

Integration as a development factor

The Republic of Belarus is chairing the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021. The concept of its presidency provides for the development of coordinated approaches to solving urgent issues of regional cooperation, strengthening multilateral cooperation for a comprehensive and balanced economic and social development of all post-Soviet states. Particular attention is being paid to achieving synergy among members of the Commonwealth in various integration associations and organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as in bilateral format. Media coverage of this cooperation is also expected to increase. In the sphere of inter-regional and cross-border cooperation we are talking about the development of socio-economic potential of regions, the establishment of direct links between business entities, the formation and implementation of a coordinated regional policy. How are these integration building plans realized in practice? The answer to this question is in the materials of the proposed study.



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*Peculiarities of regional cooperation
in the post-Soviet space*

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Chapter 1

Commonwealth of Independent States: Evolution of regional cooperation

In February 2019, the Working Group on the Preparation of the Draft Economic Development Strategy of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period until 2030 met in Moscow and "approved the content of the first four sections of the draft Strategy"¹. The fifth section is scheduled to be discussed in April 2019. This fact shows that the CIS has started concrete work to update the CIS Concept of Further Development, adopted back in 2007, which should help identify common points of economic growth among the member states of this international association and implement plans to work out joint development priorities. It should be noted that the need to update the concept was discussed back in September 2018 at a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Dushanbe, where it was also stated that "the CIS potential for developing regional cooperation is not exhausted, and appropriate steps should be taken to implement it. This will help increase the competitiveness of national economies, the well-being of citizens, and the development of humanitarian ties"².

The Republic of Belarus has consistently advocated strengthening the economic potential of this association of post-Soviet countries and expanding their trade and production ties in order to consolidate the positive dynamics observed in the CIS: "Mutual trade within the CIS continues to grow. Last year [2017], trade totalled USD 164 billion, an increase of 25%"³. In the first seven months of 2018, "the value of mutual trade increased by 15% (\$102 billion) compared to

¹ A meeting of the Working Group on preparing a draft Economic Development Strategy of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period until 2030 was held in Moscow [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://http://www.e-cis.mfo/news.php?id=21302.e-cis.mfo/news.php?id=21302>

² On the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.e-cis.mfo/page.php?id=26493.e-cis.mfo/page.php?id=26493>

³ Results of the CIS Council of Heads of Government Meeting and List of Adopted Documents (2 November 2018, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.e-cis.info/page.php?id=26548.e-cis.info/page.php?id=26548>

the previous year"⁴ , and the year-end figures show a 20% increase in mutual trade among CIS member states.

⁵One of the effective levers for resolving the tasks set in the Commonwealth is further intensification of interregional cooperation among its member states, which during the existence of this international organisation has become an effective tool of interstate dialogue and an integral part of economic interaction, since "it allows strengthening economic ties among regions, optimising infrastructure location, joint efforts to solve large-scale investment projects, increasing the effectiveness of

It should be recalled that back in 2004 the **Concept of Interregional and Border Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States** was adopted. Its emergence was dictated by the fact that "due to the formation of new independent states the population of border territories found themselves in a particularly difficult situation, where economic, labor, cultural and household ties were severed or significantly limited. The acuteness of this situation confirms the need to realize the potential of interregional and cross-border cooperation to involve the regions in foreign economic activities and implement a set of measures for the normal livelihood of the population of the border regions"⁶ .

It was this document that laid down the basic principles of interregional and cross-border cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States: mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other CIS Member States; inviolability of state borders; peaceful settlement of border disputes; mutual respect for national legislation governing interregional and cross-border

⁴ Participation in the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/8365.government.by/ru/content/8365>

⁵ The development of inter-regional and cross-border cooperation is a crucial factor in the consolidation of the Commonwealth [Electronic resource]. -2015 . - URL: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/news.php?id=5355>

⁶ Concept of interregional and cross-border cooperation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2004. - URL: <http://http://www.cis.minsk.by/page.php?id=13214.cis.minsk.by/page.php?id=13214>

cooperation as well as relevant international agreements; ensuring mutual interests in interregional and cross-border co-operation

Among the main objectives were the creation of an environment of trust, understanding and good neighbourliness between the population, the authorities and the business community in the regions and

The border areas of the CIS Member States ;

Encouraging an increase in mutually beneficial trade, developing and strengthening economic, cultural and humanitarian ties between regions; preserving cultural heritage; facilitating mutual communication between interested authorities, business communities and population groups, including ethnic communities separated by state borders, supporting compatriots abroad living in the border area and in the region; creating and efficiently developing economic, social infrastructure in the border areas and in the regions

In October 2008, the legal framework for inter-regional cooperation in the post-Soviet space was supplemented by

Convention on Cross-border Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The adoption of this document was caused by the fact that by that time a number of prerequisites for the development of cross-border cooperation as the most active form of inter-regional cooperation had already matured in the CIS. These include a new vision of coordinated development of the borderland leading to the formation of new competitive advantages; a new understanding of the interests of local communities, socio-cultural, environmental and other public initiatives that rise above municipal and regional administrative boundaries; "the actualisation of existing and the establishment of new formalised and informalised institutions of inter-territorial cooperation"⁷.

