

Facets of an all-weather partnership

In March 2023, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China (PRC) adopted a joint statement on the basic principles of developing exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era, which include mutual support for the state course and on issues affecting each other's indigenous interests. In August 2024, Premier Li Qiang of the State Council of the People's Republic of China paid an official visit to Belarus, during which a number of documents were signed, revealing the potential of China-Belarus cooperation in trade, investment, development and deepening of industrial cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation, as well as in-depth plans for the joint development of China's provinces and regions of Belarus. The two governments decided to declare 2024-2025 the Years of Cooperation between Belarus and China in Science, Technology and Innovation. In short, the two countries have set further concrete tasks and plans, showing the exemplary nature of an all-weather and all-round strategic partnership in the new era, despite the overall situation in the global economy. This is the subject of this study.



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Facets of partnership

Boris Zaleski



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Horizons of Belarusian-Chinese strategic cooperation

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CHAPTER 1

Great Stone Industrial Park:

A project that will shape the future

May 2020 marked five years since the visit of the leaders of the two countries - A. Lukashenko and S. Jinping - to the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone". Jinping. This event became a kind of starting point in the history of the park for its rapid development. And, indeed, in such a short period of time roads were laid here, water supply, electricity, heating and gas were brought in, more than 60 thousand square metres of standard production buildings were erected, the first office building, residential building and research centre were built, about 60 investment projects were attracted, the declared volume of investments 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 facilitated cultural exchange. That is why the 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 two countries and from other states, and has become a model of cooperation on the Belt and Road"¹.

It should be noted that such a high assessment of the Great Stone is voiced not only in Belarus or China. In November 2019, the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones (FEMOZA) held a summit in Monaco, the main topic of which was strengthening cooperation and transforming the successful experience of free economic zones (FEZ) into working tools. More than 400 representatives of FEZs from the UK, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Asia and Africa, as well as chambers of commerce and industry, public authorities and potential foreign investors took part in this large-scale event. It should be reminded that FEMOZA is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation supported by the United Nations, which was founded in 1999 in Geneva with the aim to support and promote free and special economic zones all over the world and especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to assist in bringing projects of FEZ residents to the international market and attracting foreign investments. FEMOZA functions include elaboration of norms, rules and directions of FEZ development, providing them with technical, legal and economic assistance, training of specialists.

¹ Zheng, X. "The Great Stone" symbolises the firm friendship between Belarus and China / X. Zheng // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velfkii-kamen-simvoliziruet-tverduiu-druzhu-belarusi-i-knr-hu-chzheng-7289/>

Statistics state that "today there are 3,500 free zones in 130 countries around the world, accounting for more than 70 million jobs"². But, "despite the benefits and preferences given to them in all countries, <...> only 300-400 are effective. All this is due to the technological lag, which does not allow FEZs to become part of the global economy"³.

It is not the first year that the Republic of Belarus has been very actively involved in FEMOZA activities. The summit in Monaco was truly significant for the Belarusian side, as it was there that the China-Belarus Industrial Park Velikiy Kamen was honoured with the FEMOZA Awards 2019, winning in the category "The Fastest Growing Industrial Park". The peculiarity of this nomination is that "the key factors in determining the winner were Velikiy Kamen's prospects for global investment and the rapid pace of its development"⁴. Indeed, today in Velikiy Kamen the Belarusian side has created solid benefits for residents - both tax and in terms of land ownership, as well as a favourable regime in which the registration of companies is carried out in the shortest possible time on the principle of "one window". 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. At the beginning of November 2019, 57 residents were registered here. And there is every reason to believe that the number of them "by the end of 2020 may grow to 80"⁶. A project to create a solar panel production facility is already underway here. In July 2019, the construction of a Belarusian-Chinese plant for the production of mechanical gearboxes with an investment volume of \$17 million started in the industrial park. In October 2019, the engine production plant MAZ-Veichai LLC opened here, where they produce "small-unit assembly of Euro-5 and Euro-6 engines for trucks, special vehicles and buses". The production capacity at one-shift operation mode will amount to 10 thousand engines per year"⁷. But even more impressive plans are being taken here for realisation

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%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%B0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B2%2019%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%83>

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

⁴ "Velikiy Kamen" is recognised as the fastest growing industrial park in the world [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikiy-kamen-nrznian-samvin-bvstrozasuschim-industrialnyin-park-v-mre-369159-2019/>

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

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

⁷ Opening of the plant for the production of engines of Maz-Veichai LLC in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone"

in the near future.

At the end of October 2019, Beijing hosted the 12th meeting of the Working Group for the Chinese-Belarusian

The participants focused their attention on such areas of development of this special economic zone as: improving the legal environment of the park; establishing additional comfortable conditions for attracting investments in the creation of competitive industries; creating a sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure; digital construction; developing the park as a smart city; and implementing projects through technical and economic assistance. Among the tasks for the development of the industrial park in 2020 were highlighted the "priority of export orientation, attraction of anchor investors with high-tech projects, expansion of international activities"⁸. At the same time, they intend to continue to be guided by four main principles of development: "Firstly, it is globalisation, as the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Secondly, industrialisation. The main task is to attract international industry clusters. Thirdly, it is digitalisation, which should give great advantages to the development of the park. <...> Fourthly, ecologisation. Environmental protection and compliance with environmental requirements are the key to sustainable development"⁹.

Recall that at the beginning of 2020 in the "Great Stone" has already registered 60 residents from 15 countries, including: 33 - from the People's Republic of China; 15 - involving companies from Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Switzerland, United States of America and Estonia; 12 - established by Belarusian business entities. By this time, in less than five years, 32 kilometres of roads have been built here, about 400 kilometres of water and gas pipelines, electric lines, sewage branches have been laid, 25 buildings with a total area of about 300 thousand square metres have been completed. And the total volume of concluded contracts and investments exceeded one billion dollars from 11 countries of the world.

Speaking about the trends observed in the industrial park today, we can highlight several major ones. One of them is the development of Veliky Kamen as a smart city with innovative industry and high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020, the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation of the Republic of Belarus, the Industrial Park Development

[Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9051>

⁸ Industrial park "Velikiy Kamen" in November will be presented at the Chinese international import exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-veliki-kamen-v-nojabre-predstavjat-na-kitaj-skoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-immoria-367476-2019/>

⁹ Zheng, X. "Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for Belarusian-Chinese co-operation / X. Zheng // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/veliki-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoi-platfornoj-dlja-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>

Company and the Veliky Kamen administration signed an agreement on the development of 5G technology in the industrial park. It was noted that one of the most promising areas of 5G technology development here is unmanned transport. As a result, the China-Belarus Industrial Park should become "the first in Belarus exemplary base for the introduction of 5G technologies"¹⁰.

It should be noted that the priority areas of development of "Great Stone" remain mechanical engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, new materials, logistics. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the innovative activity of residents. And about 20 projects are already yielding results. Among them is the commercial and logistics company China Merchant, which received a certificate to operate Belarus' only bonded bonded bonded public warehouse. In November 2019, Veliky Stone hosted the opening of the production building of Hess Great Stone LLC, a subsidiary of the Swiss company Garrosserie Hess AG, to produce electric passenger transport. "This type of transport will be characterised by zero carbon emissions and quiet running. The rooftop batteries will be charged at the terminus in a few minutes"¹¹. This resident of the industrial park plans to reach the full production cycle in 2021, when up to fifty bus bodies will be produced here.

The following fact is also indicative of the innovative activity of the park's residents: in March 2020, the manufacturer of a wide range of medical products Assomedita LLC, registered in Veliky Kamen as a resident in 2017, "mastered a new production of respiratory masks and bacterial-virus filters of single use for adults, children and newborns"¹² - products that provide maximum respiratory protection from germs and viruses, which can be used for 12-24 hours.

The industrial park is also thinking ahead. This is evidenced by the fact of registration in March 2020 as a resident of "Velikiy Kamen" of the Chinese company "Sinomach" with a project to create a zone of scientific and technical cooperation and innovative developments, within the framework of which it is planned to build a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and auxiliary infrastructure. In the first phase, the company intends to "implement four research and development projects related to such developments as optical devices, automotive sensors,

¹⁰ Nemankova, Yu. Pilot project for the development of 5G will be realised in "Veliky Kamen" / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyi-proekt-po-razvitiu-5g-realizuiut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>

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

¹² Production of breathing masks is opened in the industrial park "Velikiy Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnykh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikii-kamen-383799-2020/>

semiconductor devices and new materials". The 13 companies also plan to realise the second phase of the project"¹³.

In terms of expanding the international activities of the Velikiy Kamen Industrial Park, one of the most effective tools can be such a form of attracting new residents as the creation of sub-parks, which means "the arrival of not one investor, but a pool of iconic companies under the leadership of a separate management company. This opens up broad prospects for large corporations"¹⁴. It should be added that the park administration addresses this proposal not only to Chinese provinces, "but also to investors from Europe, in particular Switzerland, and Japan"¹⁵. The main condition for future residents, which must be fulfilled, is the creation of high-tech enterprises in the industrial park. And there is enough space and opportunities for building technological clusters and subparks on a national basis for everyone.

It should be noted that the subpark format is already used in practice in Veliky Kamen. Back in May 2017, the first stage of the trade and logistics subpark was opened here, located on 29 hectares. This is one hundred thousand square metres of real estate, half of which was taken up by warehouses and another almost a quarter by an exhibition centre. "About \$120 million has been invested in the construction of the sub-park. In the near future it is planned to start the construction of the second stage. In total, the territory of the sub-park will occupy an area of more than 90 hectares, the volume of investments - \$500 million"¹⁶.

At the 11th meeting of the Working Group on China-Belarus Industrial Park, held in November 2018 in Beijing, it was noted that in the near future the necessary support will be provided for the practical implementation of the subparks of Harbin City, which is in Heilongjiang Province, and Guangdong Province in the Great Stone. It was also planned to "substantively work out the establishment of sub-parks in the industrial park with Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces as well as Hangzhou city by the end of 2019"¹⁷. As for Guangdong Province, back in January 2017, in its administrative centre of Guangzhou, "a signing ceremony was held for the establishment of the China (Guangdong) LED sub-park in the Great Stone Industrial Park"¹⁸, as well as

¹³ New resident with Chinese capital registered in "Velikiy Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belita.by/economics/view/novyi-resident-s-kitai-skim-kamitalom-zaregistrirovany-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>

¹⁴ Koyota, P. Alexander Yaroshenko told about the new residents of the industrial park "Velikiy Kamen", satellite town and plans for 2019 / P. Konoga // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/vysech-pribyl-iz-kamnva.html>

¹⁵ "Velikiy Kamen" offers foreign partners to create subparks [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belita.by/economics/view/velikiy-kamen-predlagayet-zarubezhnym-partneram-sozdat-subparki-365694-2019/>

¹⁶ Anatoly Kalinin took part in the opening of the first stage of the trade and logistics subpark 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/protokol11.pdf>

¹⁸ A sub-park of LED products will be created in the Great Stone Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

five more documents on the intention to join this sub-park of specific companies.

Another document, which is significant in the context of this topic, was signed in November 2018 at the first Chinese exhibition of imported goods and services in Shanghai. This is an agreement on the establishment of the Chengdu-European Industrial Subpark on the territory of the Great Stone. The fact is that Chengdu - the administrative centre of Sichuan province - has a significant industrial potential, including developed automotive and aerospace industries, which corresponds to the priorities of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park. Moreover, "Chengdu is the most economically close city in China to Europe"¹⁹.

Let us note an important detail: recently, a number of important meetings and negotiations have taken place to consider the creation of national sub-parks of European countries in Great Stone. In particular, in August 2019, this topic was discussed in 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 subpark in Veliky Kamen, but also "to act as a developer in it and both engage in development and attract Swiss business to cooperation with Belarus"²⁰. It is noteworthy that already in December 2019 the 60th resident was registered in the industrial park - the already mentioned above "Swiss company Hess Great Stone for the production of electric passenger transport"²¹. And in January 2020 the issue of "possible future creation of an Italian-Belarusian sub-park in Velikiy Kamen"²² was considered in practical terms at a meeting in Rome with owners and managers of Italian companies interested in investing in the projects of the industrial park.

Undoubtedly, all these facts emphasise the very high dynamics of development of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park, a project whose role in the Belarusian economy will very soon become significant in terms of innovation and investment, as well as in terms of technology.

<https://industrialpark.by/novosti/2017/v-industrialnom-parke-velikii-kamen-budet-sozdan-subpark-svetodiodnoi-produkcii.html>

¹⁹ Chinese Chengdu considers the possibility of creating high-tech industries in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<https://interfax.by/news/polity/ekonomicheskaya-politika/1251824/>

²⁰ Kryzhevich, I. On the territory of the "Great Stone" can create a Swiss subpark / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/na-territorii-velikogo-kamnya-mogut-sozdat-shveitsarskiy-subpark.html>

²¹ The 60th resident appeared in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Veliky Kamnya" [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://interfax.by/news/biznes/businesses/1268182/>

²² Belarus and Italy will consider the issue of creating a joint sub-park in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-italia-rassmotrit-vopros-sozdaniya-sovmestnogo-subparka-v-velikom-kamne-376060-2020/>

CHAPTER 2

The goal is to introduce innovations

The science and innovation vector occupies an important place among the main areas of trustful comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. At the same time, three priority components can be distinguished in this segment of bilateral interaction. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the sphere of innovation activities, where a network of joint innovation centres and scientific laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships of specialists, teachers and students take place"²³. Today, the development of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Veliky Kamen is particularly innovation-oriented, which makes it possible to create competitive production facilities, sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure, and digital construction with the aim of turning the park into a "smart city". At the same time, the pace of innovative progress has noticeably accelerated in 2020. Here are just a few examples to support this observation. In May 2020, Great Stone laid the foundation stone at the site of the future construction of the Science and Technology Cooperation and Development Zone or Torch Project by China's Sinomach Corporation. It should be reminded 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 now being implemented in Belarus. As for the Fakel project, this zone will be "aimed at creating conditions for attracting Chinese and European technologies, introducing and testing them in the park and further exporting them to Europe and China"²⁴. Here it is planned to build office buildings and premises for scientific developments, where "four research and development projects are planned to be realised - in the field of optical technologies, mechanics, electronics and new materials. It is also envisaged to build laboratories, office-type co-working spaces, complex construction of educational institutions and high-tech pilot commercial facilities"²⁵. This project will involve not only research institutes and enterprises of Sinomach Corporation, but also enterprises of the Chinese Zhongguancun Technopark and structures of the National Academy of

²³ Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / Boris Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 115-116.

²⁴ On the development in the park "Great Stone" zone of scientific and technical cooperation and development SINOMACH [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/cf_e399_ad_f175824_a.html

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

Sciences of Belarus.

The mentioning of the Zhongguancun Technopark in this context speaks about the very serious attitude of the Chinese side to the Torch project in Veliky Kamen. The fact is that this technopark, founded in 1988 in the north-western part of Beijing, is considered the Chinese analogue of Silicon Valley, is the first 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., "appeared in due course. A total of 5,000-plus products were developed, which filled a void in the history of Chinese high-tech"²⁶. Now the research and development science bureaux of many multinational corporations are concentrated here. China has high hopes for this technology park in terms of "fulfilment of the ambitious Made in China 2025 strategy, which will make the country technologically independent and make it a leader in many fields. The Chinese authorities will spend about \$300 billion to implement the programme"²⁷. Speaking about this technopark, one cannot but mention such a figure: from January to November 2019, it recorded an increase in revenues by almost 14 per cent. At the same time, "the revenues of leading high-tech enterprises in the technopark reached 5.43 trillion yuan (about \$779 billion) during this period"²⁸.

Returning to innovative affairs in Veliky Kamen, we note that in May 2020 another landmark event took place here, showing that one of the promising facets of the development of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park is digitalisation. An unmanned, electric-powered bus developed using technology from Singaporean scientists was tested here for the first time. "The maximum speed that the prototype can reach is 40 kilometres per hour. <...> The driving range is about 180 kilometres. A full charge will take no more than 4 hours"²⁹. On the territory of the "Great Stone" they plan to work out the technology of operation of the novelty, after which, apparently, in the not too distant future it will be possible to commercially operate this unmanned transport.

Also in May 2020, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park registered a new resident - Crownhomes Scientific and Technical Company for Wooden

²⁶ Wei, W. Silicon Valley of China / W. Wei // Models, systems, networks in economics, technology, nature and society. - 2013. - C. 19.

²⁷ Kraslinskova, Y. Beijing launches a programme to attract foreign IT specialists / Y. Kraslinskova // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing_jures_talant

²⁸ In the first 11 months of 2019, Beijing's Zhongguancun Technopark registered 13.8 per cent revenue growth [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 The first unmanned electric bus was tested in Veliky Kamen [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-besplotnyj-elektrobus-protestirovali-v-velikom-kamne-390612-2020>

Structures LLC, which will create in Veliky Kamen "a centre for the production of production lines for the woodworking industry based on the principles of Industry 4.0"³⁰. This production centre, which is based on innovative technologies, is expected to be put into operation in 2022.

Moreover, in 2020, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Veliky Kamen, despite the alarming epidemic situation, continued to demonstrate quite high rates of development, remaining a landmark project of the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" in Eastern Europe. Suffice it to say that "by the end of October, 66 enterprises from 14 countries were among its residents, and the volume of agreed investments was about \$1.2 billion"³¹. This 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, the revenue from the sale of goods, products, works, services outside Belarus amounted to Br36.8 million (8.7 times growth)"³². And the number of employees employed at Veliky Kamen came close to one thousand - 970 people. And, to all appearances, the industrial park is not going to rest on its laurels, as evidenced by a number of facts from the second half of 2020, which show that this special economic zone is now actively searching for new ways of development in many areas, including optimising logistics and introducing innovations.

Thus, in September 2020, CJSC Eurasian Railway Geitvei, a company that "will implement an investment project for construction of a bimodal railway terminal in the park"³³, was registered as a resident of Veliky Kamen. The list of participants in this project, construction work on which will begin in 2021, is very solid. They include the world's largest inland port Duisburger Hafen from Germany, the leading intermodal transport network operator in Europe Hupak Intermodal SA from Switzerland, the Brest branch of the Belarusian Railway, and the resident of the park China Merchant China Commercial and Logistics Company. It is expected that the terminal reaching its design capacity will bring Veliky Kamen residents to a qualitatively new level of realisation of their logistic opportunities.

Speaking about the innovative perspective of the industrial park's

³⁰ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce woodworking products [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnj-a-budet-vypuskat-produktsij-u-dlj-a-derevoobrabotki-390684-2020>

³¹ Xiaoyong, S. China opposes foreign interference in the internal affairs of Belarus / Xiaoyong, S. China opposes foreign interference in the internal affairs of Belarus. C. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kитай-vvstupayet-protiv-vmeshatelstva-izvne-vo-vnutrennie-dela-belarusi-7572/>.

³² Revenue of the residents of "Veliky Kamen" in January - September increased 3.4 times to Br126.2 million [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/yyruchka-rezidentoy-velikogo-kamnj-zv-nyare-sentjabre-vyrosla-v-3.4-raza-do-br126.2-mln-416031-202020/>

³³ The new resident of "Great Stone" will build a railway terminal [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-postroit-zhd-terminal-407959-2020/>

development, it should be recalled that in September 2020, the China-Belarus Innovation Centre for Industrial Technologies, created by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Guangdong Academy of Sciences and the Foshan Research Institute of Industrial Technologies, became a new resident of Veliky Kamen. The creators of the centre see it as a platform for "the implementation of scientific and technological achievements between the two countries. The task of this platform is to develop scientific ideas and bring them to industrial realisation"³⁴. It is expected that the research and development work started here today in such areas as new materials, modern industrial technologies, digitalisation in production, bio- and eco-technologies will develop into specific technologies and production in two to three years. In addition to serving as a link for scientific and technological cooperation between institutes of the Guangdong Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the centre will provide business consultancy 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 commercialisation of the results of the research and development work of the industrial technology centre, it is planned to create a special fund of the Belt and Road Initiative in the amount of \$1.5 million"³⁵, whose resources will be used to support the commercialisation of selected research projects and incubated enterprises.

Another innovation centre for the commercialisation of scientific and technological achievements was planned to be opened in Great Stone by the end of 2020. It was in this vein that the issue was discussed in September 2020 at a meeting of the Belarusian part of the commission for scientific and technical cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese intergovernmental cooperation committee, where the implementation of the programme of scientific and technical cooperation between Belarus and China for 2019-2020 was considered. This centre should become a comprehensive platform for nurturing startups.

Finally, in November 2020, another event took place that can seriously contribute to the introduction of innovations in this special economic zone. It is about the agreement signed by the National Centre for Intellectual Property and the administration of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great

³⁴ Chinese-Belarusian Innovation Centre of Industrial Technologies appeared in "Velikiy Kamen". stone" [Electronic resource] - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitalisko-belorusskii-innovatsionnyi-tsentr-promyshlennyyh-tehnologii-pojavilsja-v-velikom-kamne-408221-2020/>

³⁵ Innovation Centre in "Velikiy Kamen" is planned to be opened by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/innovatsionnyi-tsentr-v-velikom-kamne-planiruiut-otkryt-do-kontsa-goda-408059-2020/>

Stone" on the establishment of a Technology and Innovation Support Centre on the territory of the park. This new structure is expected to "facilitate researchers' search for information on existing scientific achievements and activate the scientific work of young scientists and start-up organisations"³⁶. In particular, this centre will provide free access to patent and non-patent databases of the World Intellectual Property Organisation for all employees of the park's residents. So the opportunities for innovations here are considerable.

It should be noted that today Veliky Kamen also tries to make maximum use 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 innovation alliance of special special economic zones of free trade, created in autumn 2020 in the Chinese city of Shenzhen. This initiative, whose participants also include 47 counties and regions of the Innovation Alliance of Free Trade Zones of the People's Republic of China, intends to "actively respond to global and regional plans, such as the UN's sustainable development agenda to 2030, the Belt and Road Initiative, the EU's investment plan, Africa's Agenda 2063"³⁷. In addition to the Great Stone, the new alliance includes quite a few other foreign participants, whose co-operation may yield interesting results in the future, as each of them is an innovative platform with its own unique creative experience of activity. Among them are Lekki Free Trade Zone in Nigeria, Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia, Djibouti International Free Trade Zone in East Africa, Hambantota Industrial Park in Sri Lanka, Eastern Industrial Park in Ethiopia, Thailand-China Industrial Park in Rayong, Suez Canal Economic Zone. Let us get to know them better.

For example, the **Lekki Free Trade Zone**, located in the Nigerian state of Lagos, is one of the most promising in this African country. Its project is a universal complex, "divided into separate sectors for the oil and gas industry, industrial production, financial and commercial sphere, tourism, health improvement and private housing"³⁸. The FTZ accounts for five kilometres of coastline. Half a hundred kilometres away is Anana Port, the largest in West Africa, and 70 kilometres away is Murtala Mohammad International Airport.

³⁶ Centre for technology and innovation support created in "Velikom Kamne" [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/isentr-podderzhki-tehnologii-i-innovatsii-sozdali-v-velikom-kamne-415194-2020/>

³⁷ "Velikiy Kamen" entered the innovation alliance of special economic zones of free trade [Electronic resource]. - resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikiy-kamen-voshel-v-innovatsionnyj-alijans-osobyh-ekonomicheskikh-zon-svobodnoj-torgovli-405052-2020/>

³⁸ Rendeavour expands Lekki Free Trade Zone development project [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

<https://www.prnswire.com/ru/press-releases/ru-584836431.html>

The Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone is an overseas economic and trade cooperation area in Cambodia, which was established by Chinese companies together with the Cambodia International Investment and Development Group to promote favourable market conditions, where a large industrial centre was built in 2010 in addition to the port. By early 2019, 153 enterprises from China, Europe, America, Southeast Asia and other countries and regions were "registered here. Among them are 139 industrial enterprises, mainly engaged in industries such as textiles and garments, suitcases, bags and other leather goods, machinery and mechanisms, electronics, 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 inaugurated in July 2018 with the active participation of China State Construction. It is expected to "become the largest free trade zone in Africa and <...> a new engine for Djibouti's economic development, helping Djibouti to build a financial, shipping and trade centre in North East Africa"⁴⁰ once all stages of construction are completed. The creators of this FTZ see it as a testing ground for the so-called "Silk Road Station" to replicate China's successful experience in developing global enterprises here.

Creating a transit maritime hub for the entire South Asian region is the goal of a **Sino-Lankan project to revamp the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka**, which sits very close to major international shipping routes. "In the past, there were hardly any ships entering this small fishing town. But that all changed after the launch of a joint Sino-Lankan project to revive the maritime harbour."⁴¹. Thousands of new jobs have already been created here in the course of implementing the Chinese model "port-industrial park-city", the essence of which boils down to the fact that after the port is developed, an industrial park will be created, which will help develop the city. This, in turn, will transform the Hambantota port into a key element of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road.

Ethiopia's Eastern Industrial Park is another "Chinese overseas trade and economic co-operation zone of national level, it already hosts more than 80 enterprises, most of them Chinese"⁴², engaged in pharmaceutical, textile,

³⁹ Yifeng, X. A new industrial district is being built in Sihanoukville province / X. Yifeng, S. Mengkhon // [Electronic resource].
[Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/beltandroad/khm/ruindex.shtml>

⁴⁰ Heads of State of five countries participated in the opening ceremony of the International Free Trade Area in Djibouti [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: https://ru.cscec.com/xwxw_ru/gsxw_ru/201810/2891561.html

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

⁴² Ethiopia-China cooperation is a classic model of China's co-operation with Africa - Ethiopian President [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/c.htm/2018-08/14/_137387915.

metallurgical and a number of other industries. It should be noted that this is not the only project implemented by the Chinese side in this African country. "Based on the experience of China's economic growth, 15 industrial parks will be built in Ethiopia in the coming years using Chinese technologies"⁴³, which, according to Addis Ababa, will allow this East African country to join the group of middle-income countries in the next ten years.

The Thailand-China Industrial Park in Rayong province was built back in 2005. This cluster became the only one in Thailand certified by the Chinese government as an overseas trade and economic co-operation area. By 2017, more than 90 enterprises were already operating here, which "brought more than \$2.5 billion worth of investment to Thailand, solved the employment problem for more than 20,000 local residents, and became an industrial centre and export base for priority traditional Chinese industries in Thailand"⁴⁴. An interesting detail: based on the experience of the industrial park in Thailand's Rayong province, China's Huali Corporation opened the Beimei Huafushan industrial cluster already in Mexico in October 2015 to assist other Chinese companies in entering and developing the US market.

The Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt was established in 2015 when a new 72 kilometre-long channel of the canal was put into operation to attract foreign investment here for an international industrial and logistics hub project. It is expected that "with the development of the Suez Canal, the manufacturing and service industries housed there will form up to a third of the country's total economy"⁴⁵. In spring 2019, there were already 77 residents operating in the Sino-Egyptian part of this seven square kilometre zone. In May 2018, an agreement was signed to establish a Russian industrial zone in this region. In February 2020, the Belarusian side also announced its desire to take part in the creation of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone. Undoubtedly, the innovative experience of developing all these special free trade special economic zones will also be very useful for the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park, which, in turn, has a lot to share with its partners in the new alliance.

⁴³ Stronger the belt of co-operation, shorter the way out of the "backwardness trap" [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 neighbourhood" on the "One Belt, One way" [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

http://russian.china.org.cn/exclusive/txt/2017-04/13/content_40612178.htm

⁴⁵ The President of Egypt issued a decree on the establishment of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/2181686>

CHAPTER 3

To develop the existing potential for cooperation

⁴⁶In 2021, the People's Republic of China launched the 14th Five-Year Plan for the country's socio-economic development until 2025, which will take new steps in reform policies and form a new architectonics of mutually beneficial international cooperation to "comprehensively enhance the country's opening up to the outside world, promote liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment, foster innovation and trade development, and promote the high-quality development of the joint construction of the One Belt One Road project". Meanwhile, the Chinese side will aim to create new advantages in international cooperation and competition, as it believes that "international economic interaction and exchanges are still objective requirements for the world's economic development. Openness to the outside world is the basic state policy of the country"⁴⁷. As for Belarus, the Chinese side expresses confidence that the two states should continue to mutually utilise the advantages of their economies, which are largely complementary, develop the existing potential for cooperation, including within the framework of the "One Belt, One Road" project and the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone", as well as expand cooperation "in such areas as epidemic control, trade and economy, education, science and technology, culture, interregional ties"⁴⁸.

