signed contracts for the supply of meat and dairy products worth about \$ 31 million [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-chuntsin-podpisali-kontraktv-na-postavku-miasno-molochnoj-produksii-na-summu-okolo-31-mln-637082-2024/>

environments, and underground mining. It was founded in 2010 by students of Chongqing University of Engineering and has now become a leader in emergency safety in China. Today, the company is ready to invest in opening its own subsidiary in Belarus in Veliki Kamen with local assembly and the creation of an electronic data storage server for specific projects. The company is also ready to establish joint production with a Belarusian partner.²⁸⁶

Another example is Chengju Chenghua Seating, a manufacturer of car seats. This Chinese factory "is considering establishing joint production in Belarus to meet the requirements of our country [Belarus]"²⁸⁷. It is possible that this manufacturer will enter into cooperation with the BELDZI factory. In May 2024, in Chongqing, the Belarusian side familiarized itself with medical equipment from another Chinese manufacturer, Zybio, which "specializes in the research and development of reagents and equipment for laboratory diagnostics, immunoassay and molecular diagnostics, hematology, and microbiology."²⁸⁸. As a result, the Minsk region will send specialists to Chongqing to thoroughly study Zybio's technology and its performance in hospital settings. If the results are positive, new Chinese medical equipment will appear in hospitals in the Minsk region.

Returning to the plan for deeper cooperation between the Minsk region and Chongqing, it should be noted that the Belarusian region has been actively increasing trade with China in recent years. In particular,

²⁸⁶ A robot manufacturing plant may appear in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-mozhet-pojavitsia-predpriatie-po-proizvodstvu-robotov-636330-2024/>

²⁸⁷ Turchin familiarized himself with the production of auto components in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/society/view/turchin-poznakomilsja-s-proizvodstvom-avtokomponentov-v-chuntsine-636362-2024/>

²⁸⁸ Medical professionals from the Minsk region are planning to go to Chongqing to check out some new equipment [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/medikov-minskoj-oblasti-planirujut-napravit-v-chuntsin-dlja-izuchenija-novogo-oborudovaniia-636079-2024/>

in the first half of 2023, the trade turnover between the two sides exceeded \$1.25 billion. "The Minsk region exports poultry meat, dairy products, frozen beef, wood products, and flax fiber to China. China imports automatic data processing machines and their components, auto parts, telephone sets, and television receivers"²⁸⁹. With the advent of the new plan, interregional cooperation between the Minsk region and Chongqing will soon be filled with new concrete projects to develop industrial cooperation and attract high-tech expertise for the implementation of investment projects at enterprises in the Minsk region, establishing direct interaction with Chinese partners.

This summer, the Minsk region took a new step in cooperation with another Chinese region, **Guangdong Province**, signing a roadmap for cooperation that marks a new period in relations between the two regions. The parties, which have been working closely together for more than ten years, believe that "the signing of the roadmap is an important signal for business in our two countries."²⁹⁰. After all, today it is necessary to look for new points of contact. In particular, in the fields of agriculture, automotive manufacturing, and medicine.

For example, interesting projects in this regard could be implemented in the Belarusian capital region with the Chinese agricultural holding company Guangdong Agribusiness Group Corporation, which is involved in large-scale trade and the production of rubber and sugar cane. The holding's enterprises also specialize in livestock breeding for meat and dairy production, grain cultivation, and oil production. "The corporation includes a vocational college where

²⁸⁹ Minsk Region and Chongqing, China, to define roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/minskaia-oblast-i-kitaiskii-chuntsin-opredeljat-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-580980-2023/>

²⁹⁰ Turchin and the governor of China's Guangdong Province sign roadmap [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/turchin-i-gubernator-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-651136-2024/>

students are trained in construction and technology. The agricultural holding also has 38 hospitals, which serve, among others, the company's employees"²⁹¹. So all these areas could be promising for cooperation with Belarusian partners.

Among the potential partners for Minsk region enterprises from Guangdong province are the GAC Aion electric car factory and Guangzhou Baiyunshan Zhongyi Pharmaceutical Co. In the first case, production is carried out on a full cycle and includes research and development, as well as product sales and after-sales service. The second manufacturer produces medicines for improving vision, diabetes drugs, and restorative tablets used for cerebral ischemia and its consequences. Representatives of the Minsk region have already discussed prospects and options for cooperation with these Chinese partners. So let's hope that these negotiations will be followed by concrete actions in the near future.

The People's Republic of China is a strategic partner of another Belarusian region, **Mogilev**, with which cooperation continues to deepen and reach new levels of interaction thanks to systematic work. Suffice it to say that over the past ten years, exports of goods from this Belarusian region to the PRC have grown 18, . "The main exports from the Mogilev region to China remain beef and poultry, dairy products, wood products, technical carbon, flax, chocolate, various types of water, and strong alcoholic beverages"²⁹². In addition, three enterprises in the Mogilev region currently have permits to supply products to

²⁹¹ From electric cars to endocrine raw materials: a delegation from the Minsk region visits Guangdong Province [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-elektrokarov-do-endokrinnogo-svrjia-delegatsija-minskoj-oblasti-poseschaet-provintsiju-guandun-651244-2024/>

²⁹² Exports of goods from the Mogilev region to China have grown 18 times over the past ten years [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-iz-mogilevskoj-oblasti-v-kitaj-za-poslednie-desiat-let-vyros-v-18-raz-575841-2023>

China: the open joint-stock companies Babushkina Kryнка, Mogilev Meat Processing Plant, and Bobruisk Meat Processing Plant. The main Chinese imports this year are acrylic polymers, complex synthetic fibers, adhesives and glues, molds and pallets for metal casting, electrical transformers, household electrical appliances, and passenger cars. "In January-April 2024, trade turnover between the Mogilev region and China amounted to \$ 57.4 million, a growth rate of 102.2% compared to the same period in 2023. Exports of services in January–April 2024 amounted to \$ 867.5 thousand (a growth rate of over 193%). Education services accounted for the bulk of exports, with a share of almost 81%."²⁹³

At the interregional level, the eastern region of Belarus is currently actively cooperating with such Chinese provinces as Henan, Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi, and the city of Tianjin. In addition, more than ten international documents have been signed between cities and districts of the Mogilev region and regions of China. In 2019, **Tianjin**, one of the four cities under central government control, became the youngest partner of the Mogilev Region's ". " It is a major port hub in northern China with connections and transport routes to more than 500 ports in other countries. The city has a well-established production chain in many industries and extensive educational and scientific resources, including more than 50 universities.