⁷ Sachuk T.V., Sachuk T.V. Socio-economic cooperation of border regions of the Northwestern Federal District / T.V. Sachuk // Prospects of socio-economic development of border regions: proceedings of the Fourth Scientific-Practical Conference with international participation, [June 9, 2017, Petrozavodsk] / FIC "Karelian Research Center RAS", Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences; [ed.] - Petrozavodsk, 2017. - C. 15.

⁸The Convention specified the main directions of joint activities of the parties concerned: creation of special or special economic zones (free economic zones) in the border areas; cross-border trade, ensuring its security; carrying out joint activities on environmental monitoring, including cross-border rivers, and rational use of natural resources, ensuring sanitary, epidemiological, ecological, veterinary and sanitary well-being of the CIS countries by the competent authorities. The same year, 2008, the **Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation of the CIS Member States** was established to address the "sustainable economic development of regions and border areas, ensuring the security of citizens and strengthening friendship and good-neighbourliness between the CIS Member States"⁹ .

Active development of cooperation at the level of administrative-territorial formations and border territories in CIS countries by 2010 began to really help to solve or mitigate certain problems of interstate relations, to strengthen and develop historically established ties. By this time, the regional environment in the post-Soviet space is increasingly beginning to determine "the competitiveness of national businesses in the modern world market, promoting the development of knowledge-intensive production, in which not the scale of production and sales prevail, but the ability to constantly renew products through the introduction, creation and marketing of fundamentally new goods"¹⁰ . Small and medium businesses are beginning to emerge from the "shadow" as the most adapted to the rapid change of technology and capable of creating competitive products. Regional unions of scientists, entrepreneurs and local

⁹ Convention on Cross-Border Co-operation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2008. - URL: <http://http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=2510.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=2510>

⁹ Regulation on the Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2008. - URL: <http://http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=2520.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=2520>

¹⁰ Development of Interregional and Cross-border Cooperation in the CIS Member States (Information and Analytical Note). - Moscow, 2010. - C. 6.

administrations are starting to become a factor of market success. At the same time, intergovernmental commissions on cooperation of the CIS member states become permanent formats organising and coordinating interregional and cross-border cooperation. Thus, "in the Republic of Belarus alone, 6 meetings of the intergovernmental commissions on trade and economic cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine (2) were held in 2009, and 19 meetings of the Belarusian parts of the intergovernmental commissions took place"¹¹.

By 2014, interregional cooperation at the level of administrative-territorial formations is already becoming "an important feature of modern interstate relations of the CIS member states, contributing to the strengthening and development of historically established ties and increasing mutual trade turnover. The use of its potential is one of the most effective factors facilitating real integration and playing an important role in the creation of a common market for goods, capital, services and labour".¹². Bilateral agreements regulating interregional cooperation include 7 (out of 74) regions of Azerbaijan, 10 (out of 11) regions of the Republic of Armenia, all regions of the Republic of Belarus, 16 (out of 17) regions of Kazakhstan, all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic, 12 (out of 33) regions of the Republic of Moldova, 4 (out of 13) regions of the Republic of Tajikistan, 5 (out of 6) regions of Turkmenistan, all regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, almost all regions of the Russian Federation. A form of interaction between the regions, such as bilateral forums, which provide an ongoing dialogue on a wide range of issues, is increasingly developing. In particular, in June 2014, Minsk hosted the first forum of the regions of Belarus and Russia. Its theme was "The effective development of agro-industrial complexes of Belarus and Russia - a major condition for food

¹¹ Ibid. C. 13.

¹² Information on the Role of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States in the Development of Interregional Cooperation among the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://naviny.org/2014/10/10/by1130.htm.org/2014/10/10/by1130.htm>

security of the Union State.

In May 2015, another important document appears within the Commonwealth of Independent States - **the Concept of Interregional and Cross-border Cooperation of the CIS Member States for the period until 2020**, which concludes that "interregional and cross-border cooperation has become an effective tool for inter-state dialogue"¹³. It is already aimed at the development of cooperation not only between neighbouring regions but also with non-contiguous regions with which there are common interests and intentions to develop partnerships on both a multilateral and bilateral basis, as it allows to restore and strengthen economic ties between regions, optimize the location of infrastructure on the basis of cooperation of their activities, eliminate inefficient financial expenditure related to the creation of duplicate economic structures in the regions, and jointly target the development of regional economic relations. This document contains ten main objectives:

1. Improvement of the legislation of the CIS Member States taking into account existing bilateral and multilateral international treaties, including: a) legal regulation of interregional and cross-border cooperation in order to develop common approaches to its implementation; b) convergence of technical requirements and regulations in the economic sphere.
2. Mobilisation of existing capacities in the socio-economic and cultural fields for joint tasks, including: a) identification of the socio-economic and cultural potential of the regions; b) development of modern forms of territorial management; c) harmonisation of approaches to the development of the territories of the border regions.
3. The Forum of CIS Regions, the establishment of regional associations of cooperation, whose functioning includes: a) joint decision-making on topical issues; b) exchange of experience in the effective management of regions and

¹³ The concept of interregional and cross-border cooperation of the CIS member states for the period until 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://http://www.cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5135.cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5135>

territorial communities; c) joint implementation of projects in various areas of cooperation in order to achieve synergies.