It should be reminded that by today the Republic of Belarus has built quite strong and open relations with the People's Republic of China, which are now characteristic of only three countries - Russia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by such figures. "The People's Republic of China is Belarus' second 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. With the help of Chinese resources, Belarus has already implemented 24 projects worth almost \$4.5 billion"⁴⁹.

Undoubtedly, the flagship project in this context is the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Veliky Kamen", for incomplete six years of its existence, \$650 million has already been invested in it, where 68 residents from 14

⁴⁶ Communiqué of the Fifth Plenum of the 19th CPC Central Committee [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://ru.china-embassy.org/rus/gp/14.htm1832267>.

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

⁴⁸ Xiaoyun, S. Taking the Bull by the Horns / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vzjat-byka-za-roga-sovetv-posla-kmr-kak-pravilno-vstretit-kitaï-skii-novyi-god-7657/>.

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-otnosheniia-s-kitaem-428410-2021>.

countries with declared investments of \$1.2 billion have already registered, of which about half have started their activities. As a result, "a supercapacitor, truck cranes, laser equipment, drones, Euro-6 engines and heavy-duty gearboxes, a 5G communications pilot zone and a multimodal container terminal are just a few examples of projects currently underway in the park"⁵⁰. In 2021, they plan to attract 17 more new residents here. Great hopes in this regard are pinned on the 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 here of the American company Ivy Global, which is considering the possibility of opening in Veliky Kamen "a pharmaceutical plant for the production of a wide range of drugs, including those to combat COVID-19"⁵¹. In the same year, "when the second phase of the park's development begins, plans also include the construction of a second residential complex with 173 flats and a second substation"⁵².

Continuing the theme of construction, it should be noted that in 2021 the construction of a national football stadium and swimming pool of international standard in Belarus at the expense of gratuitous technical and economic aid from China with the completion of these projects in 2023, as well as the beginning of the third phase of construction of social housing on the Belarusian land in the first half of 2021 with the use of Chinese gratuitous aid will also come to the fore. Recall that during the first two stages of this project, 38 houses for 3,286 flats were built in six regions and Minsk, which improved the living conditions of more than ten thousand people. Within the framework of the third stage "it is planned to build 1166 flats of social housing in 20 houses. The total construction area will be about 66 thousand square metres. The flats will be given to citizens who are registered as being in need of better housing conditions and have the right to receive social housing"⁵³.

Finally, as far as the coronavirus pandemic is concerned, the two countries have joined forces to combat it from the very beginning, providing each other

⁵⁰ Investments in "Velikiy Kamen" for the period of the project implementation totalled \$650 million - Yaroshenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-v-velikiy-kamen-za-vremia-realizatsii-proekta-sostavili-650-mln-yaroshenko-428432-2021/>.

⁵¹ The American company Ivy Global considers the possibility of opening in "Velikiy Kamen" pharmaceutical plant [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amerikanskaya-kompaniya-ivy-global-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-otkrytiya-v-velikom-kamne-farmzavoda-426540-2021/>.

⁵² Industrial park "Velikiy Kamen" expects to attract about 17 residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyy-park-velikiy-kamen-rasschityvaet-v-2021-godu-privlech-okolo-17-rezidentov-423412-2021/>.

⁵³ China is going to build 20 more social houses in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitai-sobiraetsya-postroit-v-belarusi-esche-20-sotsialnykh-domov-426882-2021/>.

with assistance and support. As a result, "40 tonnes of humanitarian medical supplies were sent from Belarus to China. From China - two shipments of emergency medical aid goods worth about 32.6 million yuan provided by the Chinese government, as well as 110 tonnes from twin regions and partner companies"⁵⁴. Taking into account the current situation with repeated outbreaks of the epidemic, the parties intend to continue to actively cooperate together in confronting this global challenge, confirming by concrete actions the existing level of trustful comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation.

As for the interaction between the regions of the two countries, back in January 2021, the parties "with a view to developing interregional cooperation, proposed to declare the Year of Regions of Belarus and China and to hold it within three years, from 2021 to 2023"⁵⁵. A number of Belarusian and Chinese regions are already taking active steps to actualise these partnerships. Thus, back in 2020, the Belarusian **Grodno region** and the Chinese province of **Hainan** signed an agreement on establishing twinning ties, which provides for a significant expansion of interaction between the regions in the economic, trade and cultural spheres. This is not the first partner in the Celestial Empire for Hrodna.

Back in 2007, Hrodna residents established twinning relations with the province of **Gansu**. In 2014, "the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation to strengthen economic and trade cooperation and developed the Programme of Cooperation between Grodno Region and Gansu Province for 2014-2020, which systematically tried to take into account the most important aspects of development of bilateral partnership and twinning ties"⁵⁶.

One of the active participants of this interregional interaction 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 department to postgraduate studies. Several joint scientific projects in the field of biochemistry are also being developed. Earlier a project in the field of mechanical engineering was realised, now we also count on a project in the field of logistics"⁵⁷. In August 2018, in the building of Yanka Kupala GrSU, a centre for the internship of

⁵⁴ Qiuyan, Ch. Covid is not a hindrance - trade between Belarus and China turned out to be stress-resistant / Ch. Tsyuyan // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kovid-ne-pomeha-torgovlia-belarusi-i-knr-okazalas-stressoustoi-chivoi-7641/>

⁵⁵ Telephone conversation with the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://president.gov.by/ru/events/telefonnyy-razgovor-s-predsedatelem-kitayskov-narodnov-respubliki-si-czinpinom>

⁵⁶ Zaleski, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / Boris Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 105.

⁵⁷ Yanka Kupala GrSU develops joint scientific projects with Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodno-im-lanki-kumaly-razvivayut-s-kitaiskimi-vuzami-sovmestnye-nauchnye-proekty-344391-2019/>

workers from Gansu Province was opened. In 2019, four investment projects based on Chinese investments were implemented in Grodno. In particular, the former Grodno Hotel was being reconstructed. In the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" a resident from China was registered, who planned to implement a project in the field of logistics. In addition, "a centre of traditional Chinese medicine and a trade and exhibition centre, where the goods of the region's partners from China are presented, were also opened in Grodno"⁵⁸.

In 2018, Grodno Region signed a Protocol of Intentions on establishing friendly ties with the province of **Fujian**. In official language, "the document outlines important areas of interregional complementary cooperation - trade, investment, logistics, culture"⁵⁹. It can be added that the fact that the Chinese province has a well-developed industrial sector - electronics, machine building, and agriculture - and the Belarusian region has a well-developed agricultural sector, contributed to the rapprochement of the regions. 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 woodworking products are in demand in the Chinese market, and the Chinese side has declared its readiness to increase investments in Grodno region in a wide range of areas: from nuclear power plants to high technologies. And now the parties are working on the implementation of the agreements reached.

In short, the People's Republic of China has become a strategic partner for the Belarusian western region, as evidenced by the figures. In the first 10 months of 2020, the enterprises of Grodno region exported more than \$160 million worth of goods to the Chinese market. These are mainly foodstuffs and oil refining products. The emergence of new Chinese partners, namely Hainan Province, means for the Grodno side the actualisation of cooperation in other areas - in the sphere of high technologies, electrical engineering production, as well as the implementation of more global and ambitious projects. Such projects include "construction of a logistics centre on the basis of Grodno airport, opening of direct flights between Grodno and Hainan province. This will allow, firstly, to develop tourism and cooperation in the humanitarian sphere more actively, and secondly, to promote mutual

⁵⁸ In Grodno region 4 investment projects with Chinese capital are being implemented [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-grodnenskoj-oblasti-realizuiutsia-4-investproekta-s-kitaiskim-kapitalom-344505-2019/>

⁵⁹ On the establishment of regional ties of the Grodno region with the Chinese province of Fujian [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

http://shanghai.mfa.gov.cn/ru/o_generalnom_consultsv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html

⁶⁰ Grodno Region and Fujian Province of the People's Republic of China will develop co-operation more actively [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaia-oblasti-i-provintsia-krn-futszian-budut-aktivnee-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-313085-2018/>

deliveries of products"⁶¹. At the same time, the logistics centre may become a transport hub and a gateway to promote Chinese goods not only to Belarus, but also to the nearest European countries. Besides, one can say with confidence that the establishment of twinning ties between Grodno Region and Hainan Province will contribute to the development of cooperation between the cities of the Belarusian and Chinese regions. Thus, agreements between such cities as **Lida** and **Sanya**, **Astravets** and **Qionghai** are already at the stage of elaboration. The administrative centres of **Grodno** and **Haikou** will not be left out of this process.

Another interesting example in this series is **Gomel region**, which in April 2021 signed an agreement with the Chinese province of **Sichuan** on the establishment of twinning ties, which provides for the expansion of cooperation in economic, social and cultural spheres. Recall that the Belarusian and Chinese regions established friendly relations six years ago.

six years ago, when in May 2015 they signed an agreement on cooperation, which provided for "the organisation of cooperation on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in such areas as economy, agriculture, health care and culture, education, sports and tourism"⁶², as well as agreed to establish direct contacts and twinning ties between the cities of the region and the province. And already three years later - in August 2018 - the agreement to establish twinning relations was adopted by the administrative centres of the regions - the cities of **Gomel** and **Chengdu**.

By this time, interregional cooperation of Gomel region on the Chinese vector developed in three more directions - with the autonomous regions of **Inner Mongolia** (2011) and **Xinjiang Uygur** (2016), as well as **Jiangsu Province** (2016). This allowed the region's enterprises to increase exports of goods to China almost three and a half times in 2018, from \$3.9 million to \$13.5 million. The main export positions then were dairy products, flax, wool, sawn timber. And the list of accredited enterprises to supply dairy products to the Chinese market already then included "five Homel producers: "Milkavita", Rogachev dairy canning plant, Turov and Kalinkovich dairy plants, "Mozyr Dairy Products"⁶³.

The next two years showed even more impressive growth of export supplies

⁶¹ Grodno region and the Chinese province of Hainan signed an agreement on twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belita.by/regions/view/grodnenskaia-oblast-i-kitaiskaia-provintsiia-hainan-podnisa-li-soglasenie-o-pobratimskih-sviaziah-421086-2020/>

⁶² Zaleskii, B. Potential of multi-vectorality. Chronicle of international co-operation / Boris Zaleskyy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 63.

⁶³ Enterprises of the Gomel region in 2018 increased the export of goods to China by almost 3.5 times [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belita.by/regions/view/predpriatia-gomelskoj-oblasti-v-2018-godu-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-v-kitai-pochti-v-35-raza-338253-2019/>

from the Gomel region to China, convincingly demonstrating how much demand for these products is in China.

Chinese market. In particular, "in 2020, with an increase of 32%, \$91 million worth of goods were sent to this country"⁶⁴. The basis of these supplies was already wood pulp, timber, meat and dairy products, confectionery. And it should be assumed that the current level of cooperation with Chinese regions is far from exhausting its potential, as "Homiel producers are ready to meet the needs of the Chinese side in flax, confectionery, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, carbon threads, non-woven carbon fibre, sawn timber, furniture"⁶⁵. In addition, there is considerable interest in expanding supplies of Gomselmash cob harvesters and forage harvesters to the Celestial Empire. It should be noted that there are great reserves of development for Gomel region in cooperation with practically every Chinese region - partner or twin, the agreements reached earlier with which should be updated today. For example, in the same province of Sichuan, where more than 90 million people live, in its administrative centre - Chengdu, in November 2019, the Belarusian National Pavilion was opened, divided into seven zones, where Belarusian goods, including food and beverages, agricultural products and handicrafts, were sold. At the same time, the Belarusian and Chinese sides declared their readiness to use the pavilion to "create a comprehensive bilateral platform of ties that will cover such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investment and services"⁶⁶. Let's hope that the agreement signed in April 2021 on establishing twinning ties between Gomel Region and Sichuan Province will become another real tool to fulfil this task.

Interesting opportunities may open up in 2021 in the interaction between Gomel region and the Chinese Autonomous Region of **Inner Mongolia**. After all, in 2019, the regions have already adopted a cooperation programme for 2020. And they reinforced this document at the same time with the Agreement of Intentions on the establishment of twinning ties between the administrative centres of the region and the autonomous region - the cities of **Gomel and Huh-Hoto**, which envisaged the development of cooperation in the field of economy, trade, science, technology, ecology, culture, education, sports, tourism, health care. The fact that Inner Mongolia is an area rich in "natural resources: forests in the east, iron ore in the west, cattle breeding is

⁶⁴ Enterprises of the Gomel region increased export of products to the PRC by one third [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoi-oblasti-na-tret-ivelichili-eksport-produktsii-v-knr-434841-2021/>

⁶⁵ Gomel region and Chinese province Sichuan signed agreements on twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaia-oblast-i-kitaiskaia-provintsiia-svchuan-podpisali-soglasenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

⁶⁶ Mozgov, E. The Belarusian National Pavilion opened in Chinese Chengdu / E. Mozgov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/v-kitavskom-chendu-otkryl-sva-belorusskij-natsionalnyj-navilion.html>

developed in the north, grain is grown in the south"⁶⁷. On the part of Huh-Hoto, the priority areas of co-operation at the time included "machine building, particularly the production of agricultural machinery", ⁶⁸ as well as food industry and

construction. The seriousness of the intentions of Gomel enterprises to enter the market of Inner Mongolia with their products is evidenced by the fact of their participation in the Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Huh-Hoto in June 2019, where "the investment potential of Gomel region, <...> Gomel meat and dairy company, JSC "Spartak" were presented in separate presentations"⁶⁹. It should be assumed that all these intentions of the parties about cooperation are now entering the phase of realisation of concrete joint projects.

In the end, we would like to emphasise that all the above facts once again confirm the correctness of the course chosen in Belarus for the establishment and development of various twinning and partnership relations between Belarusian regions and their colleagues from other countries. The existing experience of their implementation shows that this is "an important and effective sector of international cooperation, which is characterised by openness, mutual trust, tolerance and good-heartedness"⁷⁰, with the consistent and steady development of which the partners are moving towards the encouragement of cooperation between Belarusian regions and their colleagues from other countries.

⁶⁷ An agreement of intent was signed // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soplashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo

⁶⁸ Authorities of the Chinese city of Huh-Hoto intend to develop relations with Gomel in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vjasti-kitaiskogo-goroda-huh-hoto-namereny-razvivat-otnosheniya-s-gomelem-v-promyshlennosti-366222-2019/>

⁶⁹ Grishkevich, A. The Belarusian-Chinese regional forum was held in the city of Huh-Hoto / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/belorusko-kitaj-skii-regionalnyi-form-iproshel-v-gorode-xux-xoto-199900.html>

⁷⁰ Batura, B. Twinning - small links of a great friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenitja-bolshoi-druzhev-7603>

CHAPTER 4

Regions as a factor of 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 the Year of Regions of the two countries within the next three years - from 2021 to 2023. This decision once again emphasises the enormous role that intensified interaction at the level of autonomous districts, regions, provinces, and cities of the two countries plays in the development of bilateral Belarusian-Chinese relations, and the potential of which has only just begun to be truly explored 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 per cent. At the same time, "the driver of Belarusian exports to China was agricultural and woodworking products, the supplies of which increased twofold"⁷¹. It is also important that over a hundred Belarusian agricultural producers, the overwhelming majority of which are located in the regions of our country, have already been accredited in the Celestial Empire.

The facts show that the parties are now taking a variety of measures to unlock the full potential of bilateral Belarusian-Chinese interaction. In this regard, special attention is being paid to resolving issues related to ensuring access of Belarusian goods to the Chinese market. In particular, at the December 2020 meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, a practical platform was created to work out all the issues of access to the Chinese market, as well as veterinary, quarantine supervision and logistics chains, in the form of the Commission on Customs and Quarantine Cooperation. A working group formed at the end of 2020, which includes specialists 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 essence and depth of joint development, simplify the provision of mutual investment without restrictions and prohibitive lists. Simplifying trade in services at the present stage is the basis for active trade, as modern goods are 80 per cent made up of services"⁷². The same

⁷¹ On the results of bilateral trade with China in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ca-ba60371055783-e.htm>

⁷² Belarus and China have created a platform for working out the issues of access to the Chinese market [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-1-knr-sozdali-ploschadku-dlja-otrabotki-voprosov-dostupa-na-kitajskij-rynok-420487-2020/>

December (2020) meeting of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee also noted the need for the prompt involvement in economic turnover in Belarusian regions of the remaining Chinese credit resources in the amount of about USD 4 billion for specific projects to develop social and transport infrastructure.

As we can see, the tasks set at the interstate level are notable for their scale and specificity. Of course, it will hardly be possible to solve them without the most interested participation of the regions themselves. And this is where the regional mass media should say their weighty word in promoting the ideas of the Belarusian-Chinese comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation in the next three years. Moreover, they are now facing no less ambitious tasks to renew both their form and their content.

It should be recalled that at the February 2021 board meeting of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, regional print media, which make up a significant segment of the Belarusian media sphere and cover practically the entire territory of the country, were named among the most important issues of the development of the information field of our country that should be worked out and solved as a matter of priority. Their priority should be the creation of high-quality media products. At the same time, they "should respond to the challenges of the time, be able to quickly adapt to the needs of the reader"⁷³, as well as contribute to the formation of a positive image of Belarus. In this connection, the most 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. Moreover, the thematic focus of the publications devoted to the co-operation between the regions of the two countries can and should already be very diverse.

In particular, such a form of co-operation between the regions of the two countries as twinning and partnership ties should receive particularly powerful impulses of development in the next three years. Their current level is very eloquently evidenced by the following fact: every Belarusian region and Minsk have already become twinned or partners of two or more Chinese regions, thus covering practically all provinces in the Celestial Empire. Thus, the Brest region has the provinces of Hubei (since 1994), Qinghai (2015).), Qinghai (2015), Anhui (2016), Shanxi (2019); Vitebsk - Shandong (2004), Heilongjiang (2005), Guizhou (2015), Jiangxi (2018); from Gomel - Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions (2016), Sichuan

⁷³ Igor Petrishenko: Today a journalist should be a universal media worker, able to work on different platforms - in a newspaper, on a website, in social networks and messengers. [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9758>

(2011) and Jiangsu (2016) provinces; from Grodno - Gansu (2007), Fujian (2018), Hainan (2019) provinces; from Minsk - Chongqing (2002), Guangdong (2012) and Zhejiang (2015); from Mogilev - Jiangsu (1997), Henan (2008), Hunan (2016), Shaanxi (2018), Tianjin (2019); from the Belarusian capital - Changchun (1992), Beijing (1997), Shenzhen (2013), Shenyang (2016), Shanghai (2018). In addition, "more than 20 agreements have been concluded on the establishment and development of cooperation at the city-city level between regional centres and cities of Belarus and administrative centres and cities of central subordination of China"⁷⁴.

Characteristically, the process of expansion and actualisation of twinning and partnership ties continues today. Thus, in terms of the development of twinning ties between **Grodno** Region and **Hainan** Province, "agreements between such cities as Lida and Sanya, Astravets and Qionghai are already at the stage of elaboration"⁷⁵. In April 2021, **Homiel** Region and **Sichuan** Province decided to significantly expand twinning ties in the economic, social and cultural spheres. At the end of March 2021 **Brest** region and **Hubei** province discussed the whole range of interaction. As a result, "the parties agreed to agree on a roadmap for the development of co-operation in the near future"⁷⁶.

As for the **Mogilev** region, in June 2021 it signed a roadmap for co-operation with the Chinese province of

Henan in order to continue co-operation in trade and increase it in the investment sphere. In addition, according to the parties, "among the important issues to be worked on is the improvement of transport communication and logistics between our countries"⁷⁷. It should be reminded that Mogilev region signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations with Henan province back in 2004. Ten years later, "in July 2014, the administrative centre of this province - the city of Zhengzhou - became Mogilev's twin"⁷⁸. Perhaps for this reason, the development of interaction with Chinese partners has been gaining momentum for this Belarusian region since then, as evidenced by the figures. In particular, since 2015, the trade turnover of Mogilev region with the People's Republic of China has increased

⁷⁴ Belarusian-Chinese interregional co-operation and twinning ties [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 // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2021", Volume 4. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 8.

⁷⁶ Chinese Hubei and Brest region intensify co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskij-hubej-i-brestskaja-oblast-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-434998-2021/>

⁷⁷ The Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan signed the road map for the development of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dorozhniu-kartu-po-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-podpisa- mo-gilevskai-a-oblast-i-kitaiskai-a-provintsia-444325-2021/>

⁷⁸ Zaleski, B. Real multi-vectorality. Belarus in the System of External Relations / Boris Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2015. - C. 26.

13 times, totalling almost \$95 million in 2020.

It should be noted that Mogilev region, in addition to Henan province, has four more partners among Chinese regions. These are Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi provinces and the city of Tianjin. In addition, friendly relations have been established between the partner cities: Mogilev - Nanjing, Bobruisk - Wuxi, Osipovichi - Yangzhou, Krichev - Lianyungang. In September 2019, during the first Regional Belarusian-Chinese Cooperation Week held in Mogilev, it was noted that "with each of these partners, relations are developing in several areas: the parties are interested in cooperation in the medical and educational spheres, industrial and tourism sectors, as well as in terms of interregional exchange"⁷⁹. As early as in July 2017, the same Henan province discussed the possibility of implementing investment projects in the free economic zone (FEZ) "Mogilev" and the south-eastern region, where there are serious preferences for business. In particular, in the south-east of Mogilev region there is vast free land for "the creation of a joint venture for beef production taking into account the culinary requests and needs of the Chinese side with the subsequent supply of products to the Celestial Empire"⁸⁰.

As for **Shaanxi** Province, its Department of Commerce in April 2019 signed an agreement of intent to promote economic development and friendly cooperation with the Committee of Economy of Mogilev Regional Executive Committee, in which the parties agreed to "provide active support and information assistance to enterprises interested in investing and establishing import-export relations"⁸¹. In December 2020, the Mogilev Regional Development Agency hosted an online meeting of more than 30 representatives of the parties' enterprises, including FEZ "Mogilev", JSC "Krasny Vyshevik", Bobruisk meat processing plant, Oasis Trup, JSC "Babushkina Krynka", Mogilev Ice Cream Factory, SZAO "Servolux", Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA). One of the concrete results of this meeting was the partnership "between the BGSAA and the North-West University of Agriculture and Forestry. There are already certain developments on approbation of Chinese varieties of wheat and other cereals"⁸².

⁷⁹ Mogilev region has increased beef exports to the PRC by 9 times over the last year [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-noslednij-od-mogilevskaj-a-oblast-v-9-raz-uvlechila-eksport-govi-adinv-v-knr-360961-2019/>

⁸⁰ Kulyagin, S. The Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan intend to more actively develop investment co-operation / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017 - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-henan-namereny-aktivnee-razvivat-investsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-25-7928-2017/>

⁸¹ Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Shaanxi intend to develop economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-shensi-namereny-razvivat-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-342757-2019/>

⁸² Emelyanova, O. Issues of trade and economic cooperation and education discussed during the online meeting of representatives of Mogilev region and Shaanxi province / O. Emelyanova [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev->

Mogilev citizens got a concrete result of cooperation with the city of **Tianjin** back in June 2017, when a social house was put into operation in the regional centre, the general contractor of the construction of which was Tianjin Electric Construction Company. "The new building of 10 floors with 120 flats is located in the Kazimirovka neighbourhood under construction on Grunvaldskaya Street. This is one of the three houses that were erected in Mogilev region thanks to the implementation of the first stage of the project "Construction of social housing" with the technical and economic assistance of the People's Republic of China. Similar objects appeared in Bobruisk and Osipovichy"⁸³. In May 2019, the parties signed a Memorandum on the establishment of twinning ties. In November 2020, such companies from the Chinese city as Tianjin Constant Towards International Trade Co., Bonyum International Trading Co., Tianjin Mengdong International Trade Co., Zhonggong Huamu (Tianjin) Food Co., Zhonggong Huamu (Tianjin) Food Co.

The Chinese province of **Jiangsu, which** in 2015 signed an agreement on the establishment of twinning ties with Mogilev region, became the first of the Chinese regions, with whom Mogilev residents in July 2020 held a contact and co-operation exchange in videoconference mode, the participants of which from the Chinese side were more than 20 companies working in the meat and dairy industries, flax processing, production of alcoholic beverages and drinks. Their interest in this event is understandable, because only on the basis of previously implemented projects the entrepreneurs of Jiangsu province in 2020 "additionally allocated more than \$2 million for the further development of their enterprises. Today, Chinese investors are implementing and planning to realise projects on growing and processing flax, producing mushrooms and various medical products"⁸⁴. Finally, **Hunan** Province is interesting in this context because in January 2018 it presented Mogilev with two new electric buses at once. And the Zoomlion company is implementing a project to produce specialised machinery here.

Speaking about **Minsk** region in this context, it should be noted that in July 2021, Minsk Regional Executive Committee and JSC "China SAMSE Engineering Corporation" signed a memorandum, according to which large healthcare facilities will be built in the Belarusian capital region with the help of the Chinese side. In particular, the adopted document provides for "the

region.gov.by/news/voprosy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-obrazovanija-obsuditi-vo-vremya-onlajn

⁸³ Emelyanova, O. The social house built with the technical assistance of China was commissioned in Mogilev / O. Emelyanova // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/postroennyy-s-technicheskoy-pomoshchyu-kitajskoy-sotsialny-dom-sdali-v-eksploatatsiyu-v-mogileve-254650-2017/>

⁸⁴ Business circles of the Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Jiangsu discuss the prospects of cooperation at the contact and co-operation exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/delovye-kruzi-mogilevskov-oblasti-i-klavskoy-provincii-czvasu-obsuzhdavut-perspektivy>

construction of an infectious disease hospital in Borisov and a surgical building in the regional hospital, export-import trade in agricultural products, the creation of a factory for the production of baby food and solving problems with rubbish processing.⁸⁵ . It should be recalled that in our country, SAMCE, a subsidiary of China National Machinery Corporation Sinomach of Beijing, owns shares in the Industrial Park Development Corporation NWR, acted as a general contractor for the construction of a bleached sulphate pulp plant at the Svetlogorsk Paper Mill and for such facilities in the Velikiy Kamen Industrial Park as the engineering and transport infrastructure, the administrative building, and the plants of Zumlion Bel-Rus LLC and MAZ-Veichai LLC.

It should be noted that the Chinese vector of trade and economic co-operation plays an increasingly important role in the foreign economic activity of Minsk region today. According to the results of 2020, the People's Republic of China became the second largest trade partner of the Belarusian capital region in terms of turnover, accounting for 14.3 per cent of the total volume of foreign trade. And there is every reason to believe that this figure will only increase in the coming years, as Minsk Region "pays special attention to the Chinese market, which is promising for the supply of food products"⁸⁶ . In particular, all dairy processing enterprises of Myasomolprom holding have already received permission to export butter, cheese, whey, skimmed and sterilised milk powder to this country. As for meat-processing enterprises and poultry farms of Minsk region, they are actively working on accreditation to supply their products to China. And already LLC "Veles-Mit", JSC "Slutsk Meat Processing Plant" and JSC "Stolbtsovsky Meat Canning Plant" have received permission to export frozen beef, and JSC "Agrocombinat Dzerzhinsky" and JSC "Smolevichi Broiler" - to ship poultry products. Permission to supply pasteurised milk, cream and milkshakes to the Celestial Empire was also obtained by Niasvizh Baby Food Plant Ltd.