In March 2023, the parties signed an Action Plan for the Development of Cooperation for 2023-2025. And in May last year, Tianjin hosted Mogilev Region Week. At that time, more than 20 enterprises from the Mogilev region demonstrated their export potential

²⁹³ Platform for the implementation of joint projects: Belarusian-Chinese business forum held in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ploschadka-dlja-vyhoda-na-realizatsiju-obschih-proektov-belorussko-kitajskij-biznes-forum-proshel-v-643622-2024/>

at the "Tianjin – Gateway to China" forum. As a result of these negotiations, agreements were reached on the supply of dairy and meat products, commercial offers were received for the export of Belarusian sawn timber, and contacts were established for further cooperation on the import of goods from China to retail chains in the Mogilev region. At the same time, documents were signed on cooperation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district of Tianjin, the Mogilev Special Economic Zone, the TEDA Economic Zone, the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Tianjin Council for the Promotion of International Trade. Agreements were also reached on the establishment of a joint dry milk processing plant in Tianjin.²⁹⁴

A little over a year later, in June 2024, a reciprocal event was held – Tianjin City Week in the Mogilev Region, which included:

- 1) an exhibition of Chinese products from organizations in Tianjin;
- 2) a regional Belarusian-Chinese business forum entitled "Mogilev Region and Tianjin City: 5 Years of Cooperation";
- 3) the Mogilev-Tianjin Forum on Cooperation in Education.

In addition, the parties signed a roadmap for the development of cooperation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education, and tourism for 2024-2025; an agreement between the Administrative Committee of the Tianjin Free Trade Zone of the PRC and the Administration of the Mogilev Free Economic Zone; an agreement on cooperation between the Tianjin

²⁹⁴ Mogilev Region to present construction and industrial investment projects at an exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-predstavit-stroitelnye-i-promyshlennye-investproektv-na-vvstavke-v-shanhae-595292-2023/>

During these events, the parties outlined their proposals for joint cooperation in various sectors. For example, the Mogilev region believes that at this stage of relations, it is advisable to move from simple trade to deeper interaction and the creation of joint projects. In the livestock sector, Chinese partners could establish new meat processing complexes in the Mogilev region for the subsequent processing of beef and supply to the Chinese market. "The second area is minerals: the Mogilev region is rich in deposits of peat, sapropel, and trepel, which, when used in combination with mineral and organic fertilizers, are an effective means of stimulating plant growth and increasing crop yields,"²⁹⁶. This natural mineral supplement is used to enrich the diet of cattle to compensate for macro- and microelements lacking in feed. Given this potential, Mogilev residents are ready to offer a project for the production of feed additives, organic soils, and fertilizers.

Another interesting proposal was made at the business forum "Mogilev Region and Tianjin City: 5 Years of Cooperation." The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) will assist enterprises of both sides in organizing interregional trade in industrial and agricultural products. "To this end, it is planned to use the relevant elements of the BUTB electronic ecosystem, which will allow Belarusian and Chinese companies, taking into account the specifics of their sales and procurement policies, to conclude deals either during

²⁹⁵ Business forum, exhibitions, and competitions. Tianjin City Week kicks off in the Mogilev region [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/biznes-forum-vystavki-i-sorevnovanija-nedelja-goroda-tjantszin-startuet-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-643224-2024/>

²⁹⁶ "Finding ways to interact." Tianjin City Week is being held in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/najti-puti-vzaimodejstviia-v-mogileve-prohodit-nedelja-goroda-tjantszin-643563-2024/>

classic session trading or using the exchange's B2B platform, operating on the principle of a marketplace with an integrated exchange mechanism,"²⁹⁷ . At the same time, based on the profile of Chinese partners, priority will be given to the export of Belarusian meat and dairy products and vegetable oils to Tianjin, and in the future to other cities in the Bohai Economic Zone. The Belarusian market will be supplied with polymer packaging materials, diesel generators, industrial paints, sheet metal, veterinary drugs, and other products in demand in the country's industrial and agricultural sectors. Judging by all indications, cooperation in these areas will be very fruitful.

Another key region of Belarus in terms of developing cooperation with China, both in the economic and social spheres, is **the Gomel region**. Suffice it to say that over the past five years, trade turnover between this southeastern Belarusian region and China has grown almost fourfold. "The main exports to China are wood pulp, timber, meat, dairy, and confectionery products. Transport, education, and tourism services are developing. At the end of last year [2023], 44 enterprises in the Gomel region supplied their products to China,"²⁹⁸ . There are good prospects for further cooperation in industrial production, transport and logistics, and agriculture. For example, twenty enterprises in the Gomel region are already accredited to supply food products to the Chinese market, "including nine milk processing enterprises, seven meat processing enterprises, and four food industry enterprises."²⁹⁹ . And they are ready to increase supplies of beef, poultry

²⁹⁷ BUTB will help simplify trade between the Mogilev region and Tianjin, China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-pomozhet-uprostit-torgovlju-mezhdu-mogilevskoj-oblastiju-i-kitajskim-tjantszinem-643724-2024/>

²⁹⁸ In five years, trade turnover between the Gomel region and China has quadrupled [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-pjat-let-tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-kitaem-vyros-v-chetvye-raza-640488-2024/>

²⁹⁹ Twenty enterprises in the Gomel region are accredited to supply food products to China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/akkreditatsiju->

meat and by-products, whole milk products, condensed milk and cream, and dry milk whey.

In addition, Gomel enterprises are ready to supply China with sawn timber and finished wood products. Other areas of cooperation are also opening up. In particular, these include complex mineral fertilizers and other projects for possible joint implementation. Among them are a logistics hub based at the Gomel airport, the production of plywood furniture and other products at Gomeldrevo, and the creation of new production facilities in the Gomel-Raton free economic zone (FEZ). Moreover, there is an interesting example in the FEZ – the unitary production enterprise Alcopack, which manufactures medical products and has been cooperating with Chinese manufacturers of equipment, spare parts, and technological equipment for more than 20 years. At present, 80-90% of thermoplastic machines are manufactured in China.< ...> The number of contacts, orders, and equipment purchased is increasing. Friendly relations have been established with Chinese manufacturing companies."³⁰⁰ . So the time is coming for the first residents from China to arrive in the FEZ, for whom attractive conditions have already been created.