4. Coordinated development of border infrastructure in order to: a) improve the efficiency of border crossing points between CIS Member States, including by: a) organising joint controls at these border crossing points; b) improving procedures for crossing state borders between CIS Member States' citizens, in particular when residents of border areas cross state borders; c) creating favourable conditions for passengers

5. Development of trade, economic and investment cooperation between the regions, including: a) promotion of mutually beneficial direct links between economic entities of the regions; b) development of cross-border trade; c) implementation of joint large innovative investment projects in various fields of economy and creation of joint competitive enterprises and financial and industrial groups; d) mutual exchange of information on investment activities and investment attraction, as well as on export opportunities

6. Strengthening the atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding and good neighbourliness between the population of the regions through the development of humanitarian links, including in the following areas: a) organisation and conduct of joint celebrations, exhibitions, concerts, local history and historical research, in particular the celebration of anniversaries in the common history of the CIS member states; b) joint preservation and restoration of historical and cultural heritage sites of the peoples of the CIS member states; c) joint preparation and implementation of joint actions to commemorate the

7. Health protection and law enforcement and security, including in the following directions: a) creation of conditions for mutual provision of medical services; b) organization of mutual provision of services in the field of sanatorium and rehabilitation treatment of the population; c) implementation of joint actions to prevent the emergence and spread of sanitary and epidemiological threats in the border territories; d) taking coordinated measures for prevention, prevention, detection, suppression, investigation and ra

8. Rational and safe use of natural resources and carrying out economic activities in an environmentally sound manner, including the following: a) regulation of economic activities in order to manage industrial wastes and organise joint control over the use of hazardous substances, as well as the implementation of joint environmental protection programmes and projects; b) joint protection and management of transboundary waters and their ecosystems; c) implementation of joint measures to

9. Ensuring timely prevention and joint response to natural and man-made emergencies in border areas, including in the following areas: a) timely and regular provision of information about infectious diseases, epizootics, epiphytotics and quarantine pests, joint preventive measures and emergency measures to eliminate diseases, quarantine diseases and pests; b) improvement of transboundary monitoring systems for natural

10. The regulation of the labour market and migration processes in the border areas, implemented inter alia in the following directions: a) development of coordinated measures to regulate migration flows, exchange of information on national legislation in the field of migration and procedures for crossing state borders of neighbouring states by local residents; b) coordination of measures to prevent illegal migration in regions and border areas; c) exchange of information on labour market situation in border areas and in regions.

Finally, in September 2016, the **Convention on Interregional Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States** was adopted at the level of heads of state¹⁴, which contains a detailed list of areas of possible cooperation among regions in the post-Soviet space: the creation of free (special, special) economic zones in the regions; joint activities on environmental monitoring, rational use of natural resources, sanitation by the competent authorities of the parties

¹⁴ Convention on Interregional Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5474.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5474>

The practical implementation of the provisions of all these documents has led to the fact that at the beginning of 2018 the Register of signed international documents on interregional and cross-border cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States already included "about 5000 documents in the trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian fields of interregional and cross-border cooperation, characterizing the current level of relations between the CIS member states"¹⁵. Among the most effective formats for realising the potential for interaction between the regions of different countries in the post-Soviet space are such bilateral events as the Russian-Armenian and Russian-Azerbaijani

interregional forums; a Russian-Kyrgyz interregional conference; a conference on interregional cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan; forums of interregional cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. These forums are held on an annual basis, alternately in the regions of the states with the participation of representatives of federal executive and legislative bodies, the business community and mass media, scientific and expert circles as well as representatives of regions of the participating states. During each forum, the parties organise regional events with presentations of promising investment projects. The existing format of the forums makes it possible to comprehensively present and realise the potential of the regions of the states in all areas of need. Thus, in 2018, the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, as well as the first Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine were already held with the participation of the Belarusian side. These formats help actively develop trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as cooperation ties between CIS regions.

All these facts show once again that inter-regional and cross-border cooperation, which is an integral part of economic interaction in the Commonwealth of Independent States, today already allows each participant to realize its economic

¹⁵ Development and Activities of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2017 (collection of information and analytical materials, issue No. 6). - Minsk, 2018. - C. 75.

opportunities, compensate peculiarities of development and distribution of productive forces, solve social problems. But even more extensive prospects will open here in the near future with the implementation of new approaches to deepening cooperation of the CIS member states in trade and economic cooperation, energy, transport and communications within the framework of updating the provisions of the Concept of further development of the Commonwealth of Independent States after 2020.

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Chapter 2

Commonwealth of Independent States: Plan for Information Promotion as a Direction of Integration in the Post-Soviet Space

In December 2020, the Council of CIS Heads of State approved a new version of the Concept of Further Development of the Commonwealth and a plan of key activities for its implementation. The new version fixes the main task of the CIS - "to increase the efficiency of its activities, including by ensuring that the states fulfil their obligations and monitor their implementation. Economic cooperation is defined as the key priority in the document"¹⁶. The development of the Commonwealth of Independent States is especially relevant today for Belarus because on 1 January 2021 Belarus assumed presidency in this international organization. And now it will largely depend on its approach to the strengthening of integration mechanisms in the post-Soviet space to what extent the CIS will be able to cope with the current problems caused by globalization and the new challenges of our time.