Here too, the great potential for intensification of co-operation with Chinese partners lies in the already existing twinning ties. In particular, back in June 2002, an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas was signed between the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and the People's Government of **Chongqing**, where more than 30 million people live today. In 2016, at the initiative of the Belarusian capital

⁸⁵ In Minsk region with the participation of the Chinese corporation will build health care facilities [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-pri-uchastii-kitaj-skoj-korporatsii-postroiat-obi-ektyv-zdravooohranenij-a-449374-2021/>

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

region, this interaction 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, it came to the adoption of the Agreement on the establishment of twinning ties between the Belarusian region and the Chinese city.

⁸⁷In March 2019, Chongqing hosted the Days of Minsk Region, during which the business forum with the participation of more than 225 representatives of business circles from both sides signed the Roadmap of Cooperation for 2019-2020, cooperation agreements between the International Chamber of Commerce of Chongqing and the UE "Minsk branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry", the Education Committee of Chongqing and the Main Department of Education of the Minsk City Executive Committee, as well as a number of "contracts for the supply of products between business representatives for a total of \$ 24 million". At the same time a representative office of Veles-Mit Ltd. was opened in Chongqing. Only two months later a representative office of the capital region itself appeared here to assist in finding "potential partners to promote the products of Minsk region enterprises to the market of Chongqing. Chongqing"⁸⁸. And in August 2019, the parties signed two agreements on investment cooperation within the framework of the projects "Village with Chongqing flavour in Belarus" and "Village with Belarusian flavour in Chongqing", where "rural dwellings of the Baiyu culture of Chongqing and architectural peculiarities of eastern Sichuan"⁸⁹ will serve as prototypes for the development, respectively, and in China, one of the dominants of the future village will be an exact copy of the Niasvizh Castle.

However, the arrival of the pandemic somewhat slowed down the realisation of the plan. And in 2020, the interaction between the parties was expressed in the provision of humanitarian aid to each other at the most crucial moments. In particular, last February, when the whole story with COVID-19 was just beginning, a batch of medical masks was sent from Minsk region to Chongqing in response to the appeal of the Chinese side. Now there are opportunities to return to the projects of the "pre-Coronavirus" era.

This is also typical of the interaction between Minsk Region and another

⁸⁷ A delegation of the Minsk region is visiting Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2019.

URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/novosti/elavnye-novosti/v-g-chumtsin-prohodit-vizit-delegatsii-minskoy-oblasti/>.

⁸⁸ On the opening of the representative office of Minsk region in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a7ecb41467556183.htm>

⁸⁹ A settlement with Chinese flavour will be built near Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. URL: [/2019/08/01/%0%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BF%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81/](http://www.belmir.by/BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BF%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81/)

Chinese twin region - **Guangdong** Province, the roadmap of cooperation with which for 2020-2021 was signed in November 2019 and included "the issues of supplying Belarusian agricultural products to China and the establishment of a joint milk-processing enterprise"⁹⁰. Let's hope that here too effective implementation of the plans of cooperation between Minsk Region and this Chinese region is not far off.

The Belarusian capital also has interesting developments in co-operation with Chinese partners. In November 2019, **Minsk** and **Shanghai** signed an agreement on the establishment of twinning ties. Interestingly, before this document appeared, the Belarusian capital had already "signed 22 agreements on cooperation with the cities of the People's Republic of China, including 3 agreements on twinning (Beijing, Changchun, Shenzhen)"⁹¹. Perhaps for this reason Chinese companies have already invested about \$30 million of direct investments in Minsk. Signing a new document on twinning, the parties "identified priority areas of cooperation - building up mutual trade, infrastructure construction, tourism"⁹². Minsk citizens are highly interested in Shanghai's experience in a number of areas. In particular, in the organisation of the working process in educational institutions, medical infrastructure, social services and rehabilitation centres for people with disabilities. The attention of Minsk's administrative and business circles is also attracted to the Shanghai Free Trade Zone, which is used in the People's Republic of China for economic and social reforms.

One of the very effective forms of coordination of trade and economic interaction between Minsk and Shanghai has already become an annual business forum of business circles of the Belarusian and Chinese cities. For example, such a forum organised in Minsk in September 2018 brought together "more than 130 domestic and Chinese companies interested in cooperating in the fields of engineering, construction, information technology, chemical industry, food, and jewellery production"⁹³. At the same time, the Belarusian capital was visited by Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothing and fabrics, packaging for medical equipment, cosmetics, toys, jewellery, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, computer equipment, interested in finding business partners in Minsk.

⁹⁰ Minsk region and the Chinese province of Guangdong signed a roadmap for co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<http://belaruschina.by/ru/news/2019/November/12November-2087.html>

⁹¹ Days of Minsk in Shanghai will be held on 7-9 November [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-minska-v-shanhae-proj-dut-7-9-noj-abria-368252-2019/>

⁹² Grishkevich, A. Minsk and Shanghai have established twinning ties / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-shanghai-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svazi-368815-2019/>

⁹³ Zaleskii, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / Boris Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 149.

The business forum "Shanghai - Minsk", which took place in November 2019 and brought together over one hundred Chinese and more than thirty Belarusian enterprises and companies, was equally wide-ranging. The forum programme provided for discussion of topical issues of cooperation "in specialised three sections: 1) Food products, food industry; 2) Tourism and hospitality of Minsk and Shanghai; 3) Industry"⁹⁴. The documents adopted as a result of the event show the high practical impact of the event. In particular, the Minsk City Executive Committee signed a Memorandum of Intent to establish co-operation with Lotusland Shanghai Corporation on the introduction of heat pump technologies and equipment in the construction of industrial and civil structures in the Belarusian capital. The point is that "the application of heat pump units for Minsk satellite cities would allow to refuse laying multi-kilometre heat networks"⁹⁵.

The memorandum on strategic partnership in the sphere of tourist exchanges was the result of negotiations between representatives of the Belarusian Republican Unitary Enterprise Centrokurot and the Chinese group travel company Shanghai Airlines Tours International (Group) Co., Ltd. The agreement on cooperation in the field of international exhibitions was signed by Minskexpo CJSC and Shanghai industry and commerce exhibition Co. Besides, the Free Economic Zone "Minsk" and Shanghai Allynay Technology Co., Ltd., as well as JSC "Slodych Confectionery Factory" and Shanghai Teemo Foods have confirmed their intentions to actively cooperate in the near future. SOAO "Kommunarka" is also going to increase the supply of its confectionery products to the Shanghai market, having signed a relevant memorandum with the Chinese LLC "Trade and Economic Company "Misier".

The fact that the market of this Chinese city attracts serious attention of the Belarusian capital's manufacturers is also evidenced by the fact that nine Minsk enterprises took part in the second China International Import Goods and Services Exhibition held in Shanghai in November 2019. Among them were SOAO Kommunarka, CJSC Minsk Winery, JSC Krinitza, JSC Slodych, JSC Kristall, JSC Minsk Bread Products Combine, CUP Minsk Khlebprom, TPUP Minsk Khladokombinat No. 2.

It is more interesting prospects for interregional

The memorandum signed in November 2019 on establishing friendly relations between the Maskouski district of the Belarusian capital and the

⁹⁴ Business forum "Shanghai-Minsk", 8 November 2019. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

https://www.tppm.by/announcement/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=23213

⁹⁵ Beluga, V. Forum of business cooperation "Minsk - Shanghai" was held in China / V. Beluga // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/forum-delojogo-sotrudnichestva-minsk-shanghai-prohodit-v-kitae/>

Jiading district of Shanghai also opens interesting prospects for interregional cooperation. Just a month later - in December - a delegation from Jiading District visited Minsk, where they discussed with the leadership of the Maskouski 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 outcomes of this visit was an invitation from the Chinese side for students of Minsk's Maskouski district to attend a summer camp in Shanghai. Apparently, friendly relations between the Soviet district of Minsk and another Shanghai district - Changning - will also be intensified in the near future.

All these facts suggest that the topic of Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation should be firmly and permanently "fixed in the Belarusian regional press and reflect as fully as possible the experience already accumulated in this respect"⁹⁷. For this purpose, creative strategies specific to international regional issues will be required in the near future, and representatives of this segment of Belarusian journalism should be engaged in the development of such strategies.

⁹⁶ On the visit of the delegation of the Jiading district of Shanghai to Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://shanghai.mfa.gov.cn/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b8befb6c09304615.html

⁹⁷ Zaleskii, B.L. Information sovereignty and international journalism / B.L. Zaleskii // *Reynalnye CMI Respubliki Belarus u li chbavuyu epoha: ad lakalnai problemamaty da shfarmatsynai bejaspki jarzhava: mataryaly Resp. nauk. - practical conference, Minsk, 5 May 2020 / Belarusian State University; edited by V.M. Samussovich (ed.) [i sh.]. - Minsk: BDU, 2020. - C. 114.*

CHAPTER 5

Industrial Park Development and regional co-operation

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 building up trade and economic, financial, and investment cooperation and expanding interregional ties among the priority tasks until 2025. Within the framework of the declared course to raise the status of Belarusian-Chinese relations to the level of iron brotherhood, exemplary all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, an important component is the activity of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", one of the main tasks of which is to ensure the efficient operation of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovative activities, startups, cluster cooperation, as well as attract Belarusian enterprises to participate in the projects of the Great Stone Industrial Park. At the same time, a specific goal is outlined: "To ensure that by 2025 the number of park residents is not less than 170 companies....",⁹⁸.

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to fulfil this objective were taken in Veliky Kamen back in 2021. In particular, over the three quarters of this year, residents of the industrial park increased investment in fixed capital by more than a third. At the same time, "the volume of industrial production increased more than 2.5 times to Br222.6 million. <> Exports of residents' products and services increased by more than 16% and are exported to 20 countries of the world"⁹⁹. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020, 68 companies from 14 countries were registered [in the park]"¹⁰⁰, then by mid-November 2021, 81 companies from 15 countries were already registered as residents. The work on the expansion of the Great Stone continues.

Thus, in October the Belarusian-Latvian SMD Bai LLC was registered here, which "plans to create a high-tech production of electronic products (boards) of small and medium series"¹⁰¹, widely used in telecommunications, medicine, automotive industry, instrumentation, to supply them to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. In November, the list of residents

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". - Min., 2021. - C. 6.

⁹⁹ In "Veliky Kamen" for 9 months more than by one third increased investments in fixed capital [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-za-9-mesjatsev-bolee-chem-na-tret-uvlechilis-investitsii-v-osnovnoi-kapital-470611-2021/>

¹⁰⁰ Zalesky, B. With the aim of sustainable development. Collection of articles / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 13.

¹⁰¹ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce electronic boards [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamni-a-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platy-465743-2021/>

of the industrial park was supplemented by several more business entities. One of them is Rufais LLC. The investment project of the new resident 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 analogues by higher operational properties. It has a wide sphere of application, including the production of roofing and other elements of buildings and structures"¹⁰², which gives good reasons to hope for the realisation of this product not only in the domestic market, but also in Russia and the countries of the European Union.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian InKata LLC, which was previously registered in Veliky Kamen as an investor to build facilities here to support subjects of innovative activities of the industrial park. "The project will provide design, prototyping, and technical documentation development services, as well as workplaces and equipment"¹⁰³. Another November resident of Veliky Kamen is the China-Belarus Centre for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies LLC, which intends to cooperate closely with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "The company will produce reagents for diagnostics of coronavirus and some other diseases, as well as for food safety diagnostics"¹⁰⁴, which are expected to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic and European Unions, as well as to China.

In the first half of December, the industrial park registered a new subject of innovation activity - Needle Med LLC, which is going to implement in Veliky Kamen a project to create an ideal simulator for practicing practical manual skills for workers of various specialties - surgeons, tattoo masters, medical students. Interestingly, this project was created in 2019 by a group of students. "Its idea is to create a simulator, as close as possible to real human tissues, to prepare specialists for practical activities"¹⁰⁵. Thanks to the opportunities that the industrial park provides to innovators, the development of young specialists, it must be assumed, will find a wide application in real life. In the second half of December, Veliky Kamen registered another

¹⁰² The new resident of Velikogo Kamnj will produce composite materials [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-469205-2021/>

¹⁰³ LLC "InKata" became a resident of "Velikogo Kamnja" [Velikogo Kamnja-Budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy]. [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ooo-inkata-stalo-rezidentom-velikogo-kamnja-471320-2021/>

¹⁰⁴ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce reagents for diagnostics of diseases [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-reagenty-dlia-diagnostiki-zaholevani-471849-2021/>

¹⁰⁵ The new company "Great Stone" will create simulators for practicing manual skills in surgery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaia-kompania-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazhery-dlia-otabotki-manualnykh-navykov-v-hirurgii-474239-2021/>

resident - Beijing Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company (MSC) LLC, the founder of which is one of China's leading enterprises in the development and production of intelligent unmanned systems - Beijing Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company. The purpose of this investment project in the industrial park is to "establish a high-tech production of universal logistics systems of unmanned aerial vehicles and equipment for them"¹⁰⁶.

Speaking about the development of cluster co-operation in Veliky Kamen, it should be recalled that back in June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Veliky Kamen. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the park administration more independent by transferring additional powers from local authorities in terms of administrative procedures; 2) expanding the types of activities of the industrial park; 3) supporting start-ups; and 4) creating preferential conditions for large investment projects with investments of more than \$50 million.

Among the new areas of Veliky Kamen's activities, we should mention, first of all, the creation and development of production facilities in the spheres of biopharmaceuticals, medical products and medical services. A very attractive innovation in this regard is the special conditions for the development of medical activities in the territory of the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services using medicines, medical equipment and products, treatment methods from foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a licence for medical services. The terms and procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices and clinical trials will be significantly reduced and simplified for manufacturers. In other words, all these changes "open wide opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine"¹⁰⁷.

Focusing on the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of medicine in the context of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic is very timely. After all, Chinese traditional medicine "has unique advantages in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases. <...> It not only has a

¹⁰⁶ The new resident of "Great Stone" will start to produce unmanned aerial vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-nachnet-proizvodit-bespilotnye-letachivye-apparaty-476043-2021/>

¹⁰⁷ Koroteev, K. Support for startups, preferences for investors, simplification of land relations - about the innovations of the decree on the development of the park "Great Stone" / K. Koroteev // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/podderzhka-startapov-preferentsii-investoram-uproschenie-zemelnyh-otnoshenij-koroteev-onovatsii-ah-ukaza-no-7805/>

good curative effect on mild COVID-19, but also has obvious advantages in treating critically ill patients, which has reduced the lethality rate of severe cases from 21% to 5%"¹⁰⁸. The use of the Great Stone platform to realise the existing potential of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of health care can have a serious positive result in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

Recall that the Veliky Kamen industrial park has 12 residents operating within the medical direction. "These are companies from Belarus, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia and the USA"¹⁰⁹. An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be Novoera Biotech, which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include the Jingtai Institute of Culture and Economics, Xishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic LLC (Beijing) and Xishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company LLC (Beijing). The new resident will undertake a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "Medicines, supplements, which are planned to be produced, are based on environmentally friendly natural material. They will be in demand not only to help in the treatment of coronavirus, but also in the treatment of colds, flu, asthma"¹¹⁰. In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, a drug aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be organised. It was assumed that at the first stage the produced medicines, the production of which was planned to start in 2021, would be exported to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

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

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

¹⁰⁹ The Centre for Expertise and Testing in Public Health and the Great Stone Park have agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-ekspertiz-i-ispytaniy-v-zdravoohraneni-i-park-veliki-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

¹¹⁰ The new resident of "Great Stone" starts the project in the sphere of Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitaiskoj-mediciny-433283-2021/>

All these facts testify to the active steps to deploy in the industrial park "an extensive cluster, which will bring together the developments in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> It is expected that in the future there will be a medical centre for diagnostic services. This direction is already in the works"¹¹¹. In addition, the development of medical tourism is also envisaged here, for which a kind of medical village will be built near the Volmyanskoye reservoir - clinics and various medical institutions in the field of rehabilitation. It should also be reminded that in the set of measures for the development of the national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025 the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Veliky Kamen" is defined "as a site for the organisation of innovative productions"¹¹². Judging by the above facts, this site 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, one can note the successful experience of its solution by such Belarusian regions as Minsk and Gomel Oblast. Speaking about the Belarusian capital, it is enough to say that "in January-May of this [2021] year, Minsk's trade turnover with China totalled \$730.6 million, while last year it was \$613.8 million for the same period"¹¹³. The main exporters were RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company LLC, Meat and Dairy Company CJSC, Mobiora CJSC, Integral OJSC. The basis of Minsk supplies to the Celestial Empire were timber, meat and food by-products of poultry, milk and condensed cream, rapeseed oil, electronic integrated circuits and microassemblies, tanned or dressed fur pelts, measuring or control devices, collections and collectibles on zoology, equipment for measuring or controlling electrical values, ready-made carriers for sound recording. In terms of consolidating this trend in the future, it is important to intensify the Belarusian capital's ties with Chinese sister cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

Changchun, the administrative centre of Jilin Province, located in the north-east of China, where science, automotive and optical instrumentation industries are developed and where about eight million people live, occupies

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

¹¹² Measures for the development of the national innovation system up to 2025 are determined [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opredeleny-meropriyatiya-po-razvitiyu-natsionalnoi-innovatsionnoi-sistemy-do-2025-goda-475735-2021>

¹¹³ Kukharev and the Chinese Ambassador discussed co-operation between Minsk and the cities of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kuharev-i-posol-kitaja-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-minska-s-gorodami-knr-453612-2021/>

a special place in this list of sister cities. May 2022 will mark 30 years since the signing of the Agreement on the establishment of twinning ties between the city and the Belarusian capital. In 2010, a Belarusian-Chinese technopark was opened in the high-tech manufacturing zone of this Chinese city to become a platform for working on joint projects and further promotion of products not only in China but also in neighbouring countries. Its basis was formed by about 15 enterprises that were part of the zone and had long-standing stable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovation enterprises. At that time, among the joint projects planned in the technopark were "the establishment of an enterprise for the production of medical laser equipment and an agreement on the creation of a joint venture for the production of high-precision electric motors. At the first stage, about 30 hectares of land for construction of office and production premises have been allocated for the project, and another 30 hectares may be allocated in the future"¹¹⁴. More specifically, the technopark is divided into six functional zones: a research and development centre, a project incubator, a museum, as well as three complexes - international cooperation, regional cooperation and service. In addition, it is planned to create an art gallery, bookshop, exhibition and concert halls on its territory. But the main thing is that here "the developments are based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"¹¹⁵.

Today there "a complex of technopark buildings has already been built, and now one of the urgent issues is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"¹¹⁶. And it has already accepted its first three residents: Chinese-Belarusian Centre for Research and Development of Precision Medical Equipment of BITU Technopark "Polytechnik" and Belarusian-Chinese Technopark in Changchun; Belarusian-Chinese Centre for Joint Development and Application of Carbon-Carbon Composite Materials between SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC and Jilin Lenke Company; Belarusian-Chinese centre for the development of functional berry crops between the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences, Poleskie Zhuraviny Ltd. and the Northeast Institute of Geography and Ecology of Agriculture of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. To support this growing dynamics of bilateral interaction, the Belarusian and Chinese sides set the

¹¹⁴ Palezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese technopark opened in the city of Changchun / T. Palezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorusisko-kitaj-skii-tehnopark-otkrivisia-v-gorode-changchun-134192-2010>

¹¹⁵ China-Belarus Technopark is being built in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://nrmgazeta.ru/news/v-changchune-stroiat-kitaj-sko-beloruskii-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 - Shumil'in [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tehnopark-v-changchune-vneset-suschestvennyi-vklad-v-razvitiie-otnoshenii-belarusi-i-si-kitaja-shumil'in-405335-2020/>

task to "focus on improving conditions for mutually beneficial co-operation, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"¹¹⁷. And today the main thematic areas of the technopark already include such as "photo-electronics, laser technology, new materials, construction and energy, agricultural technology and biotechnology, informatics"¹¹⁸.

The Belarusian-Chinese technopark in Changchun is not the only area of cooperation between Minsk and this twin city. Back in June 2014, the parties agreed to develop business co-operation, for which they planned to hold business forums.

"During such events, businessmen will have an opportunity to agree on the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will contribute to further strengthening the economic basis of our co-operation"¹¹⁹. In June 2017, in order to expand twinning ties, the Minsk City Executive Committee and the People's Government of Changchun adopted an agreement to establish cooperation in the field of tourism and development of cultural ties. And within the framework of the bilateral business forum held in the Chinese city at the same time, "memoranda of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by SOAO "Kommunarka", KUP "Minskhhlebprom", KUP "Small Wholesale Base on Western", JSC "Belryba", JSC "Minotel"¹²⁰. So the opportunities for expanding co-operation between the two twin cities are undoubtedly very extensive. It is only necessary to use them without wasting time and with mutual benefit.

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

Such a variety of partnership and twinning ties could not but have an overall impact on the interaction between Gomel region and China. Suffice it to say that for the last three years the supplies from this Belarusian region to the

¹¹⁷ About 300 applications are submitted to the Chinese-Belarusian youth competition of innovation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/oko-300-zaiavok-podano-na-kitaisko-belorusskii-molodezhnyi-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 Chinese Changchun plan to develop business co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitaiskii-changchun-planirui-ut-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

¹²⁰ Minsk and Chinese Changchun signed an agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitaiskii-changchun-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kulturny-250871-2017/>

¹²¹ Zalesky, B.L. Gomel region: Chinese vector of partnership / B.L. Zalesky // *Materiály XVIII Mezinárodní vedecko-praktická konference "Efektivní nástroje moderních věd - 2021"*. Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

Chinese market have grown 20(!) times. And "export of Gomel's enterprises to China exceeded \$100 million in January-November last year [2021]. The main export positions to China are wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionery products"¹²². And this level in the region is not considered the limit, as they see serious potential in increasing supplies to this East Asian country of beef, meat and edible by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, milk, condensed and dried cream, whey powder. For this purpose 16 enterprises have already been accredited in the Celestial Empire. of the region: 6 meat processing, 7

milk processing, 2 distilleries and one confectionery. And in the Belarusian region itself, three enterprises with Chinese capital have already been registered - hydroelectric power generation, concrete production and one engaged in restaurant activities.

An important detail: Gomel region continues to actively expand ties with Chinese regions in 2022. Thus, in January, they held a round table on multifunctional cooperation with Hebei Province, whose business entities have been interacting with Homel partners in terms of production cooperation for quite a long time. In particular, back in September 2015, a joint venture Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise Ltd. was established in Hebei Province to assemble cob harvesters, forage harvesters and grain harvesters.

combine harvesters. The investor on the Belarusian side was Gomselmash OJSC and the investor on the Chinese side was Zongshen Industrial Corporation Ltd. This co-operation project enabled the Belarusian manufacturer to strengthen and expand its presence in the Chinese market. "In 2016, the amount of machine parts supplied to the PRC totalled about USD 2.6 million," the company said. In 2016, the amount of machine parts supplied to the PRC was about USD 2.6 million, in 2017. - USD 10 million. In 2017, the amount of machine kits supplied to the PRC was about USD 2.6 million, in 2018. - USD 7 million. USD"¹²³.

As a follow-up to this project, in March 2017, construction of a new plant for the production of combines for harvesting maize, grain and rapeseed was launched in Weixian County of Handan City District of the same Hebei Province by the Belarusian-Chinese joint venture Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise. And at the same time, "the first contracts were signed with agricultural companies of Hebei and Heilongjiang

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

¹²³ Interregional relations between Belarus and China: state, problems and prospects of development / T.S. Vertinskaya [et al.]. - Minsk: Belaruskaya nauvuka, 2020. - C. 221-222.

provinces for the purchase of Belarusian-Chinese combine harvesters"¹²⁴ . And in June 2019, a new contract was already signed for the delivery of another batch of machine sets of forage harvesters to China for more than one and a half million dollars. And by mid-2019, "the enterprise produced 500 combines"¹²⁵ .

A logical continuation of these partnerships was the adoption in October 2019 by the cities of Gomel and Handan of a memorandum of intent for the establishment of twinning ties to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. In particular, the topic of increasing exports of food products, the same beef, was very relevant for the Gomel side in this context. It was also mentioned that "on a partnership basis the parties should develop industrial co-operation, in particular between Gomselmash and Hebei agricultural machinery enterprise Zongshen - Gomel. There are prospects for the implementation of joint ideas in the sphere of tourism, culture, education"¹²⁶ .

In this regard, it should be said that the twinning ties of the cities of Gomel region with Chinese partners complement the whole complex of interregional interaction of this Belarusian region with China. At the beginning of 2022, seven bilateral documents were concluded between the administrative-territorial units of Gomel region and China. The eighth was the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations between Svetlogorsk district and the city of Baoding, located in Hebei province and having more than ten million inhabitants, signed in January 2022. This document "envisages the development of mutually beneficial co-operation in various spheres - economic, trade and humanitarian"¹²⁷ . The parties certainly have the necessary potential for the development of effective co-operation. And let's hope that the next step in the development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic relations of Gomel region will be the establishment of twinning ties with the whole province of Hebei.

¹²⁴ Grishkevich, A. A new Belarusian-Chinese factory for the production of combines started to build in the province of Hebei / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-belorussko-kitaiskii-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-kombainov-nachali-stroiti-v-provintsii-hebei-237889-2017>

¹²⁵ Gomselmash will supply China with machine kits of forage harvesters for the amount of more than \$1.5 million. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://export.by/news/gomselmash-postavit-v-kitay-mashinokomplekti-kormouborochnikh-kombaynov-na-summu-bolee-15-mldoll>

¹²⁶ Gomel and Chinese Handan intend to develop twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitaiskii-handan-namereny-razvivat-pobratimskie-svazi-366580-2019/>

¹²⁷ Svetlogorskiy district and Chinese Baoding signed an agreement on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svetlogorskii-raion-i-kitaiskii-baodin-podpisali-soglasenie-o-pobratimskikh-otnosheniyah-481071-2022/>

CHAPTER 6

Prospects for co-operation identified

In May 2022, the sixth meeting of the Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation was held, where its participants discussed the state and prospects of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, transport and logistics partnership, as well as the implementation of the joint project - the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. Recall that in 2021, the volume of mutual trade in goods and services between the two countries came close to six billion dollars, while the share of Belarusian supplies to the Celestial Empire has more than doubled. At the same time, "the capabilities of Belarusian producers make it possible to ship almost \$2 billion worth of Belarusian-made goods to the Chinese market by the end of this year [2022]. This requires consolidation of the parties' efforts to accelerate the opening of the Chinese market for new Belarusian producers, to create joint trading companies, and to develop China's largest electronic trading platforms."¹²⁸

During the commission meeting, Belarus suggested deepening trade co-operation in five promising areas. The first is the expansion of direct contacts between the business circles of the two countries. The second is to increase the range of products supplied to China from Belarus. The third is to promote new mechanisms for expanding bilateral trade with a focus on the creation of joint export-import companies. export-import companies, positioning Belarusian goods on Chinese electronic trading platforms. Fourth, developing logistics through prompt delivery of goods by railway. Fifth - building up investment cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral projects and joint work on the creation of new import-substituting enterprises "through the prism of developing the Veliky Kamen industrial park and deepening interregional cooperation"¹²⁹.

The results of the first quarter of 2022 testify to the fact that the work in these areas is being carried out quite actively. In particular, Belarusian-Chinese trade turnover totalled \$1.2 billion over this period. The fact that Belarus is among the top ten largest suppliers of potash fertilisers, dairy whey, meat products and rapeseed oil to China is also indicative of a lot. The agreements reached during the work of the commission should contribute to the successful implementation of the planned areas of cooperation. For instance,

¹²⁸ Chervikov: friendly and partnership relations with China are especially significant for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervikov-druzhestvennye-i-partnerskie-otnosheniya-s-kitayem-osoboznachimv-dlia-belarusi-504062-2022>

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

the Ministry of Industry of Belarus intends to closely cooperate with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce on import and export of machine-building and electronic products. The memorandum signed by the parties "is aimed at strengthening the Belarusian-Chinese partnership in industry"¹³⁰. The memorandum of co-operation in the import and export of woodworking products was also adopted by Bellesbumprom Concern and the Chinese Association for the Circulation of Wood and Forest Products. The document is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of partnership ties, "analysing the problems of mutual trade and finding mutually acceptable ways to solve them"¹³¹ by holding joint exhibitions, fairs, business meetings, exchange of economic, legal and scientific-technical information in all areas of cooperation.

The Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Velikiy Kamen" has been identified as a site for the organisation of innovative production in Belarus in the set of measures for the development of the national innovation system for 2021-2025. One of the main tasks set for the park for the next five years is to "ensure the efficient operation of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovation activities, start-ups, cluster co-operation..."¹³². The record increase in residents in 2021 - 21 - is evidence of how this task is being solved here. To be more precise, 85 residents were registered here at the end of 2021. By the beginning of 2022, "more than \$718 million has already been invested in the park, with 37 companies producing products, conducting research and development, and providing services. Velikiy Kamen companies 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 of the world"¹³³. In the last days of 2021, the 85th resident was the Belarusian SinRubEnerg LLC with a research and development project in the field of digital energy facilities and smart city. "The company will develop complex automation and dispatching systems"¹³⁴.

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With the arrival of 2022, the industrial park continued to work actively both

¹³⁰ Belarus and China strengthen partnership in industry [Electronic resource]. -

2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitai-ukrenili-jaint-partnerstvo-v-promyshlennosti-504071-2022/>

¹³¹ "Bellesbumprom" will co-operate with the Chinese association for export of woodworking products [Electronic resource].

resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-budet-sotrudniczat-s-kitaiskoj-assotsiatsiej-po-eksportu-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-504024-2022>

¹³² Zalesky, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": new projects bring the future closer / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVIII Międzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 3.

¹³³ Yaroshenko: Velikiy Kamen enterprises supply products to 20 countries of the world [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/yaroshenko-nrednriatija-velikogo-kamnja-nostavliajut-produktsiiu-v-20-stran-mira-479114-2022/>

¹³⁴ The new resident of Velikogo Kamnja will be engaged in the creation of digital energy facilities [Electronic resource]. - 2021. -

URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zaimetsia-sozdaniem-isifrovlyi-energoobektov-477402-2021/>

to expand the number of residents and increase the volume of their economic activities. Thus, as of mid-April 2022, 89 residents from 15 countries were "already registered here. The volume of declared investments amounts to \$1.24 billion, of which more than \$750 million has already been invested in the development of the park. Residents have created more than 1.8 thousand new jobs. In addition, almost half of the companies have started their business activities in the park"¹³⁵.

The 86th resident of the industrial park in March 2022 was the Scientific and Technical Company Bel Samoyed Cloud LLC, which "will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems. It is also planned to create an e-commerce centre in Belarus and provide Belarusian and Chinese companies with services in this area"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 particularly "fruitful" for Great Stone in terms of registration of new residents. For example, earlier this month, the 87th resident was Hong Kong-based Yuzhou Science and Technology Company Ltd, whose founder works in product targeting and branding and has branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Wuhan. The new resident "plans to establish a digital promotion centre for e-commerce using Internet marketing technologies"¹³⁷, will cooperate with Belarusian manufacturers to promote their goods in China and intends to provide training on e-commerce. A little later, the industrial park registered its 88th resident - Belarusian KUBI RND LLC - with an investment project for the production of equipment and components for modular construction of smart houses. "The production is based on the innovative Cuby technology, which is the company's own development. It allows to produce high-tech structures with high environmental characteristics"¹³⁸. It is expected that 90 per cent of the products manufactured in Velikiy Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

The 89th resident was another Belarusian company - HomeLand Group LLC, which plans to produce in the industrial park multifunctional noise-insulated

¹³⁵ Yakimov, P. "The Great Stone" opens wide opportunities for strengthening co-operation between Belarus and China / P. Yakimov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikiy-kamen-otkrvaet-shirokie-vozmozhnosti-dlia-ukrepleniia-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kiiai-a-8150/>

¹³⁶ The new resident of Great Stone will deal with digital technologies and mobile payment systems [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zaimetsia-tsifrovymi-tehnologiami-i-sistemami-mobilnyh-platyezhei-490657-2022/>

¹³⁷ The new resident of "Great Stone" will be engaged in digital promotion of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zaimetsia-tsifrovym-prodvizheniem-tovarov-493650-2022/>

¹³⁸ The new resident of Velikogo Kamnja will start producing equipment for smart homes [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-vypuskat-oborudovanie-dlia-nmnh-domov-495324-2022/>

cabins "Aerocapsule" with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things - the concept of data transfer. Interestingly, this project won second place at the national competition of innovative developments in 2021. Aerocapsules, created with the use of smart technologies and equipped with innovative built-in facilities, "can be widely used in open-air offices, airports, shopping centres, production plants and allow creating optimal conditions for recreation and work"¹³⁹.

By mid-May 2022, the number of residents increased to 90 with a declared investment volume of \$1.24 billion. In May 2022, a new resident of the industrial park was the Chinese company Transport Complex - AF LLC, which will create a transport monitoring centre using Internet of Things technology. At the same time, a letter of intent was signed for Hongju Corporation JSC to enter the park, which "plans to engage in biotechnology activities in Veliky Kamen"¹⁴⁰. According to the results of the first quarter of 2022, the industrial park managed to ensure "growth of revenue from the sale of goods - 1.8 times compared to the first quarter of last year (Br123.4 million), production of industrial products of residents - 1.7 times (Br95.4 million), export of goods - 1.4 times (\$22.6 million), investment in fixed assets - 1.1 times (Br30.4 million)"¹⁴¹.

An important area of Veliky Kamen's activity is the creation of sub-parks, which are understood as the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of iconic companies under the leadership of a separate management company, which opens up broad prospects for large corporations. Interaction with the Chinese province of Guangdong is developing particularly well in this respect. Recall that "back in January 2017 in its administrative centre - the city of Guangzhou - held a ceremony of signing an agreement on the establishment of the Chinese (Guangdong) subpark of LED products in the Industrial Park "Great Stone", as well as five more documents on the intention to join this subpark of specific companies"¹⁴². Today, this subpark already has 15 residents specialising in areas such as LED production, integrated logistics, electric transport, unmanned systems and research and development. They will soon be joined by a joint innovation centre

¹³⁹ The new resident of "Velikogo Kamnja" will produce innovative aerocapsules [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-innovatsionnye-aerokapsuly-495913-2022/>

¹⁴⁰ The new resident of Velikogo Kamnja will create a centre for monitoring of transboundary transportations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdat-sentr-monitoringa-transgranicnyh-nerevozok-501098-2022/>

¹⁴¹ The number of residents of "Velikiy Kamen" increased to 90 with the declared volume of investments in \$1,24 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-vozroslo-do-90-s-zaiavlennym-objemom-investitsij-v-124-mlrd-502265-2022/>

¹⁴² Zalessky, B.L. "Great Stone": development perspective - subparks / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilisation - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences.: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 21.

established by the Guangdong Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which will focus on R&D in industrial and digital technologies, as well as new materials, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. So, in this direction we see the successful realisation of the plans outlined a few years ago.

The planned interaction of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park with similar preferential economic zones in other countries should also contribute to further unlocking the potential of the Great Stone's innovative areas. In particular, in Cuba and Uzbekistan. Thus, in January 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone (SDZ), which provides for cooperation "in attracting investment, strengthening ties between the business communities of Belarus and Cuba, and also provides for information interaction"¹⁴³. Electronics, logistics, pharmaceuticals, energy, finance and banking sectors are the priority areas of activity of the Cuban ZOR, established in November 2013, located 45 kilometres from Havana, where by the end of 2021 there were more than 60 residents from 21 countries. In January 2022, the parties have already started discussing specific areas of co-operation, "particularly in the area of attracting residents and developing interaction with Cuban pharmaceutical companies"¹⁴⁴. If we take into account that the pharmaceutical sector in Great Stone is on the rise, it is easy to assume that the emergence of concrete results from this co-operation will not be long in coming.

Another interesting example in this context is the Uzbek free economic zones (FEZ) "Jizzak" and "Syr Darya". In early April 2022, the Velikiy Kamen administration discussed with their representatives areas of possible cooperation, including "establishing interaction between residents of the park, free economic zones and enterprises in the field of import and export of component materials and finished products"¹⁴⁵. The parties agreed to sign a memorandum of co-operation, which will enshrine their desire to implement joint projects. The specialisation of Uzbek FEZs indicates that there may well be such projects.

In particular, FEZ "Jizzak" was established in March 2013 in Jizzak region to attract direct investment in the creation of high-tech and innovative

¹⁴³ "Great Stone" and Cuban zone of special development "Mariel" will co-operate in attraction of investments [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velfkii-kamen-i-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiia-mariel-budut-sotrudnichestvo-s-nrivlechenii-investitsii-426316-2021/>

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

¹⁴⁵ "Great Stone" and FEZ of Uzbekistan intend to develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velfkii-kamen-i-sez-uzbekistana-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-493658-2022/>

industries. And today there are already several interesting examples in this regard. Thus, in March 2020, an agreement was signed here on the establishment of production of Volkswagen light commercial vehicles on the basis of LLC "Jizzak Automobile Plant". The implementation of this project is divided into two stages. In 2020-2021, German cars were delivered here in a ready-made form for market research and marketing analysis. From 2022, "a full production cycle will begin, which includes welding, painting and assembly processes <...>. Dealer and service networks will also be expanded in every region of Uzbekistan"¹⁴⁶.

Another curious example is the Uzbek enterprise ADM Jizzakh, located in the Jizzakh FEZ and producing KIA and Lada models there. In October 2021, it announced that in early 2023 it would start small-scale assembly of these vehicles. In total, "it is planned to organise the production of 314 parts and components, as well as launch welding and painting shops"¹⁴⁷. This will make it possible to produce 100 thousand of these models a year, to create three thousand new jobs and to bring the localisation of production up to 30 per cent. It seems that such experience may be of great interest to the Belarusian side as well.

As for the FEZ "Syrdarya", it was established on the basis of the branch of FEZ "Jizzak" in Syrdarya region in April 2018. One of its main objectives is to ensure the comprehensive and effective use of the production and resource potential of this Uzbek region "on the basis of deep processing of mineral and raw material resources, expanding the production of products in demand in foreign markets, as well as import-substituting products with high added value"¹⁴⁸. Such production areas for attracting investments and advanced technologies as deep processing, storage and packaging of fruit and vegetables and other agricultural products, textile, footwear, leather goods, chemical, food, electrical industry, agricultural machine building, construction materials industry have been identified as the main ones. With the help of the FEZ they intend to significantly strengthen the export component of the region, where "more than 80 exporters' enterprises, which supply abroad more than 50 types of products" are already working"¹⁴⁹. So here, too, the range of joint interests with Great Stone can be quite extensive. All this indicates that the Sino-Belarusian industrial park retains its strategic

¹⁴⁶ Production of Volkswagen cars in Uzbekistan will begin in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.eazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/>

¹⁴⁷ Plant in Uzbekistan for production of KIA and Lada in 2023 will increase localisation up to 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/2021/10/27/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povyssit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

¹⁴⁸ A new free economic zone is being created in Syrdarya [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/q/FruF/948997847~%2%294899784>

¹⁴⁹ Mirzaev, G. Syrdarya opens doors to investors / G. Mirzaev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/amp/2019/08/29/syrdarinskoi-oblasti-uzbekistana-gotovv-k-millionym-investiciyam.html>

importance as a country-scale growth point for Belarus.

With regard to interregional cooperation, in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an 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 interaction between Belarusian regions and cities and provinces of the Celestial Empire. Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, "which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations"¹⁵⁰, one can note the successful experience of its fulfilment in 2022 by such Belarusian regions as Vitebsk, Grodno and Brest regions.

Thus, in October 2022, **Vitebsk Region** and the Chinese **province of Jiangxi** signed an agreement on cooperation in economy, education, healthcare, sports and will establish contacts in trade, science and technology. The parties will interact in a comprehensive manner. For example, it is planned to organise meetings via videoconference, at which the Chinese partners will be presented the leading enterprises of Vitebsk, their developments and technologies that may be useful and interesting to companies from Jiangxi. In particular, we are talking about joint projects for the development of agriculture, mechanical engineering, as well as scientific parks and university developments. It should be noted that the two regions - Belarusian and Chinese - have previously held events: a conference on vocational education and training of engineering specialists, as well as on the fight against COVID-19. In addition, "there are regular container trains to Nanchang, the urban district where the authorities of Jiangxi are located, which are formed, among other things, by a logistics company from Orsha. Nanchang and Orsha have established partnership ties, and another city of the province - Funzhou - with Polotsk"¹⁵¹. The signed agreement, apparently, will help the northern region of Belarus and the Chinese province located in the south-east of China to reach a new level of relations. In the context of this topic, it is interesting that in September 2022, within the framework of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China.

Days of Vitebsk region were held in another Chinese province - **Heilongjiang**, where "the potential for cooperation between sister regions in trade and economic, production, tourism and investment spheres" was presented¹⁵². By the way, this region of China is home to more than 30

¹⁵⁰ Zalesky, B. Time of concrete decisions. Chronicle of international co-operation / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 100.

¹⁵¹ Pushnyakova, A. Trade, science, sport: Vitebsk region signed a cooperation agreement with Chinese Jiangxi / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlia-nauka-sport-vitebskaia-oblast-podpisala-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kitaiskoi-tszjansi-532401-2022>

¹⁵² Days of Vitebsk region are held in the Chinese province Heilongjiang [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-vitebskoi-oblasti-prohodiat-v-kitaj-skoj-provintsii-hei-luntzi-an-525147-2022/>

million people.

And in October 2022 an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges and cooperation was also signed by the cities of **Grodno** and **Lanzhou** - the administrative centre of the Chinese province of Gansu, where the parties envisaged "deepening of bilateral interaction, expansion of exchanges and cooperation between the regions in trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural and tourist and other spheres. The document is also aimed at strengthening friendly ties between the residents of the two cities"¹⁵³. Recall that the memorandum on the establishment of twinning relations between **Gansu Province** and **Grodno Region** was signed in 2007. For 15 years more than 10 different agreements have been concluded between the regions, with trade and economic co-operation developing especially dynamically. In April 2022, Gansu and Hrodna signed the Cooperation Programme for 2022-2023, which is filled with concrete joint projects. It "further elaborated those areas where co-operation is not yet so actively developing <...>. These are agriculture, tourism, technology exchange, traditional Chinese medicine"¹⁵⁴. A

Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang from Gansu Province agreed to "conclude an agreement on establishing co-operation"¹⁵⁵. For reference, we note that Grodno Region has also signed an agreement on twinning relations with **Hainan Province**.

And one more interesting example: **Brest region and Hubei province**. In May 2022, the parties signed an action plan for the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation for 2022-2024, which outlines the development of international interregional cooperation in four main areas: mutual trade, investment, medicine, education. In particular, the Chinese province has been supplied with food products and woodworking products from Brestchyna producers for a number of years. But there are plans to significantly expand this co-operation, including by establishing direct business relations between economic entities. For example, it is a question of establishing investment cooperation between the free economic zone "Brest" and enterprises of the automotive industry in Hubei province, as well as between the Berezovsky motor repair plant and manufacturers of

¹⁵³ Grodno and Chinese Lanzhou signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belia.by/regions/view/grodno-i-kitajskii-lanchzhou-podpisali-sozlashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennykh-obmenov-532444-2022/>

¹⁵⁴ Grodno region intends to expand co-operation with the Chinese province of Gansu. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belia.by/regions/view/grodnenskaia-oblast-namerena-rasshirat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitaj-skoj-provintsiei-gansu-498323-2022/>

¹⁵⁵ Novogrudok district and the Chinese city of Dunhuang intend to conclude an agreement on establishing co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belia.by/regions/view/novogrudskii-rai-on-i-kitajskii-gorod-dunhuan-namereny-zakliuchit-sozlashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-495725-2022/>

diesel engines in this region of China. Also, "the possibility of participation of Chinese investors in the implementation of Brest region projects on the organisation of production of electric car charging units, production of powder and liquid detergents on the basis of JSC "Barkhim", technical re-equipment of Baranovich cotton production association, production of clinker products on the basis of Goryn Construction Materials Plant, development of glass sands deposit "Gorodnoe" will be worked out"¹⁵⁶. As for the medical sphere, the prospects of cooperation between Brest region and Hubei province are associated with the joint production of ultrasonic diagnostic devices, organisation of production of disposable systems for blood transfusion and medical solutions. There are also plans to establish a centre of traditional Chinese medicine on the basis of the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital, for which the physiotherapy building may be reconstructed.

All these facts are a good illustration of how the multifaceted Belarusian-Chinese interaction is now reaching the level of all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, as it is written 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 the road map of co-operation for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskai-a-oblast-i-provintsii-a-hubei-podpisali-dorozhniui-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-2024-godv-503065-2022/>

CHAPTER 7

Priorities of the new stage of partnership

In September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an 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 establishment of platforms as joint centres of applied scientific research and laboratories. It is noted that the development of bilateral relations has moved to a new stage where "the interaction between research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in the field of innovation has been continuously strengthened. The spheres, mechanisms and methods of scientific and technological co-operation are constantly being expanded, improved and 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 major joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation, where a network of joint innovation centres and scientific laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships of specialists, teachers and students take place"¹⁵⁸.

In particular, the National Academy of Sciences [NAS] of Belarus alone has already established more than 20 international research centres and laboratories jointly established with Chinese partners, which are engaged in the development and adaptation of advanced technologies, as well as their promotion in the markets of Belarus, China and third countries. "Contract documents have already been signed by NAS of Belarus with leading scientific organisations of China - the Chinese Academy of Sciences, academies of sciences of a number of provinces of China, large manufacturing corporations of China - Huawei, A VIC..."¹⁵⁹. In particular, in April 2022, the NAS of Belarus signed an agreement on scientific and technical co-operation with the Chinese company "SAMSE. Environmental Technologies", which specialises in environmental protection. The signed agreement, which is designed to promote scientific and technical co-operation and practical implementation of joint scientific and technical

¹⁵⁷ Xie Xiaoyun: cooperation between Belarus and China in science and technology is continuously strengthening [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-si-aouun-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-i-kitaia-v-sfere-nauki-i-tehnologii-nenervvno-ukreniaetsia-534171-2022>

¹⁵⁸ Zaleskii, B. Frontiers of multivectorality. Collection of articles / Boris Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 471.

¹⁵⁹ NAS has created more than 20 joint centres and laboratories with partners from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-nan-sozdano-bolee-20-sovmestnyh-sovmestnyh-tsentrov-i-laboratorii-s-partnerami-iz-kitaia-494752-2022/>

developments in the field of environmental protection, primarily concerns soil remediation technologies, which are of particular interest to the Chinese partners. The fact is that the Chinese company, uniting designers, scientists, equipment manufacturers, investors, operators in the field of ecology, is now concentrating its efforts on the expansion of activities in the field of municipal water supply and wastewater disposal, industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, energy saving and management of cyclic use of waste as a resource raw material. At the same time, the China SAMO Engineering Corporation was established, which also signed a co-operation agreement with the NAS of Belarus. This document defines the priority areas of cooperation as "energy saving and environmental protection, new energy sources, new materials, optics, precision instruments, semiconductors and biomedicine, as well as the expansion of commercial application of the results of joint scientific activities"¹⁶⁰.

As for the interaction between higher education institutions of the two countries, the parties will develop cooperation "on the basis of the development of joint educational programmes with the subsequent establishment of joint educational structures (faculties, institutes) between leading institutions of higher education, including the use of distance learning technologies..."¹⁶¹. Suffice it to say that Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct co-operation agreements. "To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in the PRC, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000 people. The parties have developed more than 30 joint educational programmes."¹⁶². Among Belarusian universities actively developing cooperation with China in science and education are the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Brest State Technical University, and the Polessky State University.

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 more than 50 Chinese institutions. The partners include Harbin University of Science and Technology, Henan, East China Normal University and Foshan

¹⁶⁰ Biomedicine and new energy sources. NAS of Belarus signed an agreement with the Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/biomeditsina-i-novye-istochniki-energii-nan-belarusi-podpisala-soglasenie-s-kitai-skoj-komoratsiei-498676-2022/>

¹⁶¹ China and Belarus issued the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the Relationship of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/16/kitai-i-belarus-opublikovali-sovmestnuiu-deklaraciju-ob-ustanovlenii-otnoshenii-vseporogodnogo-i-vsestoronnego-strategicheskogo-partnerstva.html>

¹⁶² Belarus and China held a videoconference on cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitai-proveli-videokonferentsiiu-po-sotrudnichestvu-po-sfere-obrazovaniia-526453-2022/>

University. "In 2019, bilateral partnership documents were signed with Peking University and Shanghai University of Transport"¹⁶³. BSU has received the honourable right to host the Confucius Institute. The Chinese partner in this case is also Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU), co-operation with which has been developing since 2007. A significant result of co-operation was the opening of two joint institutes at BSU and DPU. Today there are 244 Chinese students in the Chinese-Belarusian institute. Two graduations have already taken place. "In 2021, 78 Chinese graduates and five Belarusians received diplomas of BSU and DPU, in 2022 - 74 Chinese and two Belarusian citizens. There are 142 Belarusian students studying at the Belarusian-Chinese joint institute. The first graduation will take place in 2023"¹⁶⁴.

In May 2021 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSU and Tsinghua University, which is ranked 17th among the best universities in the world. The Memorandum "provides for exchange of students, invitation of teachers and scientists, implementation of joint research, educational projects, exchange of publications, information, teaching materials, organisation of scientific, educational and cultural events"¹⁶⁵. This university was founded in 1911. It is located in the north-west of Beijing in the Haidian student neighbourhood. Today, Tsinghua has about 53 thousand students, of whom more than 3200 are foreigners. The educational process is provided by more than 3600 teachers. There are 21 institutes and 59 faculties in structure of the university.

And in September 2022 another partner of BSU appeared in China - Huzhou University of Zhejiang Province. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities "provides for the implementation of joint research projects, educational programmes, student exchanges and other areas of cooperation"¹⁶⁶. Huzhou University has a history of more than 100 years. Currently, the university specialises in a wide range of academic disciplines and has achieved internationally recognised results in research and teaching in mathematics, clinical medicine and engineering. In 2017, the university established the Intercultural Research Centre, which is engaged in

¹⁶³ Kreinina, O. BSU on the development of co-operation with leading universities of China / O. Kreinina // [Electronic resource]. - [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/bgu-o-razviti-i-sotrudnichestva-s-veduschimi-universitetami-kitaj-3187/>.

¹⁶⁴ Cooperation of BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University was depicted in the bronze tetrapod din [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/bon-i-universitet-tsinghua-nodpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-441298-2021/>.

¹⁶⁶ BSU and Chinese Huzhou University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-kitajskii-universitet-huchzhou-nodpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-524518-2022/>.

international projects, including with the Belarusian side.

As for the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), in February 2022, the Belarusian university signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with Shenyang Technological University (STU) to establish the China-Belarus Innovation Training and Research and Production Centre for Strengthening, Rehabilitation and Corrosion Protection of Machine Parts, which will concentrate new technologies and equipment in one place, promptly produce prototypes of machine parts for the production of machine parts, as well as the development of new technologies and equipment for the production of machine parts. "The centre will concentrate all new methods of peening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts. There is no such centre in China in this form and of this type"¹⁶⁷. At the request of STU, the centre includes such Belarusian technologies as: gas-flame spraying of thermoplastic polymer powders; hypersonic metallisation; deformation cladding with flexible tools; gas-flame spraying of metal, ceramic, polymer and composite powders; laser cleaning of the surface of materials from organic and inorganic contaminants, rust, scale and paint coatings; plasma coating with metal, ceramic and composite powders; restoration of metal, ceramic and composite powders; and restoration of the surface of machine parts. The centre was opened at Shenyang University of Technology in October 2022.

In addition, in October 2022, a conference on scientific exchange between BITU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was held in Changchun. Recall that in December 2019, the parties signed an agreement on the establishment of a joint Chinese-Belarusian laboratory of advanced 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 solid oxide electrolysis for the efficient production of green hydrogen and green ammonia"¹⁶⁸. During the conference, Belarusian specialists drew attention to the experience of BITU in the field of modifying the surfaces of machine parts using high-energy impact methods and studying their structure and properties, which in the future will make it possible to expand the scope of scientific research and application of its results in the Chinese industry.

¹⁶⁷ Kravchuk, M.A. Opening of the Chinese-Belarusian innovative educational and scientific production centre of hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts / M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11923-otkrytie-kitaisko-belorusskogo-innovatsionnogo-uchebno-nauchno-proizvodstvennogo-centra>

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

Speaking about the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), it has already signed 17 cooperation agreements with universities and organisations in China, which are located in many regions of the country, including Guangdong Province. "In cooperation with Chinese partners, joint educational programmes have been created and are successfully functioning in such areas as "Machines and apparatuses of chemical productions and enterprises of construction materials", "Automation of technological processes and productions", "Mechatronics"¹⁶⁹. In addition, in March 2022 BSTU signed memoranda: with OO "Guangzhou Knowledge City Technological Industrial Service Company" - on strategic cooperation in the field of energy saving and environmental protection to help build a "carbon-free community"; with JSC "Guangzhou Hengyun Group of Companies" - in the field of hydrogen technologies for the joint construction of an industrial park of hydrogen energy.

Another example in this context is Brest State Technical University (BrSTU), where in 2022 the implementation of a joint Belarusian-Chinese project in the field of information technologies, funded by the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Basic Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China, began. And in April 2022 it became known about the launch of a joint educational programme between BrSTU and Xinxiang University, which concerns the training of students in mechanical engineering technology. "The training will take place in a full-time format on the territory of the PRC on the materials presented by Brest university. A large block of the programme will be presented to Chinese students directly by Brest State Technical University professors"¹⁷⁰. In October 2022 Brest university also established cooperation with Guangdong Construction Vocational College to create long-term conditions for the training of qualified personnel in Belarus in the interests of the construction sector of China and to cooperate in organizing a joint educational programme for training specialists in architecture and construction. It should be noted that the Chinese partner of BrSTU is "the only state college in Guangdong province, which trains highly qualified specialists in the field of construction. The college was founded in 1979 and for 43 years has graduated more than 200 thousand highly qualified personnel"¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ BSTU and Belarusian companies signed memoranda of co-operation with Guangzhou [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bgtu-i-belorusskie-kompanii-nodisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-s-guanchzhou-489362-2022>.

¹⁷⁰ BrGTU and Xinyang University started the implementation of the joint programme [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brotn-i-sinsianskii-universitet-nachali-realizatsiju-sovmestnoi-programmy-496937-2022/>.

¹⁷¹ BrSTU and Guangdong Construction Vocational College agreed to establish co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/brstu-i-guandunskii-stroitelnyi-proftekholledzh-dogovorilis-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-530263-2022/>.

As for the interaction of Polesky State University with colleagues from China, in September 2022 the Belarusian university held the first international scientific conference, which was called "Ping Readings". Together with Belarusian and foreign partners, Pinsk residents discussed topical issues for the economy, banking sector, development of biotechnology, engineering, healthy lifestyle, preservation of historical and cultural heritage. At the conference PolesSU signed an agreement on cooperation with the Shanxi Institute of Science and Technology, which "specialises in nature management, engineering, biotechnology. We aim to build serious partnerships"¹⁷². In addition to joint research projects, the universities see prospects for co-operation in academic mobility.

The high scientific, technical and innovation cooperation between Belarus and China is also evidenced by the fact that at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, the largest exhibition event in the Celestial Empire, where almost three thousand companies from 127 countries took part in 2021, the Belarusian country pavilion "High-Tech Equipment and Information Technologies" presented 126 scientific and technical developments of scientists from 32 organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and institutions of the Belarusian Ministry of Science and Technology in November 2022. In particular, the

The exposition of the Ministry of Education section included such areas of co-operation as "digital information and communication technologies and interdisciplinary technologies and production based on them; biological, medical, pharmaceutical and chemical technologies and production; energy, construction, ecology and environmental management; mechanical engineering, engineering technologies, instrumentation and innovative materials; agro-industrial and food technologies; human and social security"¹⁷³.