The southeastern region of Belarus is actively building relations with Chinese partners in the humanitarian sphere. For example, "more than 500 Chinese students are studying at universities in the Gomel region. They choose different specialties here and have already gained a lot."³⁰¹ . Gomel State University named after F. Skorina (GSU)

[na-postavki-pischevoi-produktsii-v-kitaj-imejut-20-predpriatij-gomelskoj-oblasti-640508-2024/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/se-sjajun-v-sez-gomel-raton-sozdany-privlekatelnye-uslovija-dlja-rezidentov-640508-2024/)

³⁰⁰ Se Xiaoyun: Attractive conditions for residents have been created in the Gomel-Raton SEZ [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/se-sjajun-v-sez-gomel-raton-sozdany-privlekatelnye-uslovija-dlja-rezidentov-640508-2024/>

³⁰¹ Trade, education, tourism. Se Xiao Yun on the potential for cooperation between the Gomel region and Chinese regions [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-obrazovanie-turizm-se-sjajun-o-potentsiale-sotrudnichestva-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-regionov-640506-2024/>

cooperates with 17 Chinese universities. In addition, a Confucius Institute has been established and is successfully operating at GSU, and joint educational programs are being implemented. Overall, "there are currently 332 students from China studying at Gomel State University. An experimental project has been launched in which students from China are studying in English in four specialties."³⁰²

As for the cooperation between the Gomel region and specific partners from China, as of early 2024, it has "signed bilateral cooperation agreements with four Chinese regions: the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016), and the provinces of Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016),"³⁰³, and ten agreements have been signed at the city level.

In June 2024, another new partner for the southeastern region of Belarus emerged – **Hebei Province**. During the visit of an official delegation from the Gomel region to this province, agreements, memoranda, and contracts were signed with Chinese partners, including a plan of activities and exchanges for 2024-2025 between the region and the province. The Belarusian side, interested in developing this cooperation, outlined three steps towards strengthening trade, economic, and investment cooperation. "These include the supply of high-quality food products from Gomel producers to Hebei, the implementation of joint industrial projects with preferences for the Gomel-Raton free economic zone, and joint investment projects in the field of agriculture,"³⁰⁴. In turn, the Chinese region is interested in

³⁰² Se Xiao Yun on cooperation between Belarus and China in education: this is an intellectual base for all spheres [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-siaojun-o-sotrudnichestve-belarusi-i-knr-v-obrazovanii-eto-intellektualnaja-baza-dlja-vseh-sfer-640698-2024/>

³⁰³ Zalesky, B. Belarus – China: new opportunities. Strategic cooperation in an era of exemplary partnership relations / Boris Zalesky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. – P. 12.

³⁰⁴ Trade, joint industrial projects, agro-industrial complex. Krupko on cooperation between the Gomel region and Hebei province [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL:

cooperation in the machine-building industry, logistics, the supply of raw materials for traditional Chinese medicine, as well as the purchase of Gomel agricultural products, chemical fertilizers, meat and dairy products.

As part of the Lanfang International Trade and Economic Exhibition and Fair, which took place in Hebei Province in June, a number of enterprises from the Gomel region were presented at the Belarusian stand. Following the meetings and negotiations at this forum in Lanfang, domestic exporters – Komintern, the Gomel Chemical Plant, and the Rogachevsky Milk Canning Plant (MCC) – added to their portfolios of deals. In particular, Rogachevsky MCC signed a memorandum for the supply of products worth about 1 million yuan and an agreement worth more than 7 million yuan. The memorandum of the Gomel Chemical Plant was concluded for almost 12.5 million yuan, and the deal between and Komintern was worth 14.7 million yuan.³⁰⁵ In addition, at the headquarters of Great Wall Haval, a factory producing Haval cars, the possibility of assembling these cars at the Gomel-Raton SEZ was discussed.

Continuing the theme of the participation of representatives of the Gomel region in exhibitions in China, we would like to remind you that in November 2023, during the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, documents were signed for export deliveries worth \$85 million at\$. In addition, an agreement on cooperation to attract investment was signed between the Gomel-Raton Special Economic Zone and the Sichuan Association for Economic and Trade Cooperation

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovlja-sovmestnye-promproekty-apk-krupko-o-sotrudnichestve-gomelskoi-oblasti-i-provintsii-hebei-641393-2024/>

³⁰⁵ Gomel enterprises signed new contracts and agreements with Chinese partners [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskie-predpriyatija-podpisali-novye-dogovory-i-soglashenija-s-kitajskimi-partnerami-641709-2024/>

³⁰⁶"One Belt, One Road," as well as a document of intent to establish sister city relations between the Zhlobin District of the Gomel Region and the city of Baotou in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

All these facts show that the diversity of partnership and twinning relations between the Minsk, Mogilev, and Gomel regions in China is only gaining momentum, developing intensively and fruitfully, highlighting the enormous prospects for the entire Belarusian-Chinese interregional all-weather strategic partnership.

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³⁰⁶ Documents available at\$ Representatives of the Gomel region signed agreements worth 85 million at an import exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. – 2023. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dokumenty-na-85-mln-podpisali-predstaviteli-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-vystavke-importa-v-shanhae-598283-2023/>

Cooperation in science, technology, and innovation reaches a new level

In August 2024, during the official visit of Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC), to Belarus, the governments of the two countries decided to declare 2024-2025 the Years of Cooperation between Belarus and China in the field of science, technology, and innovation. On this occasion, an action plan was signed in Minsk covering a wide range of areas of bilateral cooperation and providing for joint scientific and technical events, the creation and development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation platforms, and the implementation of joint scientific and scientific and technical projects, which will strengthen sectoral ties in the field of industrial cooperation and provide an additional stimulus for innovative development.

The plan contains 89 measures to be implemented by 140 organizations, including 59 Belarusian and 81 Chinese entities. These include leading scientific centers of the two countries, industry ministries and their subordinate organizations, and large technology corporations. In particular, in the field of information and communication technologies, the plan provides for the development of cooperation between the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of Belarus and Chinese corporations Huawei Technologies, ZTE, and PhotonSpeak on software development and the expansion of cooperation in the field of information and communication technologies, including the application of 5G/6G technologies. On the Belarusian side, the High-Tech Park, the Great Stone Industrial Park, and the companies Beltelecom and Promsvyaz will be involved in this work. In addition, in August 2024, a memorandum of understanding on strategic cooperation in the field of information and communication technologies was signed by the

Ministry of Communications and Informatization of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China, which "provides for the promotion of cooperation in digital transformation, cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, digital medicine, and ICT training"³⁰⁷. There are also plans for cooperation on the development of smart cities, the creation of joint high-tech production facilities, and a Chinese-Belarusian platform for cooperation in the field of information and communication technologies.