Among the main priorities of Belarus's CIS presidency at the December (2020) meeting of the Council of the CIS Heads of State are trade liberalization, reduction of restrictions and exemptions to a minimum, elimination of technical barriers, unification of rules and procedures for state procurement, formation of common markets of goods and services, as well as intensification of investment activities, expansion of industrial cooperation, and search for common points of economic growth. This also includes strengthening humanitarian ties, expanding contacts in science, education, health, culture, sports and tourism, youth work, as well as improving the image of the Commonwealth in the international arena with an emphasis on strengthening cooperation between CIS countries in the field of information.

¹⁶ Meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zasedanie-soveta-glav-gosudarstv-sng-25085/.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zasedanie-soveta-glav-gosudarstv-sng-25085/

The attention to boosting information cooperation in this context can be explained by concerns voiced at the CIS Heads of State Council about the state of affairs in this sphere. The participants in the summit recognised "the lack of awareness among the people of our countries, the level of their awareness of what the Commonwealth is all about, what its importance is. There is a need to make greater use of modern information and communication technologies which are especially in demand among the younger generation. It would be advisable to create more active discussion platforms and involve the export community and the journalistic corps. It is necessary to think over and adopt a plan of CIS information promotion"¹⁷. We should believe that this proposal will be taken into account in the Concept of the Belarusian Chairmanship and Plan of Measures for its implementation. The proposal sets serious tasks for the information sphere of all CIS countries to ensure an adequate media articulation of integration processes that will take place in the CIS during the presidency of the Republic of Belarus there. It goes without saying that representatives of the international segment of the national journalism of the presiding country must play a special role in resolving this creative task; they must set the tone in the media sphere by their address to the most topical issues of integration building in the post-Soviet space. In doing so, they should take into account a number of important points.

Even before its presidency, the Belarusian side announced at the highest level that it intends to focus in 2021 on the development of the common economic space of the Commonwealth, with "a special emphasis on the alignment of integration processes in the CIS and the EAEU"¹⁸ to create the same level of cooperation within the Commonwealth as in the Eurasian Economic Union. This

¹⁷ Moldova proposes to elaborate a plan for CIS information promotion [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/moldovahttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/moldova-predlagaet-produmat-plan-informatsionnogo-prodvizhenija-sngpredlagaet-produmat-plan-informatsionnogo-prodvizhenija-sng-420785-2020>

¹⁸ On the meeting of Foreign Minister V. Makei with the Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee - CIS Executive Secretary [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b824e89c5996ccf3.htmlmfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b824e89c5996ccf3.html

intention makes it relevant for members of the media to study the existing experience of integration building in the EAEU, which could be successfully used in the CIS. All the more so as the economic union of Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia has such experience.

As a reminder, in November 2020, the CIS Council of Heads of Government met via videoconference to approve an action plan to implement the first stage of the CIS economic development strategy for the period until 2030. This document "covers the period from 2021 to 2025 and contains 29 sections, including those devoted to trade and economic cooperation, industry, fuel and energy

The government has a strong commitment to the development of the transport, communications and information sector ,

agro-industrial complex, monetary and financial policy, and the labour market"¹⁹

. The measures contained in the adopted plan, aimed at strengthening and enhancing the competitiveness of CIS economies, developing new cooperation and infrastructure projects, developing the digitalisation of the economy, and realising scientific, technological and educational potential, should help the integration mechanisms of this international organisation to make effective use of the positive dynamics of the scale of interaction. After all, in the seven months of 2020 the value of foreign trade turnover of goods between the CIS countries decreased by almost 17 per cent. In addition, "in January-August, the volume of industrial production of the Commonwealth decreased by 4% compared to the same period last year. Freight traffic fell by 4.8 per cent, and passenger traffic fell by more than a quarter, by 28 per cent".²⁰

Of course, these figures do not look very convincing against the performance of the Eurasian Economic Union, where a number of positive trends in economic activity have been observed. Thus, "over the past five years, the volume of

¹⁹ The next meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government will be held in Minsk on 28 May 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sledujuscheezasedanie-soveta-glav-pravitelstv-sng-projdet-v-minske-28-maja-2021-godazasedanie-soveta-glav-pravitelstv-sng-projdet-v-minske-28-maja-2021-goda-414460-2020/>.

mutual trade of the Union's countries has grown by 35% and amounted to \$62bn (in 2015 it was \$46bn). Aggregate GDP has increased by 21% and reached \$2 trillion"^{20 21} . And if we take even the year 2020, which was not the best year for epidemiological reasons, agricultural production grew by another two and a half years and there was no decline in industrial production in the manufacturing sector. But the EAEU is well aware that the union must only accelerate the pace of integration of the industrial capacities of the member states. For this reason, strategic directions of development of the Eurasian economic integration were approved in the EAEU just a week before the meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State, which provides for the rapid pace of this international organization moving forward. "It is necessary to grow by 4.5% of GDP every year in order to reach the indicators laid down in the strategy for the development of integration until 2025"²² . The adopted strategy, which includes eleven areas and 332 implementation mechanisms, envisages the fuller use of the EAEU industrial potential and its logistical capabilities in order to fully ensure the complementarity of the economies. Particular attention will be paid to education, health, and the movement of citizens. In order to implement this kind of a roadmap for the development of integration, "we will need to conclude 13 international treaties, over 60 normative legal acts, and to make about 25 amendments and additions to the Treaty on the EEU and national legislation"²³ . As we can see, there is a lot of work to be done. An important detail: the strategy for the development of Eurasian integration until 2025 was adopted at