Among the presented novelties are ultra-small orbital spacecraft created by the Belarusian State University (BSU). The first nanosatellite was put into orbit four years ago. Under the State programme "Science-intensive technologies and engineering", the second nanosatellite has already been created, "the design of which implements an innovative modular layout of on-board subsystems of a small spacecraft. BSU is also presenting anti-tumour drugs Temodex, Prospidelong, Cisplacel"¹⁷⁴. Another interesting

¹⁷² PolesGU will co-operate with the Institute of Science and Technology from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/polesgu-budet-sotrudnicat-s-institutom-nauki-i-tehnologii-iz-kitaja-524605-2022/>

¹⁷³ Universities of Belarus at the V China International Import Expo China International Import Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11970-vuzy-belarusi-na-v-china-international-import-expo>

¹⁷⁴ More than 120 Belarusian developments are presented at the China International Import Expo. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/tech/view/belce-120-beloruskich-razrabotok-predstavleny-na-kitaj-skoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-innoma->

novelty is an electric scooter produced by JSC "Instrument-Making Plant Optron" of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Its maximum speed is 60 kilometres per hour, and its carrying capacity is 200 kilograms. In addition, such advanced developments as "Burevestnik unmanned aerial vehicle" were presented in Shanghai. (Research and Production centre Burevestnik" unmanned aerial vehicle (Scientific and Production Centre of Multifunctional Unmanned Complexes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), an automated system for registration of welding processes (Belarusian-Russian University), heat-resistant impact-resistant coatings (F. Skaryna Gomel State University), bread of increased nutritional value (Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies)....",¹⁷⁵ . Also. In November 2022, at the IX Belarusian-Chinese Youth Innovation Forum "New Horizons - 2022" held 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 of Belarusian-Chinese scientific and technical projects. "Based on its results, 35 projects will receive state support from the two countries"¹⁷⁶ . All these facts show that the multifaceted scientific, technical and innovation co-operation between the two countries, with systematic and purposeful work of the partners to develop ties, yields fruitful results.

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¹⁷⁵ Food industry novelties and spacecraft: what Belarus will present at the import exhibition in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novinki-pisheproma-i-kosmicheskie-apparaty-cto-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-imnorta-v-kitae-533240-2022/>

¹⁷⁶ Young scientists of Belarus and China develop co-operation in the sphere of innovations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/molodye-uchenye-belarusi-i-kitaja-razvivaiut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-innovatsii-534160-2022/>

CHAPTER 8

Strategic partnership entering a new era

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

Among the signed documents is the **Programme of Belarusian-Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation for 2023-2024**, which aims the two countries at creating joint innovative industries. After all, "a developed engineering base, a modern system of training highly qualified personnel, and many years of advanced experience of leading Belarusian design bureaus all form the basis for future high-tech industries"¹⁷⁸. In this regard, we would like to emphasise that Chinese investors invested over USD 100 million in projects in Belarus in 2022. In addition, more than forty projects were implemented with the participation of Chinese companies, and about twenty more promising initiatives are being worked on this year. In this context, we should mention the Great Stone industrial park, where in 2022 "Belarusian resident enterprises launched production of glass for all types of land transport, innovative photographic printing products, automated process control systems in industry and energy. The scientific and technological park "InKata" has been put into operation, which accommodates companies engaged in scientific research and experimental developments"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 the mark of 100. For reference, we note that "as of the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"¹⁸⁰. In particular, the 99th resident was Yunchenbel LLC, the

¹⁷⁷ Foreign Ministry: the state visit of the President of Belarus to Beijing has become a significant event in the relations with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid- vosvizi- prezidenta-belarusi- v-nekin-stai- znachimny- sobytiem- v-otnoshenii-ah-knr-557851- 2023/>

¹⁷⁸ Belarus and China are aimed at the creation of joint innovative productions [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitai- natselny-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-innovatsionnyh-proizvodstv-556688-2023/>

¹⁷⁹ Abramenko: "Great Stone" is a colossal opportunity for doing business on the platform of "Belt and Road" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-veffki-kamen-eto- kolossalnye- vozmozhnosti-dlia-dlia-vedeniia-biznesa-na-platforme-poias-i-puti-556679-2023/>

¹⁸⁰ Zaleskii, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Features of Eurasian cooperation dialogue in the conditions of global threats / Boris

founder of which is a large Chinese company SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform to enable the import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"¹⁸¹. And the Belarusian company Human Kraft will produce medical products - customised bone tissue prostheses based on 3P printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and cancer treatment. Also at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent to enter the industrial park as residents of Foryu Information Technologies LLC and Tontun Information Technologies LLC (People's Republic of China) were signed.

In addition, at the end of 2022, the resident company IPD Group LLC signed a lease agreement for a 5.5 thousand square metre universal production building in the industrial park. This deal became one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial property market. "On these premises, a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices will be implemented. In particular, the company will produce computer hardware, server equipment, monitors, interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-substituting products"¹⁸². In total, by the end of 2022, 19 residents were registered in Velikiy Kamen. Also. Last year residents of the park exported their products for more than \$100 million to 20 countries.

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

In February 2023, three more new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. Heprotrade LLC will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which

Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - С. 5.

¹⁸¹ The number of residents of the "Great Stone" reached 100 [Electronic resource]. - 2022.

URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnia-dostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

¹⁸² In "Great Stone" finished the year with the largest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershil-god-krupnejshej-sdelki-542635-2022/>

¹⁸³ "Velikiy Kamen" this year plans to attract at least 20 residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikii-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-nrivyech-ne-mence-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

¹⁸⁴ The new resident of "Great Stone" will create a transport and logistics centre [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamni-a-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskii-tsentr-547574-2023/>

will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tonnes per month. Realisation of the project will make it possible to provide the domestic market with such products and reduce imports, as well as to supply them for export"¹⁸⁵. The second February resident, Rivex LLC, will produce innovative dressing materials and for sterilisation, which are intended for both the domestic market and the Eurasian Economic Union countries. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, founded by a Chinese company in the field of international logistics, one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, intends to "develop logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introduce a wide range of services in this area. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organised"¹⁸⁶. This initiative will also help to address the most important strategic objective of expanding the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already registered in Veliky Kamen. And in general, during the period of operation of the industrial park, "the total number of 107 residents with a planned investment of \$1.3 billion"¹⁸⁷. It is expected that with the aim of creating additional conditions for attracting new investors in 2023 the work on further improvement of the special legal regime of the park will be continued with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that on the sites of Veliky Kamen "it is possible to quickly increase the level of localisation in the production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, to promptly replace falling imports with these products. In order to maximise the available potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build infrastructure and announce the project on a global scale"¹⁸⁸. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the residents of the industrial park - in particular, and also create additional competitive advantages for the prospective development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

¹⁸⁵ Two more residents with Belarusian capital registered in "Veliky Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-beloruskim-kapitalom-zaregistirovani-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

¹⁸⁶ The new resident of "Velikom Kamne" will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

¹⁸⁷ Velikogo Kamnja registered 7 new residents this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistiroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

¹⁸⁸ Cherviakov: current economic challenges are a window of opportunity for Veliky Kamen residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>

Another important document adopted in March 2023 is the **Comprehensive Strategy for Joint Industrial Development**, implemented by the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Informatisation of China, which provides for the creation of incentive mechanisms for Belarusian and Chinese enterprises to intensify and strengthen technological cooperation. A roadmap with specific projects and initiatives has been prepared to implement this strategy. "It is planned to establish joint ventures in China, use Chinese technologies and competences to modernise Belarusian industries and attract Chinese investments to implement projects in Belarus"¹⁸⁹ in such key areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, woodworking, optics and mechanical, pulp and paper and chemical industries.

In particular, the **Minsk Tractor Plant** is ready to intensify co-operation with China. . Now the project to organise the assembly of BELARUS tractors with the capacity of 350 horsepower is underway in the Celestial Empire. The first prototype was tested in 2020-2021. Last year, two more BELARUS 3523 tractors were delivered to China for certification, after which a decision will be made on localisation of the assembly of Belarusian tractors. And in Minsk, testing of the BELARUS 3523 model with a diesel engine from the Chinese corporation Wei chai continues. It is expected that 100 such engines will be delivered to the plant in the near future. "Another direction is related to the supply of components from China. Last year, imports from China totalled \$1.8 million, at the end of two months of the current [2023] year - \$400 thousand."¹⁹⁰ . So the parties are interested in joint investment projects.

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

Belarus also plans to almost double the volume of food supplies to China in 2023. Last year, these exports exceeded more than \$500 million. Belarusian

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

¹⁹⁰ General Director of MTZ told about intensification of cooperation with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ob-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-kitayem-rasskazal-gendirektor-mtz-553348-2023/>

¹⁹¹ Belarus expects to almost double the volume of food supplies to China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus- rasschitvayet-nochti-v-dva-raza-narastit-obъем-postavok-prodovolstva-v-kitaj-553023-2023/>

supplies "increased in poultry meat (3 times), rapeseed oil (3.1 times), milk and cream (1.4 times) <...>. At present, 148 Belarusian producers are accredited to supply China with 171 categories of goods"¹⁹². And by the beginning of 2024, the goal is to reach \$900 million in product exports. Overall, in trade and economic cooperation with its partners from China, this year the Belarusian side has every chance to increase the volume of exports to \$2.2 billion.

Two more interesting documents signed in Beijing in early March 2023 concern the topic of **regional cooperation**. The first: it is the **plan of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China for 2023**, which "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives"¹⁹³ to attract at least \$150 million of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026. Second: it is the **Agreement between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the Ministry of Commerce of China on deepening trade and economic cooperation between the regions of the two countries**, in which the parties emphasise three Chinese regions. Firstly, **Tianjin** is a city of central subordination, where the production and logistics orientation prevails. Secondly, **Qingdao**, located in **Shandong** province, where enterprises of production and medical orientation are particularly developed and where the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** free trade zone is actively used. Thirdly, **Chongqing** is another centralised city. "It is the heart of logistics, transit. Here it is mainly e-commerce, the emphasis on transport and logistics, including green corridors. This is when the train is not checked at the border, but controlled at the destination, which gives 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 health care for 2023-2025**, which notes that "the parties will develop cooperation in health care, science and education based on the principles of the countries' national legislation, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance"¹⁹⁵. The two countries will give priority to cooperation in such areas as: organisation of joint scientific research in the field of medicine, exchange of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organisation of seminars and master classes for experts; cooperation

¹⁹² In 2022 the export of Belarusian goods to China almost doubled [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/za-2022-god-eksport-belomsskh-tovarov-v-kitai-prakticheskii-udvoilsia-556681-2023/>

¹⁹³ Abramenko: Belarus and China seek to deepen bilateral co-operation in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-belarus-i-kitai-stremiasia-k-uglubleniju-dvustoronnego-vzaimodejstviya-vo-vsekh-oblastyah-556675-2023/>

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

¹⁹⁵ Belarus and China signed a plan to develop cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobytiya/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-gody-mezhdu-bela/>

in epidemiology and microbiology and exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; cooperation in surgery, transplantation and haematology; and participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus.¹⁹⁶ It is important to note that as early as in the Joint Declaration on establishing relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership, published in September 2022, Belarus and China agreed to develop cooperation in the field of high-tech medicine, vaccines and pharmaceuticals and "identified the priority of forming a joint pharmaceutical cluster, commercialisation of new pharmaceutical products and technologies, as well as the establishment of a high-quality centre of traditional Chinese medicine on the territory of the Republic of China.

For the record, the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on co-operation in healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese Ministries of Health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, a decree of the Belarusian government "On the state registration of strategically important medicines" was adopted, which allows for their accelerated registration to fight a pandemic. And at the same time, the Ministry of Health for the first time carried out state registration of the Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) drug - soft capsules "Qingyi". And today "810 items of medical equipment, 502 medical devices and 480 medicines produced in China are registered in Belarus. From April 2020 to the present day, the PRC has provided gratuitous assistance in the amount equivalent to \$30 million. Belarus has received personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment, vaccine against COVID-19"¹⁹⁷.

Our country has already established TCM centres and the necessary business conditions for the creation of pharmaceutical production facilities. In particular, for residents of the Great Stone Park, the Ministry of Health of Belarus has developed a compendium "Basic Aspects of Admission to Circulation of Medical Devices and Medicines" in Russian and Chinese languages to inform them about opportunities and preferences. In addition, work has already been completed on the architectural project "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the Great Stone Park, taking into account the creation of a regional centre for the promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine", and work is being completed on the inclusion of the specialty "doctor of traditional Chinese medicine" in the nomenclature

¹⁹⁶ China and Belarus adopted the Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://zviazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-iktav-i-belarus-prinvali-sovmestnyu-deklaraciju>

¹⁹⁷ Ministry of Health of Belarus and Weigao Company signed an agreement on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompaniya-weigao-podpisi-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552443-2023/>

of positions, which will give an additional impetus to the promotion of this topic in Belarus.

At the end of February 2023, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China said that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM issues, which should reflect the creation of a TCM centre in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster and the development of traditional Chinese medicine in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". It should be noted that "reflexotherapy methods, diagnostic methods, therapeutic gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies - electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, ultrasonic acupuncture <...> are used in Belarus. Centres of traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centres of Belarus. Cooperation has been established with a number of universities - Tianjin, Changchun, and the University of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Zhejiang Province."¹⁹⁸. In addition, the educational process in this speciality is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexology. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained annually. The staff of the department has been repeatedly trained in Beijing, Taiyuan and Tianjin. These methods have shown their effectiveness, including in the treatment of postcovidic syndrome. Reflexologists perform about 900 thousand reflexology procedures in Belarus every year.

In 2023, the parties continue to actively co-operate in this context. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of agreements on cooperation with Chinese partners. Firstly, in the city of Weihai, in Shandong Province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies medical devices and spare parts manufactured in China.

Secondly, in the city of Shijiazhuang in Hebei Province - with North China Pharmactutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been selected as a strategic partner to represent the interests of Belpharmprom Holding in the field of procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as to perform the functions of studying the market conditions, submitting to the holding's management company proposals for the supply of substances and raw materials in accordance with the applications"¹⁹⁹.

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-ootovi-at-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoi-kitaiskoj-meditsinv-552902-2023/>.

¹⁹⁹ The agreement on co-operation signed by the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitaj-skaia-farmkompanii-a-552543-2023/>.

As for the development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the new era in the **field of education**, in February 2023, Beijing hosted the China Education Expo, which included a thematic exposition "Education in Belarus", where leading Belarusian universities presented their educational programmes:

Belarusian State Economic

University of Economics, Belarusian State University

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 Eufrosinia Polotskaya and Mogilev State University named after A.A. Kuleshov. It should be noted that the Belarusian exposition was the only foreign one presented at this educational forum, which was visited by more than two thousand young men and women from China interested in studying in Belarus.

In addition, during the talks in the Chinese capital at the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, the possibility of higher education institutions of Belarus joining the International Engineering and Architectural Consortium of Educational Institutions was discussed. In general, "as a result of meetings of representatives of Belarusian universities in Chinese universities and consulting companies, 17 agreements on co-operation in the field of educational services were signed, 16 agreements are being worked out for signing"²⁰⁰. For reference, we note that "Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct co-operation agreements. To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000 people"²⁰¹. In addition, the creation of joint educational structures is being actively promoted in Belarus and China. For example, seven joint projects are already functioning: three laboratories, two centres and two institutes. There are 40 joint educational programmes at the first and second levels of higher education, 10 of which have been developed in the last two years.

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

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

²⁰¹ Zaleskij, B. Route of interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / Boris Zaleskij. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 19.

expand the areas of partnership.

In particular, BSU is entering a new level of co-operation with Peking University, which is the oldest university in China and was founded back in 1898, where the local library has more than eight million books and where more than 46 thousand students, including more than four thousand foreigners, study. Recall that the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019. In March 2023, the parties initiated cooperation in the field of mathematical sciences. "The development of joint research projects, academic exchange for lecturing on modern advances in probability theory, mathematical statistics and data analysis are seen as promising"²⁰². Besides, co-operation in the sphere of joint training of master's and postgraduate students will be expanded. For this purpose, in the near future this topic will be analysed in detail to determine the specialties and scientific fields of knowledge in which they plan to cooperate.

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

The Chinese University of Political Science and Law became a new partner of BSU following the meetings held in the same March 2023. The universities signed a memorandum of understanding, which will allow co-operation in the field of jurisprudence on numerous vectors. "These include exchange of students, opening joint educational programmes, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching materials and scientific reports, organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and preparation of joint publications"²⁰³.

Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) is also among the active Belarusian universities developing co-operation with Chinese partners. In January 2023, BrSTU signed an agreement on co-operation in education, science and culture with Guangdong Construction Vocational Technical Institute to combine the efforts of the two educational institutions to jointly train qualified specialists for the benefit of the economies of the two countries. The two sides plan to create a joint educational programme to train

²⁰² BSU enters a new level of co-operation with Beijing University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bgu-vvkhodit-na-novyj-uroven-sojuznichestva-s-pekingskim-universitetom-557082-2023/>

²⁰³ Student exchange, joint programmes: BSU and leading universities of China have defined new vectors of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-sovmestnye-programmy-bgu-i-vedushchie-vuzy-kitaja-onredelili-novye-vektory-557224-2023/>

Chinese students. It is a question of recruiting training groups, where students will study in China for the first two years and then in Belarus. The Chinese side was particularly interested in the speciality "architecture". "These joint educational programmes are very popular because they allow students to get two diplomas in one cycle of study"²⁰⁴.

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

Finally, another block of documents signed in early March 2023 in Beijing concerned cooperation in the **media sphere**. Among them was an **agreement on co-operation between the news agencies of Belarus and China - BELTA and Xinhua**. In this regard, we note that the cooperation agreement between BELTA and Xinhua was first signed back in January 1993, then re-signed in June 2018. The new document - already the third - "implies the exchange of text news, photos and videos, mutual support and promotion on the Internet and social networks"²⁰⁵. The agencies agreed to exchange experiences and train journalists, editors and technical staff to improve their skills.

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

²⁰⁴ Brest University and Guangdong Institute will jointly train architects and builders [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskii-universitet-i-guandunskii-institut-budut-sovmestno-gotovit-arhitektorov-i-stroitelei-543128-2023/>

²⁰⁵ BELTA and Xinhua signed an agreement on strengthening co-operation and intensifying news exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/belta-i-sinhua-nodrijsali-sozlashenie-ob-ukrenenii-sotrudnichestva-i-aktivizatsii-obmena-novosti-ami-553192-2023/>

CHAPTER 9

On the foundation of new ideas

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee (IGC) was held, which formed a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China and created unique opportunities and mechanisms for deepening practical cooperation across the whole range of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that "our common goal should be a new point of growth in trade turnover of at least 120 per cent compared to the last [2022] year"²⁰⁶. To be more specific about the most important areas of Belarusian-Chinese economic co-operation, four key issues should be highlighted.

First, increasing and diversifying trade, systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers, and launching procurement channels for important goods through Chinese operators. Second, increasing rail container traffic to deliver Belarusian goods to China and Chinese equipment to Belarus, ensuring the operation of green railway corridors, and organising subsidised reverse trains from Belarus to major logistics centres in China and back. Thirdly, "deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed automobile manufacturing, assembly of electric cars, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, development of bio- and digital technologies"²⁰⁷. Fourthly, financing of strategic investment projects within the framework of China's favourable credit lines, their effective implementation, building up credit, financial and technical and economic cooperation, including the purchase of necessary equipment. We would like to remind that "at the end of 2022, the countries [Belarus and China] reached a record volume of \$5.8 billion in terms of goods turnover. Five months of this year were marked by a 1.5-fold increase in trade turnover. Exports of Belarusian goods to China are growing at a record pace: 1.8 times in 2022 and 1.6 times in the first five months of 2023"²⁰⁸.

During the fifth meeting of the IGC, the parties agreed to focus their efforts

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

²⁰⁷ Cherviaikov singled out important areas of co-operation to strengthen relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviaikov-vydelil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlia-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

²⁰⁸ Snopkov: Belarus and China demonstrate an exemplary example of co-operation to the whole world [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-belarus-i-kitaj-demonstrirujut-vsemu-miru-obraztsovyi-primer-sotrudnichestva-576412-2023/>

on the implementation of major development and cooperation projects, including grant aid from the Chinese government. In this context, it should be emphasised that Belarus has already implemented 15 important socially oriented projects totalling more than one and a half billion Chinese yuan. "About a dozen of new strategic projects are in the works, including infrastructure development of the Great Stone industrial park, supply of necessary technological equipment with the total amount of financing of over 900 million Chinese yuan"²⁰⁹. The parties plan to accelerate the implementation of these projects, including two international-class sports facilities - a stadium and a swimming pool - by September 2024.

As for other production and cooperation projects, in July 2023 the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese corporation China National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach) signed an action plan to develop cooperation "on priority areas of cooperation in the production of agricultural and municipal machinery, machine-tool construction, as well as the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises"²¹⁰ and even discussed the creation of individual models of agricultural machinery, the possibility of organising the production of agricultural machinery, and the possibility of organising the development of a joint venture between the two countries.

In the same July 2023, the Chinese company Baimen and JSC Slutsk Cheese Factory signed a strategic commercial agreement on the establishment of a joint venture for the production of dairy products already this year in Shenyang, the administrative centre of Liaoning Province. It should be noted that this Chinese company is a major exporter of "Belarusian dairy products (about \$50 million worth of products exported in 2022). It is implementing a project to process colostrum and produce whey protein at the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"²¹¹. By establishing a joint venture in Shenyang, Baimen and Slutsk Cheese Factory intend to further scale up the project, systematically increasing the range of dairy products produced for Chinese customers.

And one more interesting fact. In the same July 2023, OJSC "Managing

²⁰⁹ Belarus and China agree to implement major development and co-operation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitai-dogovorilis-o-realizatsii-kрупnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiia-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

²¹⁰ The Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese company Sinomach signed the action plan for the development of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-i-kitaiskaja-kompanija-sinomach-podpisali-plan-meropriyatii-po-razvitiuu-576228-2023/>

²¹¹ The Belarusian-Chinese enterprise on dairy production will be created in the PRC this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-kitaiskoe-predpriatie-no-proizvodstvu-mochnoi-produktsii-sozhdatur-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" held negotiations with YTO Group Corporation - a Chinese manufacturer of agricultural and construction machinery, a member of the Sinomach complex machine-building conglomerate - "to organise joint production of self-propelled mowers, municipal machines, and also discussed issues of supplying components for Bobruiskagromash machinery from China"²¹². In the near future the parties will prepare the necessary documents on this project.

A separate conversation in this context is about the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Velikiy Kamen". It should be recalled that 2023 marks ten years since the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping announced the initiative - "One Belt, One Road", which marked a new era in the economic relations of states and united more than a hundred countries around the planet. Among the first participants of this megaproject was the Republic of Belarus, where the Great Stone Park is actively developing. It plays the role of a nodal platform of this initiative and already unites more than a hundred residents from 15 countries. Suffice it to say that "the volume of actual investments of the park has already exceeded \$830 million, and the volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.34 billion"²¹³. And in the first quarter of 2023 alone, 11 companies have already registered here new companies with investment projects in logistics, e-commerce, medicine, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. More specifically, "the number of residents of the Velikiy Kamen Industrial Park has now reached 108 <...>. The volume of production [for the three months of 2023] increased 1.3 times, revenue from the sale of goods - 1.8 times, export of goods - 1.2 times, foreign direct investment on a net basis - 2 times, tax payments - 3.5 times"²¹⁴.

One of the priority areas of "Great Stone" today is machine building. It should be reminded that the cluster of enterprises working in this area is the largest in the park and counts more than 20 projects. In particular, there are joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprises producing internal combustion engines, gearboxes for passenger and freight transport. One of the Chinese residents produces construction machinery based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant, and a Belarusian resident produces glass for all types of land transport,

²¹² "Bobruiskagromash" and the Chinese company YTO Group Corporation discussed the prospects of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-i-kitaiskaja-kompanija-yto-group-corporation-obsudili-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-575895-2023/>

²¹³ Declared investments of residents of "Great Stone" are estimated at more than \$1.3 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zai-avlennye-investitsii-rezidentov-velikogo-kamni-a-otsenivajutsja-bolee-chem-v-13-mld-568784-2023/>

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

which is in great demand in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Another topical area of Veliky Kamen is high-tech and competitive production - companies carrying out research and development. Now more than 25 such companies are already registered in the park.

Speaking of new residents, it can be noted that in March 2023, another company was registered in the Veliky Kamen industrial park - IRBI LLC, whose investment project has an innovative import-substituting character. "The park resident will produce monoblocks, mini-computers for offices and industrial computers, as well as computer hardware components. 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.

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

In May 2023, during the negotiations between the management of the park and a delegation from the Gansu province, the issues of the development of traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus were discussed, and "the possibility of creating a centre of traditional Chinese medicine and the development of pharmaceutical production on the territory of the park was discussed"²¹⁷. And in June 2023 an agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei was reached to work out "the issue of creating a biotechnology cluster for the production of medicines, vaccines, insulin, CAR-T technologies <...> in the Great Stone Industrial Park. Work is underway to determine the prospects for localisation of the nomenclature of Jifei's pharmaceuticals"²¹⁸.

And in the same June 2023, the Belarusian and Chinese sides stated that they

²¹⁵ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce computers and components [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-budet-proizvodit-komputery-i-komplektnye-558151-2023/>.

²¹⁶ The new resident of Velikogo Kamnia plans to produce X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskikh-trubok-560903-2023/>.

²¹⁷ Delegation of the Chinese province Gansu will study the possibility of development of pharmaceutical production in "Velikogo Kamnia" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsiya-kitaiskoi-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiya-farmproizvodstva-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>.

²¹⁸ The Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company "Jifei" intend to write an agreement on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-i-kitaiskaya-farmkompaniya-dzhi-fei-nameretu-podpisat-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-569796-2023/>.

would continue to attract investors with large projects to the Great Stone Industrial Park, with special attention being paid to the development of traditional Chinese medicine at the park's site. Also, "the Ministries of Economy of the two countries and the largest shareholder companies of the Industrial Park Development Company agreed to continue active work on attracting anchor investors with major projects to Velikiy Kamen, to organise new demanded production facilities, in particular in the sphere of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, to increase localisation of existing production facilities of residents"²¹⁹. The parties will pragmatically improve the investment environment on a systematic basis, consistently eliminate emerging development risks and bring the park to a new qualitative level of development, strengthening its position as a central Belarusian-Chinese project and international industrial cluster with an eye on the market of the Eurasian Economic Union.

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

It should be noted that as of today, more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have already been signed between the educational institutions of Belarus and China, which is about 10 per cent of the total number of existing inter-university agreements of Belarusian higher education institutions. "There are also 9 joint educational and scientific structures (3 laboratories, 4 centres and 2 institutes) functioning on the basis of educational institutions of the two countries, 40 joint educational programmes are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed in the last two years, implementation of 6 of them started in the 2022/2023 academic year. The possibility of

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

implementing 20 more joint educational programmes and organising joint training of personnel of higher scientific qualification is being worked out"²²⁰. In autumn this year, the educational departments of the two countries plan to approve a plan for the development of academic and scientific exchanges for 2023-2025, within the framework of which new concrete steps will be taken for constructive interaction between Belarusian universities and Chinese partners.