The Ministry of Industry of Belarus, together with the Center for International Economic and Technical Cooperation of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the PRC, plans to create a joint platform for the implementation of Chinese-Belarusian industrial cooperation to search for partners, transfer technologies, and develop cooperation with Chinese companies in the supply of technological equipment. It should be recalled that "in March 2023, Belarus and China signed a comprehensive strategy for joint industrial development, and in November 2023, a detailed plan for the alignment of the two countries' industrial policies"³⁰⁸, in order to develop industrial cooperation, including through joint production in Belarus and China, attracting high-tech expertise for the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises, and establishing direct interaction between the parties. This program already consists of 30 specific projects in machine tool building, automotive engineering, petrochemicals, and woodworking. In particular, "the entire cluster of domestic machine tool manufacturers, from the Gomel Machine Tool

³⁰⁷ Belarus and China signed a memorandum of understanding in the field of ICT [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-v-oblasti-ikt-656109-2024/>

³⁰⁸ Ministry of Industry of Belarus and China: cooperation plan may be updated, detailed, and expanded [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/minpromy-belarusi-i-kitaja-plan-po-sotrudnichestvu-mozhet-byt-aktualizirovan-detalizirovan-i-rasshiren-644949-2024/>

Plant to Krasny Borets in Orsha, is already involved in joint industrial development projects with China,"³⁰⁹. The decisions taken will also make it possible to reformat the textile industry, as viscose, together with flax and chemical fibers, will create a fabric for Belarusians that will become the foundation of the country's textile and clothing industry.

Overall, "15 new strategic investment projects worth up to \$3 billion are being actively developed with Chinese partners," according to³¹⁰. Among the most important are: the third stage of the Belarusian National Biotechnology Corporation's grain deep processing project, the construction of plants for the production of bleached sulfate pulp and wood-based panels, the organization of modern automated casting, the production of engines, polypropylene, carbide, sodium chlorate, hydrogen peroxide, and calcined soda.

As for existing Belarusian enterprises, for example, the Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) is interested in establishing joint ventures in China. In September 2024, a roadmap was signed for the development of a 350-horsepower tractor with a permanent magnet electric drive. MTZ is ready to implement this project with the Chinese-Belarusian High-Tech Aerospace Research and Development Center. Another joint venture may also be established in China to assemble BELARUS crawler tractors.³¹¹ In addition, the Belarusian company will purchase equipment worth more than 840 million Belarusian rubles in China to

³⁰⁹ Machines, cellulose, automobiles. What landmark projects are Belarus and China implementing [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/stanki-tselluloza-avtomobil-kakie-znakovye-proekty-realizujut-belarus-i-kitaj-671355-2024/>

³¹⁰ Snippkov: Strategic projects with China worth \$3 billion are designed for the medium term [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-strategicheskie-proekty-s-kitaem-na-3-mlrd-rasschitany-na-srednesrochnuju-perspektivu-655954-2024/>

³¹¹ MTZ is interested in establishing joint ventures in China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zainteresovan-v-sozdanii-sovmestnyh-proizvodstv-v-kitae-662915-2024/>

modernize the melting system for the first foundry, an automatic continuous sandblasting chamber with rotary tables. "The MTZ workshops will be replenished with 15 turning machines, 7 horizontal, 4 milling and centering, and 3 horizontal milling machining centers with CNC. Over the past year and a half, the company has received eight CNC machines [from China],"³¹².

Other machine-building enterprises in the republic are also open to production cooperation with Chinese companies. In particular, for the organization of "joint production of engines for trucks and passenger cars in Belarus"³¹³. In this plan, mutually beneficial options for cooperation with Guangxi Yuchai Machinery Group Co., Ltd are already being explored with a view to launching a strategic bilateral project involving deep localization.

Another interesting example is OAO Belshina, which, together with the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), is strengthening its partnership with leading Chinese tire companies and scientific organizations in that country. Back in April this year, Belshina and BSTU signed a memorandum of cooperation with Qingdao University of Science and Technology and MESNAC, a leading manufacturer of rubber equipment in China with a global supply chain. In this document, the parties provide for cooperation in the field of education, as well as scientific research and development on improving the properties of elastomeric compounds for tires and rubber products. The Belarusian tire manufacturer and one of the best universities in Belarus for training engineering personnel, including for

³¹² MTZ to purchase more than 30 units of equipment from China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zakupit-bolee-30-edimits-oborudovaniya-iz-kitaja-662946-2024/>

³¹³ Naumovich: Belarusian machine-building enterprises are open to cooperation with Chinese companies [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/naumovich-belorusskie-predpriyatija-mashinostroeniya-otkrtyv-k-kooperatsii-s-kitajskimi-kompanijami-665797-2024/>

the chemical industry, are working together to improve the quality of rubber compounds, produce new sizes of agricultural tires, and improve the performance characteristics of extra-large tires with a view to effective import substitution. By signing the memorandum, the parties plan to implement joint projects related to "improving the mileage of all-steel cord extra-large radial tires with a diameter of 57 inches, using original technologies and equipment from a leading Chinese manufacturer"³¹⁴. It is expected that the memorandum will take cooperation between the parties to a new level. Given the promising participation in projects involving Qingdao University of Science and Technology and the Belarusian State Technological University, emphasis will also be placed on scientific research in the tire industry and the training of highly qualified personnel for production.

The adopted plans also "provide for the establishment in Minsk of a project office of the Chinese Technology Transfer Center of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose activities are supervised by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the PRC"³¹⁵. This will contribute to attracting advanced foreign technologies to Belarus and commercializing the results of Belarusian scientific and innovative organizations abroad. In the field of medicine, the Ministry of Health of Belarus, together with the Center for International Exchange and Cooperation of the State Health Committee of China, will cooperate in the exchange of innovations and technologies. The Belneftekhim concern, together with the Oil and Gas Resources Research Center ()

³¹⁴ Belshina, together with BSTU, strengthens partnership with leading Chinese tire companies [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belshina-sovmestno-s-bgtu-ukrepلياet-partnerstvo-s-veduschimi-kitajskimi-shimnvmi-kompanijami-627709-2024/>

³¹⁵ The Years of Cooperation between Belarus and China in Science, Technology, and Innovation have begun [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/dan-start-godam-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-knr-v-oblasti-nauki-tehnologii-i-innovatsij-656188-2024/>

of the China Geological Survey, will cooperate in the exchange of technologies for geological research, exploration, and development of oil and gas resources.