²⁰ Roman Golovchenko took part in a meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/9638.by/ru/content/9638>

²¹ Nazarbayev: it is necessary to increase the volume and sustainability of trade flows within and outside the EAEU [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nazarbaev-neobhodimo-naraschivat-objemy-i-ustojchivost-torgovyh-potokov-vnutri-i-za-predelami-caes-419719-2020/>

²² Eurasian integration development strategy will allow to solve many issues in a new way - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. 2020. URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strategija-razvitiya-evrazijskoj-integratsii-pozvolit-po-novomu-reshat-mnogie-voprosy-mjasnikovich-419794-2020/>

²³ EEU Strategy 2025 contains 330 measures and mechanisms to promote integration Malkina [Electronic resource]. 2020. URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strategija-caes-do-2025-goda-soderzhit-330-mer-i-mehanizmov-po-razvitiyu-integratsii-malkina-419802-2020/>

the time of the presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the EEU, which allows us to hope for an effective presidency of the Belarusian side in the CIS in 2021 as well.

An interesting experience for the CIS in terms of integration processes with the EAEU may also be the transition currently observed in this economic union from the formative stage to the project integration stage, with an emphasis on investment cooperation and complementary specialisation in the real sector of the economy. The essence of this transition is contained in the industrialisation and agro-industrialisation maps currently being formed in the EAEU. The first of these is intended to identify import-dependent technological areas and import-substituting potential of manufacturers, as well as areas for possible industrial cooperation and specific major industrial projects underway and planned in the EEU. "The current version of the draft map includes 177 major investment and relevant industry projects worth \$194.5 billion in 21 sectors."²⁴ . As for the map of agro-industry development, there will also be areas in which it is planned to implement projects involving the formation of cooperative chains for the development of import-substituting industries. The experience of implementing these components of project integration in the post-Soviet space should, of course, already be in the focus of attention of the Belarusian media, as well as of all the Commonwealth of Independent States today.

The EAEU's experience in expanding science, technology and innovation cooperation, including through the formation of Eurasian technological platforms, whose main objective is "to ensure systematic work to accumulate the best national and global achievements of scientific and technological development, mobilize the scientific potential of member states to solve applied problems in developing innovative products and technologies, and their

²⁴ Pivovar, E. Industrialization and agro-industry maps will contribute to import substitution in the EAEU - Malkina / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/karty-industrializatsii-i-agroindustrii-budut-sposobstvovat-importozamescheniju-v-eaes-malkina-419027-2020/>

implementation in industrial production"²⁵ may also be very useful for the CIS. The fact is that "the Treaty on the EAEU lacks basic provisions on scientific and technological cooperation, which would allow to regulate innovative interaction between the countries of the union"²⁶. For this reason, the Republic of Belarus initiates the inclusion of a separate article in the EEU Treaty, which would define the areas of cooperation between the member states of the union in the science, technology and innovation spheres.

Back in April 2016, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council decided to create a list of Eurasian technological platforms, which included 14 areas: 1. Medical and medical biotechnology, pharmacy. 2. Information and communication technologies. 3. Photonics. 4. Aerospace technology. 5. Nuclear and radiation technologies. 6. Energy. 7. Transportation Technology. 8. Metallurgical Technology and New Materials. 9. Natural Resource Extraction and Oil & Gas Refining. 10. Chemistry and Petrochemicals. 11. Electronics & Mechanical Engineering Technology. 12. Environmental Development. 13. Industrial Technology. 14. Agriculture, food industry, biotechnology.

In January 2019, the EAEU formed the 15th Eurasian Platform - "Energy and Electrification", whose founders were nine enterprises and scientific institutions from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, which outlined such main activities as "energy engineering, electrification, as well as the creation and distribution of smart grids - electrical installations that ensure parallel operation in the grid of different energy sources. In addition, there are plans to develop and use

Renewable sources for energy saving of remote consumers"²⁷. In August 2019,

²⁵ Eurasian Technology Platforms [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-rasshirenje-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-v-eaes-shumilinsotrudnichestva-v-eaes-shumilin-397579-2020/>.

²⁶ Belarus advocates expansion of scientific and technical cooperation in the EAEU - Shumilin [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-rasshirenje-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-v-eaes-shumilin-397579-2020/>

²⁷ Pivovarov, E. Technological platform in the sphere of energy created in EEU / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved the 16th Eurasian Technology Platform - "Technologies of Technical maintenance and repair of industrial equipment", which is designed to solve such tasks as "development of industrial partnership and import substitution, reengineering of obsolete units and assemblies on the basis of technical re-equipment and modernisation of production facilities, introduction of breakthrough technologies"²⁸. At the same time, the Eurasian Machine Tool Centre was established to maintain a unified register of machine tools produced in the EEU countries, which will make it possible to determine what competences and production capacities they have.