Among the active participants of this co-operation is the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU). Back in April 2023, the Belarusian university discussed promising areas of partnership with members of the Guangdong Union for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, BSTU signed an agreement on co-operation and establishment of a joint laboratory of applied technologies with Guangdong Vocational College of Light Industry. "The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, summer schools, discussed the prospect of contacts in the field of polymers, functional coatings, paper production technology and other areas"²²¹. They also signed documents on the implementation of joint educational programmes with Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce, Guangdong Vocational College of Communications. And a bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was concluded with the Ningbo International Research and Innovation Centre to jointly develop modern polymer composite materials, elastomers and plastic masses, and additive technologies.

In May 2023, BSTU signed a cooperation agreement with Kunshan Institute of Industrial Technology to establish joint Belarusian-Chinese transfer centres in the field of high technologies and 3P modelling. The agreement stipulates that "every year the Belarusian side will select at least 10 projects to be financed by the PRC in order to develop co-operation in the field of high technologies"²²². In addition, the parties agreed to create a joint university "Kunshan-Minsk" on the basis of the Belarusian State Technical University so that students could study part of the time in China and part of

²²⁰ Bakhovich: education provides intellectual, cultural and linguistic rapprochement between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bahanovich-obrazovanie-obespechivaet-intellektualnoe-kulturnoe-i-lazkovoe-sblizhenie-belarusi-i-kitaja-376391-2023/>

²²¹ Educational and scientific potential of BSTU presented in the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obrazovatelny-i-nauchnyi-potentsial-bstu-prezentovan-v-kitai-skoj-provincii-guandun-563887-2023/>

²²² Investment, establishment of a joint university and biomedicine centre. Delegation of Kunshan visited BSTU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-universiteta-i-tsentra-biomeditsiny-delegatsiia-kunshana-i-posetila-569539-2023/>

the time in Belarus, and eventually receive two diplomas. And one more interesting idea: together with Chinese companies, a biomedicine centre will be created in Minsk City Technopark, where they will develop testing technologies and drugs to treat human and various animal diseases. In short, the agro-industrial complex related to vaccines will be developed.

Another Belarusian university that continues close cooperation with Chinese partners in 2023 is the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR). In July this year, BSUIR opened a Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory of external electromagnetic influences in Minsk together with the North China Research Institute of Electromagnetic Protection. One of the key tasks of the new laboratory is to develop a finished product of practical interest and demand in the global technology market, "to conduct fundamental and applied research, implementation of its results, promotion of training and professional development, internships for engineering staff and researchers of BSUIR and the partner institute"²²³, as well as to strengthen international cooperation of scientists and specialists for joint research within the framework of the implementation of China's initiative".

As for the Chinese universities, there is a high interest in cooperation with Belarusian partners in Liaoning University, which in July 2023 became a partner of A.S. Pushkin Brest State University, as well as Brest State Technical University (BrSTU). In particular, the agreement between BrSTU and Liaoning University "provides for academic exchanges, joint educational programmes, implementation of scientific projects and social and cultural interaction. We plan to fill the agreement with real activities, and in the future to develop a roadmap"²²⁴. For example, to train Chinese students in the speciality "Smart Transport" on the basis of the faculties of mechanical engineering and information technologies.

Returning to the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, we note that the participants of this discussion proposed to bring scientific and technical interaction to a new level and considered the possibility of creating joint high-tech industries in a number of areas. "Such directions <...> could be robotics, electric transport, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, laser technology"²²⁵. By creating a full innovation cycle - from idea to production of high-tech products, the parties

²²³ Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory opened in BSUIR [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-kitaj-skaj-nauchno-issledovatel'skaj-a-laboratorija-otkryvas-v-b-guir-576810-2023/>

²²⁴ Universities of Brest signed co-operation agreements with Liaoning University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vuzy-bresta-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-liaoninskim-universitetom-576902-2023/>

²²⁵ Shlychkov: the implementation of joint projects with China will allow to reach the creation of new high-tech industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shlychkov-realizatsija-sovmestnyh-proektov-s-kitajem-pozvolit-vyiti-na-sozdanie-novyh-576315-2023/>

will expand promising areas of partnership, interacting on the educational foundation of new ideas, which ensures intellectual rapprochement between Belarus and China. Besides, all these facts show that the new model of strategic, including trade-economic, scientific-technical and educational partnership of the two countries, formed within the framework of the Fifth IGC meeting on cooperation, is beginning to take concrete innovative shape for the benefit of the two peoples.

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CHAPTER 10

Interaction between regions

regional cooperation reaches a new level

In March 2023 in Beijing, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted at the highest level a joint statement on the basic principles of the development of exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era. At the same time the parties signed the plan of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China for 2023. This document "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives to attract at least \$150 million of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026"²²⁶. In September 2023, the third meeting of the working group on interregional trade and economic cooperation was held in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone". trade and economic co-operation

of the Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation, where they discussed topical issues of interaction between the regions of the two countries and prospects for its development. 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 landmark mark of \$1 billion"²²⁷.

Minsk Region is one of the active participants in deepening trade and economic, scientific and technical, and socio-cultural cooperation between the regions of the two countries. In 2022, the trade turnover of the Belarusian capital region with the Chinese side exceeded two billion dollars, with exports of the Minsk region totalling almost one billion. At the beginning of 2023, the list of items of Minsk region's products supplied to the Celestial Empire has already exceeded the mark of more than a hundred. "Products of milk processing enterprises and other municipal enterprises of the region are especially in demand. All milk processing enterprises of the holding company "Minoblmyasomolprom", as well as Slutsk and Stolbtsy meat processing plants have an export licence"²²⁸. And for five months of the current year the capital region has already provided export supplies to China

²²⁶ Zaleskii, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilisation / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 13.

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

²²⁸ What production of Minsk region in the near future can appear on the market of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://m/vm.by/01032023/kakaya-produkcziya-minskoj-oblasti-v-blizhaishee-vremya-mozhet-povavitsya-na-rynke-kitaja/>

for more than five hundred million dollars.

Among interesting partners of Minskshchina among Chinese regions it is necessary to note **Guangdong province**, where more than 127 million people live and which is attractive not only as a part of the market for products, but also as a supplier of technologies in the field of mechanical engineering and agriculture. After all, the province is one of the most developed provinces in China, with strong machinery and processing companies. In 2022, the parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the co-operation agreement. In May 2023, the Belarusian region and the Chinese province agreed on the prospects of cooperation. And now the roadmap for the development of bilateral relations is already being supplemented and updated. It should be noted that "in the first half of 2023, trade turnover between the regions increased by 20%. Exports reached Br646.2 million. Poultry meat, beef, flax fibre are supplied from Minsk region to China. The main imports are machines for automatic information processing, textile products, auto parts"²²⁹. In addition, the parties are discussing the issue of attracting investments from Guangdong Province into the economy of Minsk Region, as well as options for cooperation between major companies producing household appliances and cars, including electric cars, at production sites that are located in preferential zones of Minsk Region, such as the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where in the first nine months of 2023 "12 new residents were added"²³⁰.

As for another partner of Minsk Region in China, **Zhejiang Province**, the parties intend to expand co-operation in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. As is known, a relevant centre has been set up on the basis of Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital. In June 2023, during the talks between the delegations of the Zhejiang Provincial Health Committee and the Main Health Department of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, they discussed the directions of development of this centre, "the supply of medicines from China, the possibility of training doctors of the capital region in new methods. The Belarusian side also proposed to consider the issue of organising joint production of biologically active additives and herbal medicines"²³¹. In addition, the task is to expand the capabilities of the above-

²²⁹ The Minsk Regional Executive Committee discussed the roadmap of co-operation with the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minsk-oblispolkome-obsudili-dorozhnyj-kartu-sozdnichestva-s-kitaiskoj-provintsiej-guandun-583608-2023/>

²³⁰ In Minoblispolkom told what the Chinese province of Guangdong is interesting for the economy of the region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minoblispolkome-rasskazali-chem-dlja-ekonomiki-oblasti-interesna-kitaiskaja-provintsija-guandun-593552-2023/>

²³¹ Minsk region and Zhejiang province intend to develop co-operation in the sphere of traditional medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaia-oblast-i-provintsija-chzhetszjan-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-traditsionnoi-574675-2023/>

mentioned Centre of Traditional Chinese Medicine, where such procedures as acupuncture, manual therapy and massage are already performed on its basis. Finally, one of the promising partners of Minsk Oblast among the Chinese regions is **the city of Chongqing** - the only municipality of central subordination of China, which is also the economic centre of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, where more than 32 million people live. This city is the stronghold of China's development strategy in the western part of the Middle Kingdom and the hub of the Belt and Road project. Logistics hubs, ports and customs infrastructure are being built here to participate in the logistics development of the China-Europe Express. Chongqing is China's modern manufacturing base, with a full chain of electronic information industry and automobile manufacturing. Suffice it to say that in 2022 the output of cars here totalled more than two million cars, and 284 thousand units were exported.

As for interregional ties, Chongqing and Minsk region established twinning relations in 2017. With the launch of the regular service of the China Chongqing-Minsk Railway Express, the trade turnover between the two sides has been growing every year. "In 2022, imports and exports between Chongqing and Belarus exceeded 500 million yuan, up 54.8% year-on-year. Belarus is an important supplier of meat products and butter to Chongqing. Belarusian dairy products and confectionery products are highly popular among the city's residents"²³². In 2023, the parties are taking new concrete steps to further deepen trade and economic co-operation, establish humanitarian and cultural contacts. In particular, within the framework of the Exhibition of Chinese Goods and Services - 2023, which took place in late June - early July this year in the industrial park "Velikiy Kamen", where about 180 Chinese companies presented their products, the thematic exposition of the Exhibition Pavilion of export goods of Chongqing city was also shown. More than 20 city enterprises on an area of about 300 square metres displayed engineering products, including cars, motorbikes and components. In addition, official representatives of Minsk Region and Chongqing "discussed co-operation in mechanical engineering, supplies of food products to the Chinese region, logistics"²³³.

Among the active participants of the Belarusian-Chinese interregional

²³² More than 20 enterprises from Chongqing will take part in the Exhibition of Chinese goods and services in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-20-predpriyatii-iz-chuinsina-nimut-nachastie-v-vystavke-kitaiskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-velikom-kamne-573747-2023/>

²³³ Machine building, medicine, tourism: Minsk region and Chongqing discussed the directions of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-meditsina-turizm-minskaia-oblast-i-chuinsin-obsudili-napravleniia-sotrudnichestva-574541-2023/>

cooperation is also **Vitebsk** region, which in 2022 exceeded the volume of supplies to China almost twice, which amounted to more than \$55 million. But back in 2006, the basis of the Belarusian region's exports to the Celestial Empire was represented by only 12 consolidated items, of which 97 per cent was a bundle of synthetic yarns. "But at the end of 2021, the export basket of Vitebshchina expanded to 28 items, and its basis began to be formed by supplies of agricultural products (meat, milk and dairy products) - about 70 per cent"²³⁴. Today these supplies also include dry confectionery, rapeseed oil, polyethylene, acrylic tourniquets, glass fabrics, flax processing and woodworking products, peat, and alcoholic beverages.

But recently the interaction between Vitebsk region and China has gone beyond buying and selling, as the parties are moving "to the next level - exchange of technologies, assistance in their refinement, in their research, development of new types of products"²³⁵, to enter the plane of attracting investors, investing Vitebsk funds on the Chinese territory and mastering new technologies. Besides, the emphasis in the development is placed on educational, scientific and cultural segments. It should be reminded that Vitebsk region has signed eight bilateral documents - agreements, protocols, programmes - on cooperation, established and maintained regular contacts at the level of executive authorities, organisations and companies with four provinces and one city of China. In addition, 19 bilateral documents on co-operation between cities and districts of Vitebshchina and Chinese partners have been concluded.

The Belarusian northern region has the most intensive co-operation with **Heilongjiang Province**, which is located in the north of China, where rice is grown and agriculture is generally very developed. Over the past 18 years, the parties have created a good legal framework of mutual relations: 1) Agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian and cultural and other spheres (2005); 2) Agreement on the establishment of twinning relations (2011); 3) Cooperation Development Programme for 2016-2020. "Twinning agreements with the cities of this region of the Celestial Empire were once concluded by Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Vitebsk"²³⁶. In May 2023

²³⁴ Mfishin, A. What are the prospects of co-operation between the Vitebsk region and the provinces of China? / A. Mfishin // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://vitebski.by/news/ekonomika/analitik-obvsnit-kakovy-perspektivy-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-vitebskov-oblasti-i-provinciy-kitaya/>.

²³⁵ Subbotin: co-operation with China goes beyond purchase and sale, into the plane of investment projects. [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajem-vvhodit-za-ramki-kupit-prodazhi-v-ploskost-investproektov-598640-2023/>.

²³⁶ Pushnyakova, A. Food products, MDF boards: Vitebsk region will present in June in Harbin the potential of the region / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/prodovolstvennye-tovary-mdf-plity-vitebskaia-oblast-predstavit-v-ijune>.

In May 2023, at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovations. Investments. Prospects" in Vitebsk, enterprises from Heilongjiang Province expressed interest in partnership ties with Vitebsk producers of meat products, as well as "expect to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with Orsha and Dubrovensk flax processors in the near future, to share their experience and discuss the possibility of supplying modern equipment"²³⁷. In June this year, at the international trade and economic exhibition in Harbin, the administrative centre of Heilongjiang, a memorandum of intentions on establishing friendly ties was already signed between the Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and an enterprise from the city of Suihua from the same province. In addition, the Belarusian side is interested in co-operation in the production of electrical equipment and instrumentation, as the Chinese partners have great competences in this area. So, new promising projects in this regional interaction may appear in the near future.

Another - new - partner of Vitebsk Oblast 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 another practical step, it has been decided to establish direct interaction between FEZ Vitebsk and special economic zones of Jiangxi province and their residents in order to work out the issue of creating in Belarus

joint production facilities and the use of cross-border trade mechanisms by Belarusian exporters to China"²³⁸. They also discussed the expansion of supplies of Belarusian products to China by the reverse container train Orsha-Nanchang and the exchange of practical experience in the investment sphere. After all, the city of Orsha has established cooperation with the administrative centre of this province - Nanchang - in the field of innovative and traditional medicine at the level of individual medical institutions. In December 2022 the document of intentions on cooperation was signed by the city hospital No. 2 of the Orsha Central Polyclinic and the Hundu Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which "provides for the exchange of practical and scientific experience, medical technologies, mutual internships and advanced training of medical workers, as well as the implementation of projects in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, including physiotherapy,

vitebsk.by/regiony/regiony-567209-2023/.

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

²³⁸ FEZ "Vitebsk" and special economic zones of Jiangxi province will establish direct co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-osobve-ekonomicheskie-zony-provintsi-tszi-ansi-naladiat-pri-amoe-vzaimodeli-stvie-566987-2023/>.

reflexology, electro-acupuncture, acupuncture, qigong on the basis of the Orsha Central Polyclinic"²³⁹ .

As for the third Chinese partner of Vitebskshchyna - **Shandong Province**, back in 2005 the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation, and in October 2019 adopted an agreement on the establishment of relations of friendship and cooperation, in which "identified as priorities for the development of partnership ties the development of an effective mechanism of cooperation in the field of trade and investment, the development of co-operation ties, ..."240 . B

In February 2023, an agreement on establishing friendly ties between Novopolotsk and Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, was signed. The parties noted the importance of developing interregional ties as one of the key links in bilateral co-operation. They also discussed the implementation of a number of joint projects. It should be noted that in order to strengthen Belarusian-Chinese ties, Vitebsk Region and Shandong Province regularly hold joint events and conclude bilateral documents. "Earlier agreements on the establishment of

friendly relations at the municipal level between the cities of Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao, Polotsk and Dezhou, Glubokoye and Jining"²⁴¹ . And in September 2023, three more memoranda on cooperation were signed: in innovation, education and youth policy. "Based on them and on the results of the negotiations, roadmaps for co-operation on specific projects and areas of activity will be developed"²⁴² .

Finally, in November 2023, in the framework of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, where more than 10 enterprises of the Belarusian northern region took part, including - Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products", Polotsk Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, branch "Lepelsk MCC" of Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant, confectionery factory "Vityba", plant "Naftan", The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a memorandum of co-operation with the company Zonghai Business Management (Jinan) on the creation of the Chinese Industry Park in Vitebsk and the Belarusian Industry Park in Shandong Province - on the site of Qingdao, where enterprises will be able to present their products and work out the issues of their marketing in different regions of China. This will be

²³⁹ Orsha and Chinese Nanchang agreed on the exchange of medical experience [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/orsha-i-kitaiski-nanchang-dogovorilis-ob-obmene-meditsinskimi-opytom-540364-2022/>

²⁴⁰ Zaleskii, B. From Regions to Innovations. Features of the Belarusian-Chinese strategic partnership / Boris Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. -С. 11.

²⁴¹ Novopolotsk and Chinese Liaocheng established friendly ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novopolotsk-i-kitaiski-liaochen-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svi-azi-550863-2023/>

²⁴² Kochetov, S. Vitebsk region and the Chinese province of Shandong 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-kitayskaya-provintsiya-shandong-amereniv-razvivat-i-rasshirvat-partnerstvo-v-inno/>

one of the leading platforms from where Vitebsk goods will be distributed. It will be a point of export growth of Vitebsk region, which they want to "maximally utilise, and not only for the sale of goods. <...> This is probably one of the most fresh and promising projects"²⁴³. All this in general suggests that in 2024 Vitebsk region intends to develop cooperation with Chinese regions even more actively in a wide range of areas, including economy, trade, science, technology, technologies, as well as in education, health care, sports.

And now let us turn once again to the 6th China International Import Expo 2023 in Shanghai, where the Day of **Brest Region** was held in November this year, where the economic, cultural, tourist, educational, medical potential of the Belarusian region was presented with a bias towards the export of goods and services to China. It should be noted that this exhibition forum was attended by "more than 150 countries representing the regions of Asia, Africa and Europe"²⁴⁴ and featured various thematic sections, including 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 at the Import Fair 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 expand their horizons and establish business ties with potential partners and buyers, including Chinese state corporations"²⁴⁵. An important detail: while at the 5th forum China International Import Expo 2022 in Shanghai, 27 organisations from the food industry, logistics, science and education participated in the Belarusian exposition, this time more than 70 representatives from Belarus took part in the exhibition.

As for **Brest Oblast**, it is among the leaders among Belarusian regions in terms of trade and economic relations with China. Suffice it to say that "for eight months of the current [2023] year, the volume of trade turnover [with China] totalled almost \$280 million and increased almost one and a half times. Thanks to contacts with businesses, Chinese foreign direct investment has already increased by 40 per cent"²⁴⁶. At the import exhibition in

²⁴³ Subbotin: import exhibition in Shanghai helps enterprises to make themselves known and find partners in China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-vvstavka-imnorta-v-shanhae-nomogaet-predpriiatiiam-zalaviti-o-sebe-i-nai-ti-partnerov-v-kitae-598641-2023/>

²⁴⁴ What will be the national exposition of Belarus at the international import exhibition in Shanghai? [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kakoi-budet-natsionalnaia-ekspozitsiia-belarusi-na-mezhdunarodnoi-vvstavke-importa-v-shanhae-582374-2023/>

²⁴⁵ International import exhibition opened in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnaia-vstavka-imnorta-otkrylas-v-shanhae-597935-2023/>

²⁴⁶ Chinese partners are interested in creation of production and logistic companies in Brest region [Electronic resource]. -

Shanghai Brestchyna demonstrated a wide range of goods and services, which interested consumers not only from China, but also from other countries. In particular, at the collective stand of the concern "Brestmyasomolprom" Brest meat processing plant, Berezovsky meat canning plant presented their products with tasting,

Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Luninets Dairy Plant, Pruzhany Dairy Plant. The Brest State Technical University presented the educational potential of the region, while the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital presented the medical potential.

As a result, representatives of the Belarusian region "signed 18 bilateral documents at the exhibition: seven agreements, four memoranda, six commercial contracts, one action plan. They concern different areas, including trade and economic co-operation, co-operation in education, health care, tourism"²⁴⁷. For example, the Brest Regional Executive Committee signed agreements with two corporations involved in the creation of freight forwarding centres and the development of electronic commerce; Brest State Technical University signed agreements with the Hubei Institute of International Business and Economics. As for the memorandums on cooperation development, they were concluded by: the Brest Free Economic Zone and the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the administration of the Coastal Park of the Integrated Bond Zone in the city of Shenyang, which is the administrative centre of Liaoning Province; the Department of Sports and Tourism of the Brest Regional Executive Committee with the Belarusian-Chinese Centre for Culture and Development of the People's Republic of China. Speaking about commercial contracts, they primarily concern supplies of Brest foodstuffs, mainly meat and dairy products, and are estimated at more than twenty million dollars.

A separate conversation is about the twinning ties of Brest region with Chinese partners. Brestchina has four twinning partners in China - Liaoning, Shanxi, Anhui and Hubei provinces. In November 2023, in addition to the import exhibition in Shanghai, representatives of the Belarusian region held active negotiations in **Anhui province**. The agreement to establish friendly ties with it was signed back in September 2017. This time, the two sides adopted an action plan for the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical, scientific and cultural co-operation for 2023-2025. In addition,

2023.

- URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitaiskim-partneram-interesno-sozdanie-proizvodstv-i-logisticheskikh-kompanii-v-brestskoi-oblasti-598059-2023/>

²⁴⁷ Gorodetsky, D. In China concluded commercial contracts and new co-operation agreements / D. Gorodetsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/v-kitae-zakliuchili-kommercheskie-kontrakty-i-novye-soglaseniya-o-sotrudnichestve-8970/>

agreements on the establishment of twinning relations between the cities of Brest and Hefei, Berezovsky district and the city of Benbu were signed, while Brest Regional Clinical Hospital agreed on cooperation with Anhui Medical University. We would like to add that Brest and Hefei already intend to draw up a roadmap for co-operation. The main points to find points of contact are "production, transport and logistics, transport and logistics. sphere, transport and logistics, educational, medical, cultural..."²⁴⁸.

Speaking about the economic aspect of twinning, the Chinese partners are particularly interested in setting up production and logistics companies in the Belarusian region. In turn, the Belarusian side "is ready to offer services for the conversion of wagons from narrow European gauge to broad gauge, as well as the implementation of a project to create a transport and logistics hub in the Brest region"²⁴⁹. The fact is that Brest is a nodal point of the Chinese "Silk Road" and an important element of the cross-border corridor to promote the project "Freight trains from China to Europe". In addition, Brest region is ready to provide the Chinese side with a site for the implementation of the project to build an educational centre. And this is only the beginning of new joint mutually beneficial projects.

All these facts show that the Belarusian-Chinese interregional interaction is gradually reaching a new level of co-operation in an all-weather and all-round 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 programmes.

²⁴⁸ Brest and Chinese Hefei intend to draw up a roadmap for co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-kitaiskii-hefei-namereny-sostavit-dorozhnyi-kartu-dlia-sotrudnichestva-599168-2023/>

²⁴⁹ Brest and Berezovsky got twinned to the Chinese province of Anhui [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-bereza-obzavelsi-pobratimami-v-kitaiskoi-provintsii-anhui-598126-2023/>

CHAPTER 11.

Promote domestic exporters and assist foreign importers

Back in early March 2023, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of Belarus adopted the Joint Statement on Further Developing the Relationship of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the New Era, in which the two sides agreed to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation and steadily increase bilateral trade. One of the tools to increase and diversify Belarusian-Chinese trade today is the application of the exchange mechanism, which has been actively developing since 2019.

At the end of 2022, the amount of transactions made by Chinese companies at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) increased by almost 15 per cent to about \$53 million. At the beginning of 2023, the number of trading session participants from China also increased significantly, from 67 to 113, two of which had the status of stockbrokers. "Last year, sawn timber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, vet-blue leather and synthetic fibres were supplied to China through the exchange platform. In turn, Belarusian companies purchased Chinese-made ferrous metal products and soya meal on BUTB"²⁵⁰.

The positive dynamics of the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade volumes was achieved due to active work on attracting PRC residents to exchange trading, as well as due to the creation of favourable conditions for representatives of Chinese business. In particular, the accreditation procedure at the exchange was simplified, the possibility of settling transactions in Chinese yuan was provided, and consulting support in Chinese was organised. In addition, special export trade sessions focused on the Chinese market were held regularly during 2022, which allowed Chinese importers to buy Belarusian lumber products with delivery to convenient locations in the Middle Kingdom. In 2023, BUTB expects to further increase supplies of a number of domestic products to that country. In particular, lumber, vegetable oils and meat and dairy products.

For example, in March 2023, China's **SUMEC International Trading**, which accounts for about three per cent of that country's total timber and sawn timber imports, expressed interest in working with BUTB. The parties considered "two forms of interaction: the company's participation in exchange trading as a visitor with the conclusion of transactions on its own behalf and at its own expense, or obtaining the status of an exchange broker,

²⁵⁰ The amount of transactions of Chinese companies on BUTB increased by 14 per cent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-sdelok-kitaiskih-kompanii-na-butb-vozros-la-na-14-551264-2023/>

allowing to attract new buyers from China to the Belarusian trading platform"²⁵¹. Now the geography of purchases by SUMEC International Trading is quite diversified. Timber products are imported from Brazil, Canada, Congo, Russia, Finland and other countries, including Belarus, where the company has recently opened a subsidiary. At the same time, the Chinese side is ready to purchase Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB on a regular basis, provided that the price offers of domestic woodworkers are competitive and the rhythm of deliveries is guaranteed. It should be recalled that in March 2023, at a special session at the

In March 2023, at a special session at BUTB aimed at the Chinese market, Belarusian bidders placed bids for the sale of sawn timber in the volume of more than 100 thousand cubic metres.

In April 2023, the Chinese corporation **Xiamen Xiangyu Group Corporation (XMXYG)**, which is one of the Fortune 500 largest companies in the world, confirmed its readiness to increase the volume of purchases of wood products at BUTB **auctions**, as well as to develop co-operation in other promising commodity areas. Since March 2022, its subsidiary **Xiamen Xiangyu Superchain Supply Chain Development Co.** - regularly participates in lumber trading on the Belarusian exchange platform. "During this time, XMXYG has purchased nearly 10,000 cubic metres of sawn timber products worth about \$2 million through BUTB"²⁵². Thanks to the exchange, the company has already purchased four trains of sawn timber and is determined to continue co-operation in the same vein, progressively increasing the volume of purchases. XMXYG is also interested in expanding the list of goods that the corporation buys on BUTB, and not only in the timber industry segment. We are talking about the possibility of bidding for agricultural products and, first of all, rapeseed oil, which is in stable demand in China and was already supplied to the Chinese market through BUTB in 2022. At that time, it was sold for more than \$42 million, including within the framework of import transactions made by Chinese participants. Therefore, given the significant production capacity of Belarusian oil extraction plants, this area may become a new growth point for the Chinese corporation in Belarus.

Another partner of BUTB, which is interested in co-operation with the

²⁵¹ BUTB has agreed on co-operation with one of the largest Chinese importers of forest products [Electronic resource]. - resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-dogovorilas-o-sotrudnichestve-s-odnim-iz-krupneishih-kitaiskih-importers-of-lesoproductov-553935-2023/>

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

Belarusian exchange platform, was the Chinese company **Beijing Huibaocheng Technology** in May 2023. This importer buys dairy products and vegetable oils, which are widely used in China's food industry. The company plans to "buy about 10,000 tonnes of rapeseed oil on the exchange on a monthly basis with the possibility of increasing supplies in the future"²⁵³. The Chinese importer is interested in Belarusian dried milk, so it will actively participate in the bidding.

In June 2023, another major Chinese importer announced its intention to increase purchases of sawn timber products on the BUTB - it is **Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology**. The fact is that according to the results of five months of 2023, the company has already purchased about 53 thousand cubic metres of these products 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. And by the end of 2023, "it is planned to buy at least another 20 thousand cubic metres. Thus, Belarus may become one of the three main markets from where Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology imports woodworking products"²⁵⁴. It is interesting that in 2022, Russia, Canada and Sweden were strategic partners of this company in the supply of sawn timber, while Belarus ranked only fourth.