In addition, the parties will continue to develop the Great Stone Park as an international industrial and logistics cluster with a focus on investment, technology, and the development of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. "Today, the park has 134 residents from 13 countries with a total investment of \$ 1.5 billion. More than half of the residents are companies with Chinese capital,"³¹⁶. In the first seven months of 2024, 18 new companies have already joined the park. It should be noted that in July of this year, a meeting of the working group on industrial parks was held, at which priority areas for further growth of the "Big Stone" were identified. Among the main prospects is attracting new residents from China with their advanced experience and anchor projects that will be able to gather partners around them. The second area is the continuation of the construction of the Great Stone infrastructure to prepare sites for new production facilities. This is all the more important given that "construction of the first phase of the central part of the park is about to begin, as well as the creation of a multimodal railway terminal"³¹⁷. Thirdly, there is the development of a medical cluster in the industrial park. Suffice it to say that in the first half of 2024, five companies have already joined the Great Stone medical cluster, and new Chinese companies are already on the way.

Finally, in order to increase the economic efficiency of joint activities, the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology

³¹⁶ Roman Golovchenko: Amid global instability, Belarus and China continue to build mutually beneficial cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <http://pda.government.gov.by/ru/content/10994>

³¹⁷ Chebotar: "The Great Stone" is one of the key priorities for the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <http://belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-velikij-kamen-odin-iz-kljuchevyh-prioritetov-razvitiya-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-649217-2024/>

and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the PRC will hold a competition for flagship scientific and technical projects.³¹⁸ To this end, 20 projects have been approved for joint implementation in 2024-2026 in the fields of ICT, biotechnology and medicine, mechanical engineering, and new materials. Based on the results of this competition, it is planned to select three large-scale joint projects, which should result in the creation of advanced technologies and the establishment of joint ventures or industrial technology centers. Based on the results of joint research and development, Belarus and China will "work on the creation of joint legal entities, which will be used to manufacture products for the Belarusian, Chinese, and possibly third markets."³¹⁹

In line with this theme, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NAS) will be established in China, which will serve as a Chinese-Belarusian platform for cooperation to promote interaction between universities, research institutes, and enterprises of the two countries in the fields of education, scientific research, and the introduction of achievements. "The main areas of cooperation within the branch will be aerospace technology and space sciences, materials science and composite materials, optics and optoelectronics, the production of high-tech equipment and advanced instruments, microelectronics and digital intelligence, biotechnology and pharmacology."³²⁰ In this regard, cooperation mechanisms will be

³¹⁸ Belarus and China approve 20 joint scientific and technical projects for 2024-2026 [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-utverdili-20-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektov-na-2024-2026-gody-656073-2024/>

³¹⁹ Belarus and China will establish legal entities for the production of products based on joint developments [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-budut-sozdavat-iuritsa-dlja-proizvodstva-produktsii-na-osnove-sovmestnyh-razrabotok-656197-2024/>

³²⁰ A branch of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will be established in China [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/filial-nan-belarusi-sozhdadut-v-kitae-656108-2024/>

established, such as the exchange of highly qualified Chinese and Belarusian experts, the organization of training for highly qualified scientific personnel, joint training of master's and doctoral students, the organization of internships and training, the initiation of joint research and development by the organizations of the parties, promoting the mutual introduction of technologies and achievements, and establishing joint laboratories within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. To this end, a framework agreement on strategic cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs of the People's Republic of China was signed in August this year, aimed at attracting exports by organizing technical internships for Chinese researchers in the Great Stone Industrial Park and relevant research organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on a contract basis. The main areas for internships are: space utilization and research, new energy sources and advanced energy, optoelectronics and high-tech equipment, smart production, new materials, digitalization, and artificial intelligence.

All these documents and the launch of several new industrial projects indicate that the parties see the combination of Belarusian expertise and Chinese technology as a key element in building a joint future. It is clear that "the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for joint industrial development and the preparation of detailed plans for the alignment of industrial policy &...> will fill with concrete practical content the new status of relations between the two countries – an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership"³²¹. For this

³²¹ Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and China has grown 140 times in 30 years [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10993>

reason, cooperation with China will enable Belarus to implement ambitious plans for modernization and technical re-equipment.

Returning to the results of the official visit to Belarus by Premier Li Keqiang of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, we note that, in addition to documents revealing the potential for developing and deepening industrial cooperation, scientific, technical, and innovative interaction, agreements, memoranda, and plans were signed in Minsk memoranda and plans in other areas. For example, these include an intergovernmental agreement on trade in services and investment, providing for the creation of a free trade zone for services between the two countries and a transparent, liberal and favourable investment regime to attract investment. The Belarusian Ministry of Economy and the Chinese State Development and Reform Commission also signed a "practical cooperation plan to strengthen the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative and the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Belarus. The document contains about 60 measures and projects to be implemented by the competent authorities of the two countries..."³²².

As for the Belarusian-Chinese regional dimension, "in-depth plans for the joint development of Chinese provinces and Belarusian regions" were signed in Minsk.³²³ Firstly, between the Minsk region and the city of Chongqing, where the following projects will be implemented: production of reagents and equipment for diagnostics, unmanned aerial vehicles, car seats, traditional Chinese medicine preparations, and assembly of industrial robots. Secondly, between the

³²² BNBK and "Great Stone": Belarus and China agree on new major investment projects [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bnbk-i-velikij-kamen-belarus-i-kitaj-dogovorilis-o-novyh-krupnyh-investproektah-656105-2024/>

³²³ Zalesky, B. Dynamics of a successful partnership. Internal and external reserves for the steady growth of the Belarusian economy / Boris Zalesky. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. – P. 43.

Mogilev region and Shaanxi province, where the main areas of development in trade, economic and investment, education and culture have been identified. In this context, seven more similar in-depth plans for joint development of Belarusian and Chinese regions were also supported.