For the Republic of Belarus, participation in the implementation of these Eurasian technological platforms is important already for the reason that the focus here is on the implementation of highly innovative projects that have not only economic but also political as well as social significance. In particular, this is characteristic of the participation of the Belarusian side in the implementation of the technological platform relating to space and geoinformation technologies. "The work in this direction allowed us to create our own satellite, as well as a whole sector of the economy that deals with the sphere of space, and to declare ourselves on the international scene as a space power"²⁹. Important addition: in April 2020, the Collegium of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved a global cooperation project in the provision of space and geoinformation services based on remote sensing data, which is scheduled to be implemented between 2021 and 2025. "At the first stage the operating and prospective constellations of EEU countries' satellites are to be united. At the second stage, a unified

<https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/tehnologicheskaja-platforma-v-sfere-energetiki-sozdana-v-caes-333240-2019/>

²⁸ A new Eurasian technological platform for industrial equipment maintenance and repair technologies is formed in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pageshttp://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/13-08-2019-1.aspx>

²⁹ Nikitina, Y.F. Prospects of technological platforms: Synergetic effects / Y.F. Nikitina // Designing the future. Problems of Digital Reality: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference (February 7-8, 2019, Moscow). - Moscow: Keldysh Institute of Applied Mechanics, 2019. - C. 88-89.

information portal will be created"³⁰ .

Other interesting areas of Belarus' participation in the Eurasian technological platforms include the EurasiaBio technology platform, which envisages the development of joint projects in biotechnology for effective use in the interests of science, education, the economy, social sphere and government needs, as well as the LED lighting equipment production organisation project, whose participants include Belarusian, Russian, Armenian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz organisations

Another important area that appears to be updated by the Belarusian side in the CIS in 2021, which should be focused on by representatives of the media sector, is related to the topic of interaction between the regions of the Commonwealth, as Minsk expects "a notable effect from the implementation of the Interstate Innovation Cooperation Program, the Concept of Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation and Priority Areas of Cooperation in Transport"³¹ . Note that during the years of the Commonwealth, the regions have become an effective tool of interstate dialogue and an integral part of economic interaction. The concept of inter-regional and cross-border cooperation approved at the November (2020) meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government should introduce new effective elements into this priority of development of this integration structure. It should be recalled that this area of interaction between the Commonwealth countries includes "a set of legislative, administrative and economic measures that contribute to the most rational allocation of productive forces and equalization of living standards, covering all major sectors of material production, health protection, law enforcement and security, employment, placement of services, promotion of tourism"³² .

³⁰ EAEU countries intend to create a Eurasian space constellation [Electronic resource] .
URL:

https://www.tvr.by/news/obshchestvo/strany_eaes_namereny_sozdat_evraziyskuyu_kosmicheskuyu_gruppirovku/

³¹ Igor Petrishenko named the most important tasks facing the CIS at the current stage: overcoming the economic recession, increasing mutual and foreign trade. - 2020. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9678.government.by/ru/content/9678>

³² The State of Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation in the CIS Member States (Informational

As far as interregional cooperation is concerned, developing this area of interaction, back in April 2020 the Commonwealth countries adopted the Convention on Interregional Cooperation of the CIS Member States, which clarified the term "interregional cooperation", which now refers to coordinated actions of the parties "aimed at strengthening and developing friendly relations, trade and economic, social, cultural, legal and humanitarian cooperation between the regions of the Parties"³³. And among

Priorities for action that contribute to the achievement of

In the case of the European Union, there are more than twenty areas, among them the creation of free economic zones in the regions, the implementation of investment projects, trade and trade fairs.

As far as cross-border cooperation is concerned, the relevant convention of the CIS Member States was adopted back in October 2008. This document defines "cross-border cooperation" as "concerted actions aimed at strengthening and promoting good neighbourly relations between border territories, concluding, in accordance with the legislation of the Parties, agreements necessary to achieve these objectives"³⁴. Among the more than twenty activities mentioned here, which contribute to the development of cross-border cooperation, we should mention the creation of special or special economic zones in the border areas, cross-border trade, industrial and technical cooperation.

The Republic of Belarus is among those CIS countries that pay special attention to regional cooperation. Thus, at the IX meeting of the Council for Interregional and Cross-border Cooperation of the CIS Member States, held by videoconference in September 2020, it was noted that the Belarusian regions "have more than 600 documents on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific,

and Analytical Report). - M.: CIS, 2017. - C. 4.

³³ Convention on Interregional Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: https://pravo.by/upload/docs/op/N01600091_1585774800.pdf

³⁴ Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation among the States Parties to the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2008. - URL: <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/902196976>

technological and humanitarian spheres with the regions of the CIS member states"³⁵. And although over 430 of these agreements account for regions of Russia, recently active steps have been taken to expand partnerships between the regions and other countries as well. For example, 26 such documents were signed during the preparation and holding of the first Belarus-Uzbekistan Forum of Regions in July 2019 alone. Almost 15 agreements have been concluded with the regions of Armenia. And a draft such document between Minsk and Yerevan is ready to be signed. There are 23 cooperation agreements with the regions of Kazakhstan, 18 with Moldova, and 5 with Kyrgyzstan. As for Azerbaijan, partnership relations have been established between the cities of Minsk and Baku, Mogilev and Sumgayit. Belarusian-Turkmen interregional cooperation is based on the existing agreements between Minsk and Ashgabat, Mogilev region and Mary velayat. Vitebsk, Gomel, Minsk and Mogilev regions and Minsk actively cooperate with the regions of Tajikistan.