We would like to remind once again that at the beginning of 2023 the number of participants of BUTB trading sessions from China was already 113. And as of 27 November of the same year, 152 of them had already been accredited on the Belarusian exchange floor. "At the end of 10 months [2023], China has become 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 totalled almost \$60 million.

One of the primary tasks that BUTB will be solving in 2024 with Chinese partners is to expand the range of goods from Belarus and China involved in mutual exchange trade. 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 more and more popular with Chinese business, ensuring a high positive dynamics in terms of the amount of transactions"²⁵⁶. In order to further develop these

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

²⁵⁴ Large Chinese importer intends to increase purchases of lumber products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyi-kitajskij-importer-nameren-narashivat-zakupki-piloproductov-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-kompleksnuu-podderzhku-belorusskim-eksporteram-599485-2023/>

²⁵⁶ BUTB and the Chinese Embassy identified priorities for co-operation in the trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. -

processes in Belarus and China, it is planned to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, first of all, producers import-substituting goods. In addition, it is planned to ensure further diversification of the product mix by means of targeted work of the BUTB with sectoral business associations and chambers of commerce and industry in various regions of China, which "will make it possible to establish interaction both with producers of products in demand in Belarus and with potential consumers of Belarusian goods"²⁵⁷.

In particular, in July 2023, BUTB and the **Xinjiang Asia-European International Trade Centre (AEEX)**, the operator of the **Asia Europa Exchange** electronic trading platform, agreed to increase exports to China, which will directly attract Chinese importers to Belarusian exchange trading. It will focus "on the regions through which the New Silk Road passes. First of all, these are Shanghai, Taicang and Xinjiang"²⁵⁸, where there are AEEX offices, which are already establishing interaction with representatives of Chinese businesses interested in working through BUTB.

In August 2023, the **China National Forestry Industry Corporation** announced its intention to expand cooperation with BUTB. It plans not only to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber, but also to sell Chinese-made goods through the Belarusian import substitution platform. The two sides also reached an agreement to explore the possibility of importing Belarusian rapeseed oil and milk powder to China as the most liquid commodity items. "In this context, the issue of accreditation of 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 BUTB"²⁵⁹.

Another fact: in September 2023, the **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region** expressed its interest in developing cooperation with BUTB, which "has four main features: a vast territory, huge reserves of natural resources, highly developed agriculture and a powerful energy industry"²⁶⁰. The Chinese side

2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-posolstvo-kitaia-opredelili-prioritet-vzaimodelstvija-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoi-sfere-594539-2023/>

²⁵⁷ Prospects for the development of exchange trade of Belarus and China discussed at the business forum in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/perspektivy-razvitiia-birzhevoi-torgovli-belarusi-i-kitaia-obsudili-na-business-forume-v-shanhae-597700-2023/>

²⁵⁸ Xinjiang Asian-European Trade Centre will help to increase exports to China through BUTB. [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sintezianskii-aziatsko-evropejskii-torgovii-sentr-pomozhet-narastit-eksport-v-kitaia-cherez-butb-576501-2023/>

²⁵⁹ Chinese Timber Industry Corporation intends to expand co-operation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaia-lesopromyshlennaja-korporatsiia-namerena-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-butb-581070-2023/>

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

believes that exchange trading can play a key role in creating favourable conditions for companies from this region of China to do business in Belarus. And in this regard, the BUTB, with its extensive import and export capabilities, can facilitate the activities of companies from Inner Mongolia in the Belarusian market.

Finally, in November 2023, in the framework of the 13th China International Wood Trade Conference held in Nanning, the administrative centre of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a memorandum of cooperation on electronic exchange trade was signed by BUTB and the **China Timber and Forest Products Trade Association (CTWPDA)** to assist Chinese companies in entering the Belarusian market. Recall that over 467 thousand cubic metres of Belarusian lumber products were "sold on the Chinese market in the first 11 months of 2023. This is almost five times more than in January-November last year. At the same time, working with domestic suppliers, Chinese importers actively use the mechanism of exchange address transactions, the volume of which has already reached 237 thousand cubic metres in just a few months"²⁶¹. In this regard, the establishment of partnership between BUTB and CTWPDA will not only help to find new buyers for sawn timber produced in Belarus, but will also provide an additional impetus to the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the exchange sector.

Overall, 162 Chinese residents have already been accredited on the BUTB in January 2024, which is 51 more than in January 2023. "At the same time, the amount of transactions executed by Chinese bidders increased 2.7 times, from \$30.4 million in 2022 to \$80.6 million in 2023."²⁶². This happened mainly due to exports of Belarusian products. These were mainly supplies of sawn timber, rapeseed oil, dried milk and petrochemical products. When it comes to imports from China, "Belarusian traders predominantly purchased ferrous and non-ferrous metal products through BUTB"²⁶³. For this reason, BUTB's plans for 2024 include not only further increasing export sales, but also expanding the range of Chinese-made goods. Moreover, in 2023, about a quarter of transactions on BUTB's industrial and consumer goods platform were for products of Chinese origin.

²⁶¹ BUTB and China Forest Trade Association signed a memorandum of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskaja-assotsiatsija-torovli-lesom-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-602012-2023/>

²⁶² New broker BUTB will deal with the supply of import-substituting goods from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-broker-butb-zaimetsia-postavkami-immortozameschajuschih-tovarov-iz-kitajia-611688-2024/>

²⁶³ BUTB and the administration of Chinese Shenyang have agreed on co-operation in the field of exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-administratsija-kitajskogo-shen'jana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-birzhevoi-torovli-606169-2023/>

Developing the theme of import substitution, we note that in January 2024, **Shanghai Duxia Industry and Trade Co.** broker from China, which will specialise in the supply of import-substituting products to the BUTB and attract manufacturers of goods in demand in Belarus - industrial and consumer goods. It should be noted that this company from Shanghai traditionally produces printing machines and equipment for the production and processing of plastic packaging, which are sold not only in the Celestial Empire, but also exported abroad, mainly to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe. As a broker, the Chinese partner of BUTB intends to attract manufacturers of import-substituting goods, which are in high demand in the Belarusian market, to the exchange trading. These are, first of all, electrical equipment, household appliances, video and sound recording equipment, measuring devices, industrial tools, as well as components and spare parts for machines and mechanisms. As a result, the procurement opportunities of Belarusian bidders will be significantly expanded, and the appearance of Chinese manufacturing plants on the Belarusian electronic platform will make it possible to ensure more favourable conditions for concluding transactions. One more fact in this regard: the new broker was accredited on the BUTB with the assistance of the Exchange's representative office in Shanghai, which was opened in 2023 to expand the pool of Chinese users of the exchange platform, promote Belarusian goods on the Chinese market and organise supplies of import-substituting products in demand in the Belarusian market. And 19 new Chinese residents have already been accredited at the BUTB with the participation of the representative office.

By the way, in the new year 2024, BUTB has already established partnership relations with the Chinese holding **Osell Group**, which unites a number of electronic trading platforms for manufacturers from China and facilitates their entry into foreign markets. The fact is that "the Osell Grop digital ecosystem is used by thousands of companies from various industries and agriculture, and the purpose of cooperation with BUTB is to involve Chinese business representatives in cross-border trading on the Belarusian exchange platform"²⁶⁴. And already in January this year, BUTB and Osell Grop organised a round table for the business community of this region in the city of Wuxi in Jiangsu province, given the high level of economic development and significant export potential of this province. The results of this event are expected to be available in the near future.

²⁶⁴ BUTB has started co-operation with a major Chinese trading platform [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-nachala-sotrudnichestva-s-krupnoi-kitaiskoj-torgovoj-platformoj-612305-2024/>

Returning to the topic of Belarusian exports to China via BUTB, it should be noted that this trend will continue to dominate in 2024. Especially in terms of successful deliveries of Belarusian woodworking products to the Celestial Empire market. This is evidenced by the figures, which show that "in 2023, Chinese companies purchased 501 thousand cubic metres of sawn wood products on the exchange, which is 4 times more than in 2022. Over 53% of the total sales volume was provided by exchange address transactions. At the same time, about 30 buyers from China regularly participated in the auction"²⁶⁵. This year, BUTB will further expand the range of buyers of these supplies in China.

For example, on the eve of 2024, as part of its efforts to diversify markets and increase exports of the Belarusian timber industry, BUTB has agreed on accreditation with **BNBM Group Forest Products**, a subsidiary of **China National Building Materials Group**, one of the largest construction holdings in that country, which is among the leading importers of roundwood and sawn timber. In the near future, after the first trial purchase, BNBM Group Forest Products plans to gradually increase the volumes based on the demand dynamics in China and deliver to warehouses in Changxing (Zhejiang Province) and Chengdu (Sichuan Province) and then ship to end consumers.

Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology, already mentioned above, which became the largest foreign buyer of sawn timber at BUTB in 2023, plans to scale its business in Belarus. Last year, the firm bought more than 140,000 cubic metres of sawn timber on the exchange, almost four times more than in 2022. The company will continue to increase its purchases in 2024. "At the same time, we are talking not only about increasing imports of sawn timber products through BUTB, but also about purchases of other Belarusian goods popular in China"²⁶⁶. These are milk powder, rapeseed oil, sugar. In order to further deepen cooperation in the sphere of exchange trade, the parties also agreed to work on the integration of the BUTB platform and the Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology electronic marketplace, where banking and logistics services are already connected, which will allow Belarusian exporters accredited at BUTB to better and more effectively promote their products in the Chinese market, interacting with their end consumers.

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

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

All these facts indicate that in 2024, the application of the exchange mechanism will reach a qualitatively new level of increasing and diversifying Belarusian-Chinese trade and will give a powerful impetus to the relations of all-weather and all-round partnership between the two countries in the new era.

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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 the Sino-Belarusian Association of Universities, which included more than 80 higher education institutions of Belarus and China. At that time there were more than 560 direct university agreements between the two countries. And a plan for the implementation of flagship projects between the universities was being prepared for signing. In July 2023, this plan had 35 positions, and now there are more than 70. They are constantly being added and expanded. This fact suggests that the new association is really a new qualitative level of Belarusian-Chinese relations in education and research. After all, as a result, the parties come "to the creation of joint associations of universities with high-tech enterprises of our countries, on whose orders scientific research, experimental design work and commercialisation of our university scientists for the economy will be carried out"²⁶⁷.

Speaking in general about humanitarian co-operation between Belarus and China, this association has already become a hallmark in such areas as inter-university cooperation, joint training of specialists and joint scientific work. Besides, "such an association is of great importance for training even more Chinese and Belarusian scholars who know well the languages of our two countries, who understand Chinese and Belarusian culture"²⁶⁸ and opens up many opportunities for further development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the sphere of education. Many Belarusian universities that promote joint educational structures with Chinese partners became active participants of the new association. In particular, at that time "seven joint projects were already functioning: three laboratories, two centres and two institutes. 40 joint educational programmes of the first and second levels of higher education are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed over the last two years"²⁶⁹. In this context, let us mention three Belarusian universities: Belarusian State University (BSU), Yanka Kupala Grodno State University (YKSU), Brest State Technical University (BrSTU).

²⁶⁷ Belarus and China signed an agreement on the establishment of the association of universities [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitai-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sozdanii-assotsiatsii-universitetov-600861-2023/>

²⁶⁸ Xie Xiaoyun: the Chinese-Belarusian association of universities will become a hallmark of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-siaoiun-kitaisko-belorusskaia-assotsiatsiia-uzov-stanet-vizitnoi-kartochkoi-gumanitarnogo-600900-2023/>

²⁶⁹ Zaleskij, B. Hope for a Positive Future. Dynamics of partnerships in the conditions of economic realism / Boris Zaleskij. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 103.

Let's start with BSU: as of November 2023 there were "more than 80 cooperation agreements signed with 55 Chinese educational institutions, 72% of the total number of foreign students at BSU are Chinese citizens"²⁷⁰. Since 2007, Dalian Polytechnic University (DNU) has become a strategic partner of the Belarusian university. The most significant project recently was the opening of joint institutes of DPU-BSU and BSU-DNU. And in June 2023, the parties considered the prospects of holding mirror summer schools on the basis of the two universities and opening a new speciality "Photonics" on the basis of DPU-BSU in 2024/2025 academic year.

Xi'an University of Foreign Languages became a new partner of BSU in China in April 2023. The Memorandum of Understanding considers co-operation "in the field of regional and country studies of the Eurasian continent, history and ethnic issues of the peoples of Central Asia, Russian-Soviet oriental studies"²⁷¹. The Chinese university began operating in 1952 as the Northwest College of Russian Language, which was one of the first to teach foreign languages. Now it consists of 23 faculties and educational institutes, where about 20 thousand undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from 37 countries study and where 20 foreign languages, including Belarusian, are taught.

In November 2023, BSU signed two more new documents with Chinese partners. First, it is a memorandum of understanding with the Sichuan University of Foreign Languages, which provides for prospects of cooperation in the field of regional studies, linguistics and Belarusian studies. After all, the Centre for Belarusian Studies has been operating in this Chinese university since 2019. Secondly, it is an agreement on exchange of students with the Chinese University of Political Science and Law, which develops "partnership within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the universities in force since March 2023 and concerns the training in legal specialties graduates of the Chinese university in BSU Master's degree programmes, grant support for the implementation of academic mobility programmes"²⁷². At the same time, the issue of joining the Chinese university to the activities of the Centre for Research of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, established by BSU together with Qingdao

²⁷⁰ "Photonics and summer schools. BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/fotonika-i-letnie-shkoly-bgu-i-dalianski-po-itehnicheski-i-universitet-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-571808-2023/>

²⁷¹ BSU and Xi'an University of Foreign Languages signed the memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-sianski-universitet-inostrannih-jazykov-podpisi-memorandum-o-vzaimonimani-563650-2023/>

²⁷² BSU expands partnerships with China, two new agreements signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshiraet-partnerskie-svi-azi-s-kitaem-podpisany-dva-novih-so-glashenija-598631-2023/>

University, was also considered.

Interaction with China in the field of education is one of the strategic directions of international cooperation of another Belarusian university - GrSU, which signed its first agreement 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. The cooperation is carried out in a wide range of areas: joint educational programmes, academic exchanges, joint scientific projects. In October 2023 GrSU signed an agreement on international cooperation with Shijiazhuang Engineering Professional College, which implies long-term cooperation in the field of introduction of scientific developments in the educational process, development of scientific potential and ensuring high quality of professional training of specialists in the field of academic mobility, development of training in the network form. It only remains to add that for 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 PhD theses. Today there are more than 100 students from China studying at Yanka Kupala Grodno State University"²⁷³. Also, GrSU is the first of the Belarusian regional universities, where Chinese language courses with a three-year training programme were started. And for five years more than 600 people have been trained.

As for Brest State Technical University, in November 2023 it signed a co-operation agreement with Anhui Wenda Institute of Information Engineering. This university, located in the Chinese city of Hefei, became the 15th Chinese educational institution to sign a document on co-operation with BrSTU. The partners have outlined initial priorities for profitable interaction. In particular, graduates of the Chinese institute will be able to continue their studies at the master's programme of Brest University. In addition, Belarusian and Chinese teachers will conduct joint scientific research and develop teaching materials. A more distant prospect is the creation of joint educational programmes. It should be reminded that BrSTU has already signed 170 cooperation agreements with universities of 35 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Chinese vector of co-operation is one of the priorities. For example, "for more than 15 years joint training of specialists in the field of motorway construction, accounting and automation has been carried out with Huh-Khoto Vocational Institute. Last year, a pilot training programme for mechanical engineers with Xinxiang University was

²⁷³ GrSU and Shijiazhuang Engineering College agreed on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grsu-i-shijiazhuanskii-inzhenernyi-kolledzh-dozovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-595101-2023/>

launched"²⁷⁴ . And Hebei Institute of International Business and Economics is planning to create a joint programme with BrSTU to train students in the field of e-business. In addition, Brest university has taken up scientific work in the field of information technologies, which is financed by the Belarusian Republican Fund for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of the People's Republic of China. All these facts have shown that the establishment of the China-Belarus Association of Universities has become an important stage in the development of inter-university co-operation, and also serves for the benefit of the economies of the two countries and the development of the two peoples - Belarus and China.

In June 2024, Minsk hosted the second Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China, which was attended by more than 40 heads of universities of the two countries, including 18 rectors of Chinese universities. They discussed the prospects of inter-university co-operation, first of all, inter-university ties. This includes not only training of personnel in innovative specialities, but also a wide range of scientific and technical cooperation and youth exchanges.

For reference, we note that there are more than 700 bilateral agreements between the universities of Belarus and China. More than 200 of them have been signed in the last two years alone. Now "40 joint educational programmes of higher education are being implemented, 12 of which have been launched in the current academic year. Another 20 joint educational programmes are under development, including training of personnel of higher scientific qualification"²⁷⁵ . Also, 13 joint educational and scientific structures - six laboratories, five biological centres and two institutes - are already functioning on the basis of higher education institutions of the two countries.

Speaking about the Second Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China, it should be noted that the discussion of topical issues in the field of conducting promising scientific research and introducing innovative teaching methods to train competitive and professional specialists in the current globalisation environment took place within the framework of two sections - "Innovative Models of Cooperation between Universities of China and Belarus" and "Sino-Belarusian Cooperation in Basic Sciences". Eight documents were also signed at the

²⁷⁴ Brest Technical University will co-operate with the institute of Anhui Province of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnicheskij-universitet-budet-sotrudnichestv-s-institutom-kitaj-skoj-provincii-anhui-602188-2023>

²⁷⁵ International innovation youth forum will 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/>

forum, which "provide for assistance in organizing the exchange of scientific information and students, work on joint educational and research projects, as well as informing about study programmes, holding scientific and educational events..."²⁷⁶. These include: agreements on academic and scientific co-operation between the Belarusian State Medical University and Peking University, on co-operation between the Minsk State Linguistic University and Shanghai Foreign Languages 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 University of Information Technology and Liaoning University, the Belarusian State University of Science and Technology, the Belarusian State University of Science and Technology and the Belarusian State University of Technology.

New opportunities for co-operation have also been reached between the Belarusian State University (BSU) and Peking University (PKU). By the way, this Chinese university was founded in 1898 and is a leader among universities in the Celestial Empire. It ranks 12th in the world according to the international QS rating. "The structure of PKU includes faculties - Natural Sciences, Information and Engineering, Humanities, Social Sciences, Economics and Management, as well as the Centre for Medical Sciences, Interdisciplinary Units and Shenzhen Graduate School"²⁷⁷. A memorandum of understanding was signed between BSU and PKU in 2019, and a cooperation agreement on a joint education programme was signed in May 2022.

As for BSU, it is already implementing 112 contracts and agreements with 73 Chinese partners - universities and research centres. More than three and a half thousand undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from China are currently studying at BSU. This is about 70 per cent of all BSU foreigners. Over the last year and a half, the Belarusian university has done a lot in terms of strengthening partnership ties with this country. There are several interesting examples. First, in 2023, the BSU Faculty of International Relations opened the Research Centre of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation - a platform for research in the field of international activities, history, law, trade, economics, culture. Secondly, in November last year

²⁷⁶ Eight documents on co-operation between the universities of Belarus and China 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-rektorov-643857-2024/>

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

within the framework 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 of Scientific and Research Cooperation (iUNRC). Thirdly, a joint training programme in biotechnology is being successfully implemented with PKU.

Fourthly, in March 2024 BSU signed an agreement with the Hainan Centre of Excellence in International Education on the implementation of the Belarusian-Chinese project "Institute of Innovative Education" under the auspices of BSU in Sanya. There on its basis it is planned to train citizens of the countries close to China and states-participants of the project "One Belt, One Road". "This is a kind of ecosystem that involves not only the education of students and training of specialists, but also the development of business initiatives within the framework of Belarusian-Chinese economic and industrial relations through the creation of high-tech products"²⁷⁸. This initiative has already been supported by 14 leading universities in China. The new project will be developed in several areas: development of educational and methodological documentation, preparation of Chinese citizens for admission to BSU, career guidance activities, organisation of joint teaching of Russian as a foreign language and English using information and communication technologies. At the same time in Sanya BSU signed a memorandum of international co-operation with SanyaYazhou Bei Scientific and Technical City of Development and Construction Ltd. This agreement was one of the first in the implementation of the project "Institute of Innovative Education" under the auspices of BSU and involves scientific and scientific-technical interaction between the parties in modern areas, including space.

Fifthly, in the same March this year BSU expanded co-operation with China in the field of language training of students by signing two agreements with the Second Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages. The first one regulates the opening of joint educational programmes, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching materials, organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops, courses and preparation of joint publications. The second agreement provides for academic exchange of undergraduate, master's and postgraduate students. It is clear that these agreements will contribute to the development of partnerships in education and science, deepening and expanding existing co-operation. Especially since

²⁷⁸ Innovations, high-tech co-operation 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-novyyh-proektah-s-kitajem-622125-2024/>

the Second Beijing Foreign Studies University has a vast potential for international co-operation. Suffice it to say that this university offers 14 faculties with 48 undergraduate specialities. There is also a master's programme, postgraduate studies and 15 scientific institutes"²⁷⁹. So BSU approached the 2nd Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China in full readiness to develop new multi-format ties with Chinese partners.

And already at this forum BSU and PKU established a joint initiative - "Days of Friendship and Unity", which will be celebrated annually on 25 and 26 June and "will be a demonstration of effective and reliable cooperation in various vectors, including the involvement of students and teachers in various scientific, educational, cultural exchange processes"²⁸⁰. One of the central events of these "Days" will be the International Innovation Youth Forum, which will be held in 2025. Also within the framework of this forum, the universities of Belarus and China put forward an initiative to create a Belarusian-Chinese Centre for Fundamental Research, which is a fundamentally new step in scientific cooperation, as it is fundamental research in the field of transformation of production that will allow Belarus and China to reach a qualitatively new level.

Summarising the results of this forum, it should be noted that the new stage of technological innovation development, based on the in-depth development of industrial transformation, development and technology of artificial intelligence, requires the implementation of specific measures to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation between Belarus and China. And in this regard, the Rectors' Forum of the two countries becomes an effective platform for multilateral and bilateral interaction to direct efforts towards further development of joint Belarusian-Chinese platforms for creating innovative developments, searching for new opportunities to increase the efficiency of educational and scientific-technical approaches.

²⁷⁹ BSU will expand co-operation with China in language training of students [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/society/view/hgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajem-v-azykovo-podgotovke-studentov-622894-2024/>

²⁸⁰ Forum of Rectors of Leading Universities of Belarus and China started its work in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/rukovoditel-bole-40-vuzov-belarusi-i-i-kitaja-obedini-forum-rektorov-veduschih-universitetov-643761-2024/>

CHAPTER 13

From in-depth plans - to project implementation

In August 2024, Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC), paid an official visit to Belarus, during which a number of documents were signed, revealing the potential of Sino-Belarusian cooperation in trade, investment, development and deepening of industrial cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation, as well as in-depth plans for the joint development of the provinces of China and the regions of Belarus.

Among the participants in this interregional co-operation are, first of all, **Minsk Oblast** and the **city of Chongqing**. This city is one of the four largest Chinese cities of central subordination, with a population of more than thirty million people. The in-depth plan includes such projects as "production of reagents and equipment for diagnostics, unmanned aerial vehicles, car seats, traditional Chinese medicine preparations, assembly of industrial robots, integrated logistics"²⁸¹.

Recall that the capital region of Belarus signed a co-operation agreement with this Chinese city back in 2002. In March 2017, twinning relations were established between the regions. Last June, during the opening of the exhibition of Chinese goods and services at the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where a thematic exposition of the Chongqing Export Pavilion was shown and where "more than 20 city enterprises on an area of about 300 square metres placed machine-building products, including cars, motorbikes and components"²⁸², the parties reached an agreement to intensify cooperation in various areas.

A month later, Minsk Region and the city of Chongqing signed a roadmap for 2023-2024 to develop co-operation in the production of reagents, education, tourism, and logistics. "Another promising direction is the creation of a JV for the production of electric cars with any degree of localisation"²⁸³. Especially since Chongqing's powerful industrial base in the field of mechanical engineering is of interest to Belarusian companies in the context of modernisation of production facilities using modern Chinese technologies, creation of new joint automotive assembly plants, import of components and

²⁸¹ From trade and investment to science and cinema. Belarus and China signed a weighty package of documents on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-torgovli-i-investitsii-do-nauki-i-kino-belarus-i-kitai-podpisi-yesomyi-paket-dokumentov-o-656104-2024>

²⁸² Zalessky, B. Potential of the realisation of the reached agreements / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 36.

²⁸³ From medicine to economy and twinning ties. Minsk region and Chongqing signed the roadmap of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ot-meditsiny-do-ekonomiki-i-pobratimskih-svyezai-minskaia-oblast-i-chungsin-podpisi-dorozhnyi-u-kartu-581301-2023/>

auto parts. "As an equally promising direction, the parties identified cooperation in the field of healthcare development, including the elaboration of the establishment of a research centre and production facilities in the field of traditional Chinese medicine on the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"²⁸⁴, interaction 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) VI International Trade and Investment Fair of Western China;
- 2) Chongqing Twin Cities Economic Cooperation Forum;
- 3) Belarus-Chongqing Business Forum.

As for the trade and investment fair, the central platform was given to the guests of honour - Minsk Region and the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone", which is located in the Belarusian capital region. Minsk Region enterprises producing meat and dairy products, bakery, confectionery, alcoholic beverages and cosmetics were invited to participate in the fair. In addition, this pavilion was set up to reveal the multifaceted tourist potential and modern educational opportunities of Minsk region and the Republic of Belarus as a whole.

Speaking about the Chongqing Twin Cities 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 co-operation and promoting common development". Its participants discussed investment opportunities and new points of contact economic and technological interregional co-operation, as well as green policy.

Finally, the Belarus-Chongqing Business Forum "signed 13 cooperation agreements and commercial contracts for the supply of meat and dairy products and confectionery products totalling about \$31 million"²⁸⁵, and also outlined mutual projects on investment cooperation in the spheres of robotics production, auto components and medical equipment.

If we talk more specifically about these investment projects, we can name, for example, the company Chongqing Qiteng Robot, which produces wheeled and suspended inspection robots, machines for working in extreme

²⁸⁴ Brantsevich stated about the positive dynamics in trade and economic co-operation between Belarus and Chongqing. [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/brantsevich-zaiavila-o-pozitivnoj-dinamike-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve-belarusi-i-581186-2023/>

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-chungsin-podpisali-kontraktv-na-postavku-miasno-molochnoj-produktsii-na-summu-okolo-31-mln-637082-2024/>

conditions - at high temperatures, in toxic and flammable industries, in underground mining. It was founded in 2010 by students from Chongqing Engineering University, and now it has become a leader in emergency safety in China. And today the company "is ready to invest in opening its own subsidiary in Belarus in Velikiy Kamen with local assembly and creation of an electronic data storage server for specific projects. The company is also ready to establish a joint production with a Belarusian partner"²⁸⁶.

Another example is Chengju Chenghua Seating, which produces car seats. This Chinese factory "is considering the establishment of a joint production facility in Belarus to meet the requirements of our country [Belarus]"²⁸⁷. It is possible that this manufacturer will enter into co-operation with the BELJI plant. In May 2024, in Chongqing, the Belarusian side got acquainted with medical equipment from another Chinese manufacturer, Zybio, which "specialises in research and development of reagents and equipment for in vitro diagnostics, immunoanalysis and molecular diagnostics, haematology and microbiology"²⁸⁸. As a result, Minsk region will send specialists to Chongqing to thoroughly study the Zybio technique and its operation in hospital conditions. And if the results are positive, the new Chinese medical equipment will appear in hospitals of Minsk region.

Returning to the plan of in-depth cooperation between Minsk region and Chongqing, we note that the Belarusian region has been actively increasing trade turnover with China in recent years. In particular, at the end of the first half of 2023, the parties' trade turnover exceeded \$1.25 billion. "Minsk region exports to China poultry meat, dairy products, frozen beef, wood products, flax fibre <...>. Automatic information processing machines and their units, auto parts, telephone sets, television receivers"²⁸⁹. With the appearance of the new plan, the interregional co-operation between Minsk Region and Chongqing will apparently soon be filled with new concrete projects to develop production co-operation and attract high-tech competences for the implementation of investment projects at the enterprises of Minsk Region, establishing direct interaction with Chinese partners.