Thus, continuing to build mutually beneficial cooperation, Belarus and China have defined further specific tasks, plans, and promising areas for the future in August 2024, demonstrating the exemplary nature of their all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership in a new era, despite the overall unstable situation in the global economy.

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"Great Stone": ten years of success

In 2024, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" ensured growth in all key performance indicators of its residents, including exports of goods – by almost 14 percent, production volumes – by 1.2 times, and investments in fixed assets – by more than seven percent. At the same time, as of the second half of February 2025, there were 144 residents with a total declared investment of \$1.5 billion and plans to create more than 15,500 jobs. More than 50 organizations have started economic activities and are beginning to reach full capacity.³²⁴ Last year, about 30 new companies with capital from Belarus, China, Israel, Russia, and Germany received resident status. They are implementing projects in the fields of integrated logistics, research and development, instrument engineering, medicine, biotechnology, and big data storage and processing. Let's get to know some of them.

Several residents were registered in the park back in January last year. First, **the Chinese LLC Medical Technologies Bel-Jinghe**, which "will implement a project for the production of biomedical materials and conduct scientific research"³²⁵. Second, **the Belarusian LLC Serverkom**, which will design, manufacture, and install server equipment and data storage systems. Third, **the LLC Eurasian Biotechnology Company** from Belarus, which intends to produce enzyme preparations and other active substances of microbiological origin. The planned export destinations are the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, "as well as the countries of North Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. In the long term, the company plans to

³²⁴ In 2024, 30 new residents were registered in the Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-v-2024-godu-zaregistririvali-30-novyh-rezidentov-697242-2025/>

³²⁵ A new resident of Veliki Kamen will manufacture medical products [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-meditsinskuju-produktsiju-610123-2024/>

significantly expand its product range through research and development carried out by its own research center." ³²⁶

In February 2024, two new residents and innovative entities were registered in Veliki Kamen. First, **the** Belarusian LLC **LeanGroupAlutub** will set up import-substituting production of aluminum tubes for the pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and other industries. Second, **the** Chinese company **BatteryFly Engineering LLC**, which "plans to develop highly efficient equipment and charging station management systems, including a software package"³²⁷. Thirdly, the innovative company **Dilaytek LLC** from Belarus intends to create programmable lighting installations and manage such projects.

Last spring, five new residents from Belarus registered in the industrial park. First, there is LLC **"Digna-NTR."** This company will produce metal-ceramic housings for integrated circuits, which "ensure safety and ease of installation. The products are intended for the domestic market and will also be exported to EAEU countries."³²⁸ Secondly, there is LLC **"Zavod Gerknon,"** which "plans to implement a project for the production of automotive electrical and electronic systems."³²⁹. These products will be in demand by domestic flagship machine-building companies, such as the Minsk and Belarusian Automobile Plants and the Minsk Tractor Plant. Thirdly, there is

³²⁶ New resident of "Big Stone" to implement a project in the field of biotechnology [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-realizovvat-proekt-v-sfere-biotekhnologii-610997-2024/>

³²⁷ "Great Stone" has registered two new residents and an innovative entity [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/velikij-kamen-zaregistroval-dvuh-novyh-rezidentov-i-subjekt-innovatsionnoj-deyatelnosti-613444-2024/>

³²⁸ A new resident of "Veliki Kamen" will implement a project in the field of electronics [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-realizovvat-proekt-v-sfere-elektroniki-619654-2024/>

³²⁹ Since the beginning of its operations, "Great Stone" has paid more than \$120 million in taxes to the budget [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-s-nachala-deyatelnosti-uplatil-v-bjudzhet-bolee-120-mln-nalogov-619525-2024/>

Investment Financing CJSC, which is creating "a modern production facility for composite materials for high-tech industries, in particular aircraft manufacturing"³³⁰, which is intended both for the Belarusian market and for supplies to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.³³¹ Fourthly, there is **VostokTechno Group LLC**. "The company is organizing the production of video endoscopic systems in the park. It plans to release such modifications as video gastroscopes, video colonoscopes, and video bronchoscopes," which are import-substituting in nature. Fifth, there is a new entity engaged in innovative activities, **GVAIDIS GROUP LLC**, which will implement an innovative project to develop, design, and manufacture metal heat treatment equipment for industrial systems.

The summer of 2024 was marked by an influx of new residents to the industrial park. In particular, **Micrologistic LLC** intends to build a 13,000 square meter warehouse complex based on modern technological and design solutions. At the same time, advanced technologies will be introduced, which "will improve the efficiency of warehouse operations. In addition, the company will provide a range of logistics services"³³². **Transport Aviation Logistics** will also create a modern transport and logistics center in Veliki Kamen with a total area of 10,000 square meters for cargo handling by Minsk National Airport. A new resident of the park, **Doctor Med LLC**, which specializes in the production of medical products, will create a center for equipping medical institutions of various profiles. "The production process will

³³⁰ New resident of the "Big Stone" will produce products from composite materials [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://industrialpark.by/novosti/2024/novyi-rezident-parka-budet-vypuskat-produkciju-iz-kompozitnykh-materialov/>

³³¹ A new resident and innovative entity has appeared in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/novye-rezident-i-subiekt-innovatsionnoj-deyatelnosti-pojavilis-v-velikom-kamne-637930-2024/>

³³² A new resident of "Veliki Kamen" is implementing a project in the field of integrated logistics [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-realizuet-proekt-v-sfere-kompleksnoj-logistiki-641593-2024/>

use 3D modeling technologies with the application of our own technological developments, as well as environmentally friendly materials,"³³³. The industrial park's collection of innovative companies has been expanded with the addition of **Plag Carbon LLC**, which "has been accepted for incubation at the innovation center with a project related to biotechnology and developments in the field of artificial intelligence for the implementation of climate projects."³³⁴. Finally, in August, a heating equipment manufacturing plant was opened in Veliki Kamen. "The investment project was implemented by a park resident with Chinese capital, **SAS Industrial LLC**. The total area of the facility is 12,200 square meters,"³³⁵. In addition, **the Chinese company Bel Yanling Technology LLC** will implement a project to create a center for integrated automation solutions for industrial robotics and intelligent equipment. "In the future, based on the results of the development, it is planned to produce heavy and explosion-proof industrial robots."³³⁶.