As you can see, the potential for partnership is not insignificant. How it is reflected in the national media today is not an easy question. In any case, this diversity of regional ties will have to be fully disclosed in 2021, first of all, by Belarusian regional mass media based on the provisions of the CIS Information Promotion Plan discussed at the December (2020) meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State, in order to reflect this direction of integration in the post-Soviet space in their publications, programmes and broadcasts as adequately as possible, thereby contributing to the successful presidency of the Republic of Belarus in this international body

³⁵ Speeches of the participants of the IX meeting of the Council on Interregional and Cross-border Cooperation of the CIS Member States on the status of interregional and cross-border cooperation in the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3763/89102/e-cis.info/cooperation/3763/89102/>

Chapter 3

Commonwealth of Independent States: the key to success is innovative cooperation

One of the priority areas of the presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2021 is the further development of the common economic space, international cooperation and integration in order to ensure a comprehensive and balanced economic and social development of the member states of this international organization. The most important aim in the field of science and technology is to "contribute to the creation of effective mechanisms for bringing together the efforts of CIS member states in science, technology and innovation and strengthening the innovation component of economic growth through the creation of national innovation systems in the implementation of inter-state innovation projects"³⁶. They intend to solve this problem on the basis of the experience of interaction in this field that already exists in the Commonwealth.

As a reminder, the year 2020 marked the end of the Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation between the CIS countries, which was approved in October 2011 and set out its main objective - "to create interstate space that integrates the capabilities of national innovation systems, gives a sustainable systemic character to innovative development and promotes the effective use of scientific and technological developments and inventions"³⁷. During its implementation, certain results have been achieved. These include the formulation of a functioning mechanism for the implementation of interstate projects, the creation of a legal framework for successful interaction between the participants, and the formation of an innovation infrastructure.

With respect to the participation of the Republic of Belarus in the implementation of the provisions of the completed programme, Belarusian

³⁶ Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.mfa.gov.by/multilateral/belaruscischairmanship2021/>

³⁷ Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19142cis.minsk.by/page/19142>

organizations have become executing agencies in nine out of ten inter-State projects. Among the most significant of them is the development and implementation of an integrated information system for aerospace forecast monitoring of natural emergencies, which makes it possible to reduce damage from such situations and the cost of dealing with their consequences by up to 20 per cent through timely measures. Another interesting example in this context is the development of a highly sensitive test system for the detection of hepatitis E in humans, wild and domestic pigs, rabbits and deer, on the basis of which Belarus has developed a system of anti-epidemic measures for the population.

A continuation of systematic work in this area was the adoption in November 2020 at a meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of Government of a decision on the Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2030. This document is a "system of measures interconnected in terms of objectives, resources and timeframe, which takes into account the accumulated experience. In particular, much attention is paid to attracting extra-budgetary sources of financing for inter-state innovation projects."³⁸. The main task of the new programme is to organize large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and promising

The new programme has been made more flexible in its implementation. One of the innovations that distinguish the new document from the previous one is that the new programme has become more flexible in its implementation. Whereas previously there was a strict condition of participation in an innovation project by representatives of at least three Commonwealth countries, now "provision is made for projects to start with the participation of two CIS member states, and other interested countries may join later"³⁹.

The focus on measures to increase the efficiency of innovation activities is

³⁸ On the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/>

³⁹ The CIS innovation cooperation programme has become more flexible and adaptive - Shumilin [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/programma-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-sng-stala-bolee-gibkoj-i-adaptivnoj-shumilin-421456-2020/>

dictated by the fact that, in the run-up to 2030, global economic processes will be characterised by increased uncertainty and instability, even possible radical changes under the influence of geopolitical factors. But the most important trends, which in the next decade can really affect the development of world processes, will remain new technologies, innovative solutions in the economy, creation of a large number of own high-tech industries.⁴⁰ And in this respect, the Commonwealth still has a lot to do to get rid of those obstacles in the field of innovations, which even today the CIS member states continue to face, where there is still "a certain inertness, the time factor is not taken into account, the level of strategic planning in the spheres of innovative development and international scientific and technical cooperation is low, the measures to support small and medium, including youth, science and technology and innovative entrepreneurship are not effective enough". Successful implementation of the provisions of the new programme would help to achieve the expected effect in 14 directions at once, including: increasing the number of breakthrough technologies, discoveries and promising developments by providing promotion of research results in the market; building capacities within the CIS to increase the number of companies - world technology leaders; expanding scientific, technological and innovation cooperation as a basis for creating joint competitive products, including in third countries' markets.

⁴⁰ Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2030. - M., 2020. - C. 8.

Commonwealth of Independent States: Towards a Common Educational Space

The concept of Belarus' presidency in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 envisages that one of the priorities of the presidency in this international organization will be further strengthening of humanitarian ties and expansion of contacts in education and science. In this case, it is to continue working on the development of the legal framework aimed to form a common educational space of the Commonwealth, promote "partnership ties between educational organizations of the CIS member states, implementation of joint educational projects and programs"⁴¹.