This summer, Minsk Region took a new step in co-operation with another region of China - **Guangdong Province** - by signing a roadmap of co-operation with it, which marks a new period in the relations between the two

²⁸⁶ In "Velikiy Kamen" may appear the enterprise for the production of robots [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-mozhet-notavitsia-predpriatie-po-proizvodstvu-robotov-636330-2024/>

²⁸⁷ Turchin got acquainted with the production of auto components in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/special/society/view/turchin-noznakomilsia-s-proizvodstvom-avtokomponentov-v-chuntsine-636362-2024/>

²⁸⁸ Minsk region medics are planned to be sent to Chongqing to study new equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/society/view/medikov-minskoi-oblasti-planiruiut-napravit-v-chuntsin-dli-a-izuchenii-a-novogo-oborudovaniia-636079-2024/>

²⁸⁹ Minsk region and Chinese Chongqing will determine the road map of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/minskaia-oblast-i-kitai-sklj-chuntsin-onredeliat-dorozhnyi-kartu-sotrudnichestva-580980-2023/>

regions. The parties, which have been closely co-operating for more than ten years, believe that "the signing of the roadmap is an important signal for the business of our two countries"²⁹⁰. After all, today it is necessary to look for new points of contact. In particular, in the field of agriculture, automotive industry, medicine.

For example, interesting projects in this regard can be implemented in the Belarusian capital region with the Chinese agricultural holding Guangdong Agribusiness Group Corporation, which is engaged in large-scale trade, rubber and sugar cane production. The holding's enterprises also specialise in meat and dairy cattle breeding, grain cultivation, and oil production. "The corporation has a vocational college where students are trained in construction specialities, technologies. Also, the agricultural holding has 38 hospitals, where, among others, the company's employees are served"²⁹¹. So, all these areas can become promising in terms of co-operation with Belarusian partners.

Among the possible partners of Minshchina enterprises from Guangdong Province are also the GAC Aion electric car manufacturing plant and Guangzhou Baiyunshan Zhongyi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. In the first case, production is carried out on a full cycle and includes research and development, as well as the sale of products and after-sales service. In the second case, this manufacturer produces drugs to improve eyesight, diabetes drugs, and recovery pills for brain ischaemia and the consequences of this disease. Representatives of Minsk Oblast have already discussed the prospects and options of co-operation with these Chinese partners. So let us hope that these talks 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** Oblast, with which the development of cooperation, thanks to systematic work, continues to deepen, reaching a new level of interaction. Suffice it to say that over the past ten years, exports of goods from this Belarusian region to China have grown 18 times. "Beef and poultry meat, dairy products, woodworking products, carbon black, flax, chocolate, various waters, strong alcoholic beverages remain the main export items from Mogilev region to China"²⁹². In addition, today three enterprises of Mogilev region have permission to supply products to the Celestial Empire: open joint-stock companies "Babushkina Krynka", Mogilev and Bobruisk meat

²⁹⁰ Turchin and the governor of the Chinese province of Guangdong signed a road map [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/turchin-i-gubernator-kitaiskoi-provintsii-guandun-podpisali-dorozhniyu-kartu-651136-2024/>

²⁹¹ From electric cars to endocrine raw materials: the delegation of Minsk region visits Guangdong province [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-elektrokarov-do-endokrinnogo-svriia-delegatsiia-minskoi-oblasti-poseschaet-provintsiyu-guandun-651244-2024/>

²⁹² Export of goods from Mogilev region to China has grown 18 times in the last ten years [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-iz-mogilevskoi-oblasti-v-kitai-za-poslednie-desiat-let-vvros-v-18-raz-575841-2023>

processing plants. The bulk of Chinese imports this year are acrylic polymers, complex synthetic yarns, glue and adhesives, opoks and pallets for metal foundry production, electrical transformers, household appliances, and passenger cars. "In January - April 2024, trade turnover between the Mogilev region and China totalled \$57.4 million - a growth rate of 102.2% compared to the same period of 2023. The export of services in January-April 2024 amounted to \$867.5 thousand (growth rate of over 193%) The basis of exports was education services, the share of which is almost 81%"²⁹³.

At the interregional level, the Belarusian eastern region is currently actively co-operating with such Chinese provinces as Henan, Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi and the city of Tianjin. Besides, more than ten documents of international character have been concluded with the regions of China at the level of cities and districts of the Mogilev region. The youngest partner of Mogilev region in the Celestial Empire was **Tianjin** - one of the four cities of central subordination in 2019. It is a major port hub in the north of China, which has established communication and transport routes with more than 500 ports of other countries. It is a city with an integrated production chain in many industries and extensive educational and scientific resources, with more than 50 universities.

In March 2023, the parties signed an Action Plan for the development of co-operation for 2023-2025. And in May last year Tianjin hosted the Week of Mogilev region. Then, participating in the forum "Tianjin - Gateway to China", more than twenty enterprises of Mogilev region showed their export potential. As a result of these negotiations, agreements were reached for the supply of dairy and meat products, commercial offers were received for the export of Belarusian sawn timber, and contacts were established for further co-operation in importing goods from China to the trade networks of Mogilev region. At the same time the documents on co-operation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district of Tianjin, FEZ "Mogilev" and TEDA economic zone, the Mogilev branch of the BelCCI and the Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade of Tianjin were signed. Agreements have also been reached to establish a joint production facility for milk powder processing in Tianjin"²⁹⁴.

A year later, in June 2024, a reciprocal action - the Week of the city of Tianjin in the Mogilev region took place, which included:

²⁹³ Platform for the exit to the implementation of common projects: Belarusian-Chinese business forum was held in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ploschadka-dlia-vvhoda-na-realizatsiiu-obshchih-proektov.-belorussko-kitaiskii-biznes-forum-nroshel-v-643622-2024/>.

²⁹⁴ Mogilev region will present construction and industrial investment projects at the exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaia-oblast-predstavit-stroitelnye-i-promyshlennnye-investirovki-na-vystavke-v-shanhae-595292-2023/>.

- 1) an exhibition of Chinese products of organisations of this city;
- 2) regional Belarusian-Chinese business forum "Mogilev region and the city of Tianjin: 5 years of co-operation";
- 3) Mogilev-Tianjin forum of co-operation in the field of education.

In addition, the parties signed a "road map for the development of cooperation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education, tourism for 2024-2025; an agreement between the administrative committee of the port free trade zone Tianjin PRC and the administration of the free economic zone "Mogilev"; an agreement on cooperation between the Tianjin Museum and the Mogilev Regional Art Museum named after P.V. Maslennin. P.V. Maslennikov"²⁹⁵.

During these events, the parties outlined their proposals for joint co-operation in various fields. For example, the Mogilev region believes that at this stage of relations it is advisable to move from simple trade to deeper co-operation and the creation of joint projects. If we take livestock breeding, Chinese partners can create new complexes of meat direction in Mogilev region for further processing of beef and supply to the Chinese market. "The second direction is minerals: The [Mogilev] region is rich in deposits of peat, sapropel, and trepel, the use of which in combination with mineral and organic fertilisers is an effective means of stimulating plant development and increasing crop yields"²⁹⁶. After all, this natural mineral supplement is used to enrich the ration of cattle to replenish the missing macro- and microelements in feed. Taking into account this potential, Mogilev residents are ready to propose a project for the production of fodder additives, organic soils and fertilisers.

Another interesting proposal was voiced at the business forum "Mogilev region and the city of Tianjin: 5 years of co-operation". The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) will assist the enterprises of the parties in organising interregional trade in industrial and agricultural goods. "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 transactions either in the course of classical in-session trading or to use the exchange's B2B platform operating on the principle of a marketplace

²⁹⁵ Business forum, exhibitions and competitions. Tianjin City Week starts in Mogilev region [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/biznes-form-vvstavki-i-sorevnovaniia-nedelja-goroda-tianszin-startuet-v-mogilevskoi-oblasti-643224-2024/>

²⁹⁶ "Find ways of interaction". Tianjin City Week takes place in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/naiti-puti-vzaimnoi-stviiia-v-mogilev-prohodit-nedelja-goroda-tianszin-643363-2024/>

with an integrated exchange mechanism"²⁹⁷. Based on 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, other cities within 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 industrial and agricultural sectors of the country. To all appearances, co-operation in these areas will be very fruitful.

Another of the main regions of Belarus in terms of developing co-operation with China, both in the economic and social spheres, is **Gomel Region**. Suffice it to say that over the past five years, the trade turnover of this south-eastern Belarusian region with China has almost quadrupled. "The basis of exports to the Celestial Empire is wood pulp, timber, meat, dairy and confectionery products. Transport, educational and tourist services are developing. According to the results of the past [2023] year, 44 enterprises of Gomel region supplied their products to China"²⁹⁸. In the future there are good prospects for cooperation in industrial production, transport and logistics, agriculture. For example, twenty enterprises of Gomel region have already been accredited to supply food products to the Chinese market, "including 9 milk processing, 7 meat processing enterprises and 4 food processing enterprises"²⁹⁹. And they are ready to increase the supply of beef, meat and food by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, condensed milk and cream, whey powder.

Besides, Gomel enterprises are ready to supply lumber and finished woodworking products to China. Other areas of co-operation are also being opened. In particular, on complex mineral fertilisers, as well as on other projects for possible joint implementation. They include a logistics hub on the basis of Gomel airport, production of plywood furniture and other products on the basis of Gomeldrev, creation of new production facilities on the premises of the free economic zone (FEZ) Gomel-Raton. The more so because there is an interesting example in FEZ - production unitary enterprise "Alkopak", which produces medical products and which "has been co-operating with Chinese manufacturers of equipment, spare parts, technological equipment for more than 20 years. At the moment 80-90% of

²⁹⁷ BUTB will help to simplify trade between Mogilev region and Chinese Tianjin [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-pomozhet-uprosti-torgoviu-mezhdu-mogilevskoi-oblasti-i-kitai-skim-fi-antiszinem-643724-2024/>

²⁹⁸ For five years the trade turnover of the Gomel region with China has grown four times [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-piat-let-tovarooborot-gomelskoi-oblasti-s-kitajem-vyros-v-chetvre-raza-640488-2024/>

²⁹⁹ Accreditation for the supply of food products to China has 20 enterprises of the Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/akktreditatsiiu-na-postavki-pischevoi-produktsii-v-kitai-imeit-20-predpriatii-gomelskoi-oblasti-640508-2024/>

injection moulding machines are Chinese-made. <...> The number of contacts, orders, purchased equipment is increasing. We have built up friendly relations with Chinese manufacturing companies"³⁰⁰. So the time is coming for the first residents to appear in the FEZ from the Celestial Empire, for whom attractive conditions have already been created.

The south-eastern region of Belarus is actively building relations with Chinese partners in the humanitarian sphere. For example, "more than 500 Chinese students study in higher educational establishments of Gomel region. They choose different specialities for themselves here and have already gained a lot"³⁰¹. Gomel State University named after F. Skaryna (GSU) co-operates with 17 Chinese universities. In addition, the Confucius Institute has been established and is successfully functioning at GSU and joint educational programmes are being implemented. In general, 332 students from China are currently studying at Gomel State University. An experimental project has also been implemented - students from China study in English in four specialities"³⁰².

As for the cooperation of Gomel region with specific partners from the Celestial Empire, at the beginning of 2024 it "signed documents on bilateral cooperation with four Chinese regions - the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016), Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016)"³⁰³, and ten agreements were adopted - at the level of cities.

In June 2024, another new partner of the Belarusian south-eastern region was identified - **Hebei Province**. During the visit of the official delegation of Gomel region to this province, contracts, memoranda and agreements with Chinese partners were signed, including the plan of events and exchanges for 2024-2025 between the region and the province. The Belarusian side, interested in development of this interaction, outlined three steps on the way to increasing trade, economic and investment co-operation. "These are deliveries to Hebei of quality food products of Homel producers, implementation of joint industrial projects with the preferences of the free economic zone "Homel-Raton", as well as joint investment projects in agriculture"³⁰⁴. In turn, the Chinese region is interested to cooperate in

³⁰⁰ Xie Xiaoyun: FEZ "Gomel-Raton" has created attractive conditions for residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/se-siaotun-v-sez-gomel-raton-sozdany-privilegiatnye-uslovia-dlia-rezidentov-640651-2024/>

³⁰¹ Trade, education, tourism. Xie Xiaoyun about the potential of co-operation between the Gomel region and the regions of China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlia-obrazovanie-turizm-se-siaotun-o-potentsiale-soimnichestva-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-i-regionov-640506-2024/>

³⁰² Xie Xiaoyun about the cooperation between Belarus and China in education: it is an intellectual base for all spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-siaotun-o-soimnichestve-belarusi-i-i-lmr-v-obrazovanii-eto-intellektualnaya-baza-dlia-vseh-sfer-640698-2024/>

³⁰³ Zalesky, B. Belarus-China: New Opportunities. Strategic interaction in the era of exemplary partnership relations / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 12.

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

machine building, logistics, supply of raw materials of traditional Chinese medicine, as well as to purchase Homel agricultural products, chemical fertilisers, goods of meat and dairy industry.

Within the framework of the Lanfang International Trade and Economic Fair, which was held these June days in Hebei Province, a number of enterprises of Gomel region were represented at the Belarusian stand. As a result of meetings and negotiations at this forum in Langfang, domestic exporters - Comintern, Gomel Chemical Plant, Rogachev Milk Canning Plant (MKK) - added to their portfolios of deals. In particular, Rogachev MCC signed a memorandum for product supplies worth about RM1m and an agreement for more than RM7m. Gomel Chemical Plant's memorandum was concluded for nearly RMB 12.5 million and Comintern's deal for RMB 14.7 million.³⁰⁵ . In addition, at the headquarters of Great Wall Haval - the factory for the production of Haval brand cars - the possibility of assembling these cars on the premises of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" was discussed.

Continuing the theme of participation of Gomel region representatives at exhibitions in the Celestial Empire, it should be reminded that in November 2023 at the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai during the Day of Gomel region documents on export supplies worth \$85 million were signed. In addition, at that time an agreement on cooperation on investment attraction between FEZ "Gomel-Raton" and Sichuan Association for Promotion of Economic and Trade Cooperation "One Belt - One Road" was adopted, as well as "a document of intent was signed to establish twinning ties between Zhlobin district of Gomel region and Baotou city of the autonomous region Inner Mongolia"³⁰⁶ .

All these facts show that the variety of partnership and twinning ties of Minsk, Mogilev and Gomel regions in China is only gaining momentum, developing intensively and fruitfully, emphasising huge prospects for the whole Belarusian-Chinese interregional all-weather strategic partnership.

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovlia-sovmestnye-promproektv-ank-krunko-o-sotrudnichestve-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-provintsi-hebei-641393-2024/>

³⁰⁵ Gomel enterprises signed new contracts and agreements with Chinese partners
2024. - URL:

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<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskie-predpriatia-nodpisali-novye-dogovory-i-soglasenija-s-kitaiskimi-partnerami-641709-2024/>

³⁰⁶ Documents for \$85 million signed by representatives of Gomel region at the import exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. -
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<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dokumenty-na-85-mln-nodpisali-predstaviteli-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-vystavke-imnorta-v-shanhae-598283-2023/>

CHAPTER 14

Co-operation in Science, Technology and Innovation innovation reaches a new level

In August 2024, during the official visit of Premier Li Qiang of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Belarus, the two governments decided to declare 2024-2025 the Years of Cooperation between Belarus and China in Science, Technology and Innovation. On this occasion, an action plan was signed in Minsk. The plan covers a wide range of areas of bilateral cooperation and envisages joint scientific and technical events, the creation and development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation platforms, the implementation of joint scientific and scientific-technical projects, which will make it possible to strengthen sectoral ties in the field of industrial cooperation and become an additional incentive for innovative development.

The plan contains 89 measures to be implemented by 140 organisations - 59 Belarusian and 81 Chinese. These include leading scientific centres of the two countries, sectoral agencies and their subordinate organisations, and major technology corporations. In particular, in the field of information and communication technologies, the plan envisages the development of cooperation between the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation of Belarus and the Chinese corporations Huawei Technologies, ZTE and PhotonSpeak on the development of software, expansion of cooperation in the field of information and communication technologies, including the application of 5G/6G technologies. On the Belarusian side, the High Technology Park, the Velikiy Kamen industrial park, 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 Informatisation of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Informatisation of China, which "provides for the promotion of cooperation in digital transformation, cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, digital medicine, ICT training"³⁰⁷. There are also plans for co-operation on the development of smart cities, the creation of joint production facilities for high-tech products, and as well as a Chinese-Belarusian platform for co-operation in the field of information and communication technologies.

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-kitai-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimopomoshni-v-oblasti-ikt-656109-2024/>

The Ministry of Industry of Belarus together with the Centre for International Economic and Technical Cooperation of the Ministry of Industry and Informatisation of the People's Republic of China envisages the creation of a joint platform for the implementation of Sino-Belarusian industrial cooperation to find partners, transfer technologies, and develop cooperation with Chinese companies on the supply of technological equipment. Recall that "in March 2023, Belarus and China signed a comprehensive strategy of joint industrial development, and in November 2023 - a detailed plan to interface the industrial policies of the two countries"³⁰⁸ to develop industrial cooperation, including through joint production facilities in Belarus and China, attracting high-tech competences for investment projects at Belarusian enterprises and establishing direct interaction between the parties. This programme already consists of 30 specific projects in machine-tool construction, automotive, petrochemicals and wood processing. In particular, already "the entire cluster of domestic machine-tool enterprises - from the Gomel Machine-Tool Plant to Krasniy Borets in Orsha - is involved in the implementation of joint industrial development projects with China"³⁰⁹. Also, the decisions taken will allow to reformat the textile industry, as viscose together with linen and chemical fibres will create a fabric for Belarusians, which will become the foundation of the textile and clothing industry of the country.

In general, "15 new investment projects of strategic level worth up to three billion dollars are under active consideration with Chinese partners"³¹⁰. Among the most important are: the third stage of the project on deep grain processing of the Belarusian National Biotechnology Corporation, the construction of plants for the production of bleached sulphate pulp and particleboard boards, the organisation of modern automated casting, the production of engines, polypropylene, cardboard, polypropylene, polypropylene. engines, polypropylene, carbide, sodium chlorate, hydrogen peroxide and soda ash.

As for existing Belarusian enterprises, for example, Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) is interested in setting up joint production facilities in China. In September 2024, a roadmap was signed to develop a 350-horsepower tractor

³⁰⁸ Ministries of Industry of Belarus and China: the plan of cooperation can be updated, detailed and expanded [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/economics/view/minpromv-belarusi-i-kitai-a-plan-po-sotrudnichestvu-mozhet-byt-aktualizirovan-detaalizirovan-i-rasshiren-644949-2024/>

³⁰⁹ Machine tools, pulp, car. What landmark projects Belarus and China are realising [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/society/view/stanki-tseliuloza-avtomobil-kakie-znakovye-proekty-realizuiut-belarus-i-kitai-671355-2024/>

³¹⁰ Snopkov: strategic projects with China for \$3bn are designed for the medium-term perspective [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL:

<https://belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-strategicheskie-proekty-s-kitaiem-na-3-mird-rasschityvay-na-srednesrochnuiu-perspektivu-655954-2024/>

with permanent magnet electric drive. MTZ is ready to implement this project with the China-Belarus High-Tech Aerospace Research and Development Centre. Another joint production facility may also be set up in China - for the assembly of BELARUS caterpillar tractors"³¹¹. In addition, the Belarusian company will buy equipment in China for more than 840 million Belarusian rubles to modernise the melting system for the first foundry shop, an automatic continuous sandblasting chamber with rotary tables. "The MTZ workshops will be replenished with 15 lathes, 7 horizontal, 4 milling centre and 3 horizontal CNC milling machining centres. Over the last year and a half, the company has received eight CNC machines [from China]"³¹².

Other machine-building enterprises of the republic are also open to production co-operation with Chinese companies. In particular, to organise "joint production of engines for trucks and cars in Belarus"³¹³. In this respect, mutually beneficial cooperation options are already being worked out with Guangxi Yuchai Machinery Group Co., Ltd. in order to reach a strategic bilateral project providing for deep localisation.

Another interesting example is Belshina, which together with the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) is strengthening its partnership with leading Chinese tyre companies and scientific organisations in this country. Back in April this year, Belshina and BSTU signed a memorandum of co-operation with Qingdao University of Science and Technology and the Chinese company MESNAC - the leading manufacturer of rubber equipment in the Celestial Empire with a global geography of supply. In this document, the parties envisage collaboration in education as well as research and development on improving the properties of elastomeric composites for tyres and rubber products. It means that the Belarusian tyre manufacturer and one of the best universities in Belarus for training engineering personnel, including for the chemical industry, are working together to improve the quality of rubber compounds, produce new sizes of agricultural tyres, as well as improve the performance characteristics of oversized tyres for effective import substitution. By signing the memorandum, the parties plan to carry out joint projects related to "improving the performance of all-metal cord extra-large tyres of 57-inch diameter radial design, using original

³¹¹ MTZ is interested in the creation of joint production facilities in China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zainteresovan-v-sozdani-ovmestnyh-proizvodstv-v-kitae-662915-2024/>

³¹² MTZ will buy more than 30 units of equipment from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zakupit-bolee400-eдиниц-oborudovaniia-iz-kitai-662946-2024/>

³¹³ Naumovich: Belarusian machine-building enterprises are open to co-operation with Chinese companies [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/naumovich-beloruskie-predpriatia-mashinostroeniia-otkryv-k-kooperatsii-s-kitaiskimi-kompaniiami-665797-2024/>

technologies and equipment of the leading Chinese manufacturer"³¹⁴. The memorandum is expected to bring the parties to a new level of co-operation. Taking into account the prospective participation of Qingdao University of Science and Technology and Belarusian State Technological University in the projects, emphasis will also be placed on scientific research in the tyre industry and training of highly qualified personnel for the production facilities.

The adopted plans also "provide for the establishment in Minsk of a project office of the China Technology Transfer Centre of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member states, the activities of which are supervised by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China"³¹⁵. This will facilitate both the attraction of advanced foreign technologies to Belarus and the commercialisation of the results of Belarusian scientific and innovation organisations' activities abroad. In the field of medicine, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the Centre for International Exchange and Cooperation of the State Health Committee of China will cooperate on the exchange of innovations and technologies. And Belneftekhim Concern together with the Oil and Gas Resources Research Centre of the Chinese 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 an investment volume of \$1.5bn. More than half of the residents are companies with Chinese capital"³¹⁶. In the first seven months of 2024, 18 new companies have already come to the park. It should be noted that in July of this year a meeting of the working group on the industrial park was held, which outlined the priority areas for the further growth of Velikiy Kamen. Among the main prospects is the attraction of new residents from China with their advanced experience and anchor projects that will be able to gather their partners around them. The second direction is to continue building the Great Stone infrastructure to prepare sites for new production facilities. Especially since "the construction of the infrastructure of the first stage of the central

³¹⁴ "Belshina" together with Belarusian State Technical University strengthens partnership with leading Chinese tyre companies [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belshina-sovmestno-s-hfmi-ukrepit-aet-partnerstvo-s-veduschimi-kitaiskimi-shinnymi-kompaniyami-627709-2024/>

³¹⁵ Start of the Years of Cooperation between Belarus and China in Science, Technology and Innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/societv/view/dan-start-godam-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-j-knr-v-oblasti-nauki-tehnologii-i-innovatsii-656188-2024/>

³¹⁶ Roman Golovenko: In the conditions of instability in the world Belarus and China continue to build mutually beneficial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <http://nda.government.gov.by/ru/content/10994>

part of the park is to begin, as well as the creation of a multimodal railway terminal"³¹⁷. Thirdly, it 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 medical cluster of Veliky Kamen, and new Chinese companies are on their way.

Finally, in order to increase the economic efficiency of joint activities, the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China will hold a competition of flagship scientific and technological projects. For this purpose, "20 projects for joint implementation in 2024-2026 in the fields of ICT, biotechnology and medicine, mechanical engineering, new materials" have been approved³¹⁸. As a result of this competition, it is planned to select three large-scale joint projects, the results of which should be the creation of advanced technologies and the establishment of joint ventures or industrial technology centres. 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 to enter the Belarusian, Chinese, and maybe even 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 become a Sino-Belarusian co-operation platform to promote interaction between universities, research institutes and enterprises of the two countries in the field of education, research and implementation of achievements. "The main areas of cooperation within the branch are aerospace engineering and space sciences, materials science and composite materials, optics and optoelectronics, production of high-tech equipment and advanced devices, microelectronics and digital intelligence, biotechnology and pharmacology"³²⁰. In this regard, such cooperation mechanisms as exchange of highly qualified Chinese and Belarusian experts, training of highly qualified researchers, joint training of master's and doctoral students, internships and training, initiation of joint research and development by the parties' organisations, promotion of mutual introduction of technologies and achievements, establishment of joint

³¹⁷ Chebotar: "Great Stone" is one of the key priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-veliki-kamen-odin-iz-kluchevykh-prioritetov-razvitiia-belorusko-kitaiskogo-sotrudnichestva-649217-2024/>

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

³¹⁹ Belarus and China will create legal entities for the production of products based on joint developments [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitai-budut-sozdatel-uritsa-dlia-proizvodstva-produktsii-na-osnove-sovmestnykh-razrabotok-656197-2024/>

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

laboratories within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative will be envisaged. For this purpose, in August this year a framework agreement on strategic cooperation was signed between the NAS of Belarus and the State Administration of the People's Republic of China for Foreign Experts, which is aimed at attracting exports by organising technical internships for Chinese researchers in the Great Stone Industrial Park and relevant research organisations of the NAS of Belarus on a contractual basis. The main areas for internships are: space utilisation and exploration, new energy sources and advanced power engineering, optoelectronics and high-tech equipment, intelligent manufacturing, new materials, digitalisation and artificial intelligence.

All these documents and the launch of several new industrial projects show that in the future the parties see the integration of Belarusian competences and Chinese technologies as a key element of 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 industrial policy interface <...> will give concrete practical content to the new status of the relationship between the two countries - an all-weather and all-round strategic partnership"³²¹. For this reason, cooperation with China will allow Belarus to implement its ambitious plans for modernisation and technical re-equipment.

Returning to the results of the official visit of Premier Li Qiang of the State Council of the People's Republic of China to Belarus, it should be noted that, in addition to the documents revealing the potential for the development and deepening of industrial cooperation, scientific, technical and innovation interaction, agreements, memoranda and plans were signed in Minsk in other areas as well. For example, this is an intergovernmental agreement on trade in services and investment, which envisages the creation of a free trade zone in services between the two countries, a transparent, liberal and favourable investment regime to attract investment. Also, the Belarusian Ministry of Economy and the Chinese State Committee for Development and Reform signed a "practice-oriented cooperation plan to strengthen the interface between 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 between the competent departments of the two countries. ,³²².

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>

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

As for the Belarusian-Chinese regional dimension, "in-depth plans for the joint development of the provinces of China and the regions of Belarus" were signed in Minsk³²³. Firstly, between Minsk Oblast and the city of Chongqing, where the following projects will be implemented: production of reagents and equipment for diagnostics, unmanned aerial vehicles, car seats, preparations of traditional Chinese medicine, assembly of industrial robots. Secondly, between Mogilev region and the province Shaanxi, where the main directions of development in trade and economic and investment spheres, education and culture are defined. Also in this context, seven more similar in-depth plans for the joint development of Belarusian and Chinese regions were supported.

Thus, Belarus and China, continuing to build mutually beneficial cooperation, in these August days of 2024, identified further concrete tasks, plans and future directions, showing the exemplary nature of an all-weather and all-round strategic partnership in the new era, despite the overall unstable situation in the global economy.

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