At the beginning of last autumn, three more residents from Belarus were registered in Veliki Kamen.³³⁷ **Strategic Technologies LLC**, located in the industrial park's innovation center for the commercialization of scientific and technical achievements, "will

³³³ New resident of the "Big Stone" will engage in the production of copper products [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-vypuskom-produksii-mednaznachenija-646420-2024/>

³³⁴ New resident and innovative entity appear in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novve-rezident-i-subjekt-innovatsionnoj-dejatelnosti-pojavilis-v-velikom-kamne-646714-2024/>

³³⁵ A heating equipment manufacturing plant has opened in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-otkrvli-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-otopitelnogo-oborudovanija-656417-2024/>

³³⁶ New resident of Veliki Kamen to create a center for integrated solutions for industrial robotics [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-tsentr-integrirovannyh-reshenij-dlja-promyshlennoj-robototekhniki-657837-2024/>

³³⁷ The new resident of "Big Stone" will produce night vision equipment [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/novvj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-oborudovanie-nochnogo-videnija-660454-2024/>

implement a project to produce multispectral electronic-optical night vision equipment for all types of vehicles," . Another **company**, "**Kheprotrade**," a manufacturer of thermal paper in Belarus, has launched import substitution production. The production capacity will be about 600 tons of thermal paper per month. The product can be used to make thermal tape for cash registers, terminals, ATMs, and thermal labels. "The products will be supplied both to the domestic market and abroad, mainly to EAEU countries," said³³⁸ , as the company manufactures its products using the latest automated equipment based on its own technological developments and carries out laboratory quality control, which ensures that the products meet the highest international standards. The third resident of the park, registered in September 2024, is **GammaComponent LLC**, which will create a modern production complex for the manufacture of automotive components from composite materials, including parts for special civil engineering equipment. "The second area is the production of metal products and structures for trucks. The products are intended for the domestic market and will also be exported," said³³⁹ . The project involves the introduction of innovative solutions, such as 3D printing for prototyping and small-scale production of complex parts, which will reduce production times and improve product quality.

It should be noted that over the first three quarters of last year, the industrial park's residents showed positive dynamics in key financial and economic indicators. "Based on the results of the first nine months of 2024, investments in fixed assets increased by 1.5 times,

³³⁸ New import substitution production facility opens in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/v-velikom-kamne-otkryto-novoe-importozameschajuschee-proizvodstvo-664698-2024/>

³³⁹ New resident of Veliki Kamen implements investment project in the machine-building sector [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/novvy-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-realizuet-investitsionnyj-proekt-v-sfere-mashinostroenija-664958-2024/>

revenue from product sales by 1.4 times, production volumes by 1.3 times, direct foreign investment on a net basis by 1.2 times, and exports of goods and employee salaries by 1.1 times. A record 19-fold increase in net profit was achieved.³⁴⁰ . By that time, more than 50 residents had already started economic activities in the Great Stone area. During this period, 21 new enterprises with capital from Belarus, China, Israel, and Russia appeared in the park. New investors are implementing projects in the fields of integrated logistics, instrument engineering, medicine, biotechnology, and big data storage and processing.

In the fourth quarter of 2024, about ten more residents were registered in the Great Stone. In November, there were four. **The company People and Numbers** has a project to organize innovative production of dental scanners and medical furniture. "The start-up project, implemented by a new innovative entity, **Deviar AI LLC**, involves the development and implementation of agents (online assistants using artificial intelligence and neural networks) for the purpose of optimizing the organization's business processes,"³⁴¹ . The idea **behind the** new startup project **by Vitaem** is to create an interactive booking and management system for guests and owners of tourist facilities using artificial intelligence. And **LLC HortSystems** plans to organize the production of modular heating and cooling units and direct-flow air conversion equipment in the park. "The production process uses innovative developments that allow products to be manufactured in a shorter time and reduce their cost. Areas of application include housing and communal services, industrial and

³⁴⁰ Ministry of Economy: the efficiency of residents of the "Great Stone" is steadily growing [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/minekonomiki-effektivnost-raboty-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-stabilno-rastet-676502-2024/>

³⁴¹ A new resident and two innovative entities have been registered in Veliky Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrirovany-novyy-rezident-i-dva-subjekta-innovatsionnoj-deyatelnosti-677811-2024/>

manufacturing facilities, and other facilities,"³⁴². The products will be exported and sold on the domestic market.

Seven new residents appeared in December. In particular, **Sanitary Defense CJSC** will implement a project to produce active pharmaceutical ingredients, medical products, and new-generation disinfectants. The project of **KN-Logistics** is related to the construction of a multi-temperature warehouse with an administrative and residential complex. **Innovative Technological Solutions** will produce endoprostheses and orthopedic devices. "The new resident of the park, **Bel Sinhui Scientific and Technical Company for Auxiliary Means**, will create a research and production center for intelligent prostheses, while **Eurasian Commercial, Trade, Cultural, Tourism, and Health Industry Corporation LLC** will open an innovative Eurasian health center for traditional Chinese medicine in Veliki Kamen.³⁴³ On the eve of 2025, it became known that the company "**ChPU-Corporation**" will implement a project in the field of mechanical engineering in the industrial park – to produce "high-precision metal-cutting machine tools that meet modern standards, with the integration of advanced control and automation technologies. Production will be organized in partnership with a Chinese company specializing in the development and manufacture of intelligent equipment."³⁴⁴ The company "**Biohim Medtech**" will open a high-tech production facility in "Veliki Kamen"

³⁴² A new resident of "Veliki Kamen" will produce industrial climate control equipment [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-promyshlennoe-klimaticheskoe-oborudovanie-678919-2024/>

³⁴³ Medicine, pharmaceuticals, logistics: five new residents registered in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/meditsina-farmatsevtika-logistika-v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrirovany-pjat-novykh-rezidentov-680725-2024/>

³⁴⁴ New residents of Veliki Kamen are implementing projects in the fields of mechanical engineering and medicine [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novye-rezidenty-velikogo-kamnja-realizujut-proekty-v-sfere-mashinostroeniia-i-meditsiny-686162-2024/>

for special filters for hemodialysis or bicarbonate cartridges for dialysis. These medical products are widely used in the treatment of chronic and acute kidney diseases.

³⁴⁵Already this year, two new residents were registered in the industrial park in January. First, the investment project of **StanOk CNC** is related to machine building. The company will produce numerically controlled equipment for the manufacturing industry. **The Swiss-owned company NICET** will conduct research and development in the field of energy. It will create high-tech energy storage solutions that can be used in electric transport, conduct research on graphene production, and develop intelligent energy management systems.

In March, three new residents appeared in Veliki Kamen. These are **Alsinor LLC**, which will establish a high-tech production facility for aluminum industrial cooling radiators based on plate and bar technology. This innovative technology "consists of a multi-layer system of alternating plates, which ensures high heat transfer efficiency, compactness, and mechanical strength of the product"³⁴⁶. The company's products will be designed for use in construction, agriculture, energy, and the oil and gas sector and will be supplied mainly to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as to the domestic market. This is **MotEra LLC**, which will implement an investment project in the field of mechanical engineering and "will produce quad bikes based on modern solutions. The line includes six models for different age categories. They differ from their counterparts

³⁴⁵ Machine building and developments in energy. What will the new residents of "Great Stone" do [Electronic resource]. — 2025. — URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-i-razrabotki-v-energetike-chto-budut-delat-novye-rezidenty-velikogo-kamnja-692642-2025/>

³⁴⁶ New resident of the "Great Stone" will create high-tech production of aluminum radiators [Electronic resource]. — 2025. — URL: <https://belta.by/amp/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-vysokotekhnologichnoe-proizvodstvo-aluminievyyh-radiatorov-703870-2025/>

in their higher engine power and greater load capacity"³⁴⁷. The products will be supplied mainly for export, as well as for the domestic market of Belarus. This is the first resident with Turkish capital – **BelTurMed LLC**, which will create a modern production facility for medical consumables. "The products will be manufactured using advanced technologies and automated quality control processes. Modern polymer materials that meet international standards will be used in production," said³⁴⁸. This investment project is import-substituting in nature, as the products will be intended for the Belarusian market and other post-Soviet countries.

In April, a new resident of the park was registered – **the Belarusian company Ingribel LLC**, which will produce complex food additives and "introduce a processing technology that is innovative for the EAEU for the production of natural components that improve the texture and consistency of food products. Experimental workshops will allow new recipes to be developed and tested, while automated control systems will increase production efficiency."³⁴⁹ The new enterprise will use renewable energy sources. The new resident's products will be intended for the Belarusian market and for export.

As of early April 2025, the industrial park already had about 150 residents, which can be grouped into four clusters. The machine-building cluster includes about 30 manufacturers producing, among other things, truck cranes, excavators, loaders, gearboxes, diesel

³⁴⁷ New resident of "Big Stone" implements project in the field of mechanical engineering [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-realizuet-proekt-v-sfere-mashinostroenija-704576-2025/>

³⁴⁸ First resident with Turkish capital registered in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/pervyi-rezident-s-turetskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-velikom-kamne-704373-2025/>

³⁴⁹ New resident of Veliki Kamen to introduce innovative food additive production technologies [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-vnedrit-innovatsionnye-tehnologii-proizvodstva-pischevyh-dobavok-707627-2025/>

engines, machine tools, with a tendency towards the production of auto components for light vehicle manufacturing. The electronics cluster includes manufacturers of server and computer equipment, as well as monitors, monoblocks, and plastic products. The logistics cluster includes "a distribution center for a large marketplace, which will be the largest in Belarus. The second largest is a 53,000 square meter warehouse complex owned by China Merchants Group, as well as a customs warehouse, two hotels, and an exhibition center."³⁵⁰ .

Of particular note is the medical cluster, which already includes more than twenty manufacturers of medical devices, equipment, and pharmaceuticals. The Belarusian side is interested in the participation of Chinese businesses in the development of this cluster, as "Belarus is the only country in the region where the conditions for the development of traditional Chinese medicine are enshrined in law."³⁵¹ . Today, every effort is being made to deepen Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in joint technological development, the active creation of production facilities in medicine, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and participation in the modernization of Belarusian enterprises using innovations in the field of healthcare, in order to double the number of residents of this cluster in the near future and bring new energy to joint initiatives. More specifically, the medical cluster already "produces breathing circuits and catheters, and one of the residents has built a plant for the production of medical devices and equipment for operating rooms. In addition, a Belarusian-Russian company has launched production of

³⁵⁰ Koroteev, K. From the forest to a mini-city. What achievements does "Great Stone" have to celebrate its 10th anniversary? / K. Koroteev // [Electronic resource]. – 2025. – URL: <https://belta.by/interview/view/iz-lesa-v-mini-gorod-s-kakimi-dostizhenijami-velikij-kamen-vstreichaet-10-letie-9581/>

³⁵¹ Belarus is interested in Chinese business participation in the development of a medical cluster in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business-news/belarus-zainteresovana-v-uchastii-kitajskogo-biznesa-v-razvicii-medklastera-v-velikom-kamne_i_177698.html

test systems for analyzing and identifying blood glucose levels"³⁵². And in September 2024, the industrial park hosted an exhibition of Chinese medical equipment, which demonstrated new opportunities for localizing the production of this equipment in Belarus and establishing joint ventures. This is especially true given that "the Great Stone Industrial Park is a platform where all this can be realized. This will significantly increase the availability of Chinese technologies for the Belarusian healthcare system and create new jobs..."³⁵³.

Let's sum up. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Velikiy Kamen industrial park. During this time, 85 buildings and structures have been built in the park (), 20 facilities are under construction, and 49 are still in the design stage. Last year, the second phase of development of this territory began, with the aim of increasing the number of people working there from 3,500 to 11,000 by 2030. This indicates that "Great Stone, as an international industrial and logistics cluster with a focus on investment, technology, and the development of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine"³⁵⁴, which is profitable in every sense, is looking confidently to the future to continue developing this Chinese-Belarusian project in all areas.

³⁵² Production and provision of services: how the medical cluster is developing in Veliki Kamen [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-i-okazanie-uslug-kak-v-velikom-kamne-razvivaetsja-medsinskij-klaster-662559-2024/>

³⁵³ You can learn about China's latest achievements in medical technology at an exhibition in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. – 2024. – URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/poznakomitsja-s-poslednimi-dostizhenijami-kitaja-v-sfere-medtehnologii-mozhno-na-vystavke-v-velikom-663544-2024/>

³⁵⁴ Zaleski, B. Belarusian-Chinese partnership in the context of an unstable global economy / Boris Zaleski. – LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. – P. 53–54.

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