It should be recalled that the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education between the Commonwealth Member States was signed in May 1992 in Tashkent. In this document, the parties agreed to support joint scientific research, "to contribute in every way to the maintenance and development of direct educational partnerships between the territories and educational institutions of the member states"⁴². Five years later, in January 1997, the normative-legal basis of cooperation in this field was supplemented by the Agreement on Cooperation in forming a Common (Common) Educational Space of the CIS, in which the parties, pursuing the task stated their intention to create "a mechanism of coordination of integration processes in the field of education, training and attestation of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel"⁴³, and the Council for Cooperation in the Education of CIS Member States was created. Since then, at the initiative of this coordinating body, about forty documents have been adopted in the CIS. Among them: the decisions on the

⁴¹ Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. 2020. - URL:

<https://www.mfa.gov.by/multilateral/belaruscischairmanship2021/>

⁴² Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education [Electronic resource]. - 1992. - URL:

<https://cis.minsk.by/page/7570cis.minsk.by/page/7570>

⁴³ Agreement on Cooperation to Form a Common (Common) Educational Space of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 1997. - URL:

<https://cis.minsk.by/page/7552cis.minsk.by/page/7552>

concepts of development of adult education (2006) and distance learning (2007); agreements on the coordination of work in the field of informatization of educational systems (2007), on professional development of teachers of educational organizations (2007), on mutual recognition of documents on higher/higher professional education (2013); regulations on the Congress of teachers and education workers (2018). In addition, within the Commonwealth 17 institutions of higher education have been given the status of basic organizations in various areas of educational activities, including Belarusian universities: Sakharov International State Environmental Institute of the Belarusian State University - basic in the CIS in environmental education; the Republican Institute of Professional Education - basic in training, retraining and professional development in vocational and secondary education and training of personnel.

Another interesting project in the Commonwealth's educational sphere is the CIS Network University, which was created in 2009 by a consortium agreement signed by the rectors of 11 leading universities of the Commonwealth with the aim of training highly qualified personnel and developing a common CIS educational space. Initially, it was planned to train personnel in the humanities and social disciplines. However, in 2010, the technical vector began to develop, and such areas as oil and gas engineering and construction began to appear. The essence of training specialists here is that "when students from Commonwealth countries study at a network university, they have an opportunity to obtain a bilateral education document, and this automatically improves their competitiveness in the labour market"⁴⁴. We note that from 2010 to 2019, 1,100 Master's students have studied here. And today 38 universities from 9 CIS member states "participate in this project"⁴⁵, including two domestic

⁴⁴ More than 800 people were trained at the CIS Networking University [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-800-chelovek-proshlihttps://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-800-chelovek-proshli-obuchenie-v-setevom-universitete-sngobuchenie-v-setevom-universitete-sng-337497-2019/>.

⁴⁵ Information on the activities of the Council for Cooperation in the Field of Education of the Commonwealth of Independent States to Form a Common Educational Space in the CIS [Electronic

universities - Belarusian State University and Belarusian National Technical University. In particular, undergraduates of Belarusian State University study international law in the fields of "Management", "Economics", "Philology" and "International relations". And "upon successful passing the state examination and defending a master's thesis a graduate receives two diplomas: Russian and Belarusian"⁴⁶.

In May 2020, during the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of the CIS Network University was signed, which effectively legalised at the governmental level the interuniversity project that had existed for more than ten years. In December 2020 the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus ratified this document, which should give a new impetus to the development of educational interaction in the Commonwealth. The entry into force of this agreement, signed in order to improve the quality of training in higher education institutions, the implementation of joint scientific and scientific-technical projects of priority to the participating countries, support the study of languages, culture and traditions of the peoples of the CIS countries, "will create the necessary conditions for the expansion and deepening of contacts between the countries in the humanitarian and educational sphere"⁴⁷, will strengthen cooperation and inter-university relations in the field of higher education in Eurasia. As a result, it will facilitate the implementation of the task of creating a common CIS educational space.

resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ehhttps://e-cis../cooperationinfo/cooperation/3063/79383/>

⁴⁶ CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. -2020 . - URL: <https://ums.bsu.by/ru/am/cis-net-university>

⁴⁷ Deputies ratified the agreement on the establishment and functioning of the CIS Network University [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/deputaty-ratifikirovali-soglashenie-ob-uchrezhdenii-i-funktsionirovanii-setevogo-universiteta-sng-420406-2020/>

Eurasian Economic Union: regional and media cooperation

Today, the Belarusian regional press is facing large-scale creative tasks to cover all stages of the implementation of the state policy of development of Belarus' regions, "one of the most important components of which is the deepening of cross-border cooperation with foreign partners, which implies the adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism, among other things"⁴⁸. At the same time, interaction of Belarusian regions with foreign partners should be organically integrated into the development of international cooperation of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the main criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of export of goods and services, as well as the achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services.

In this regard, the Belarusian regional media have a very broad thematic spectrum, which in the near future should be fully reflected on the pages of city, district and regional newspapers. Let us single out those directions, which emphasize the geography of interregional cooperation and which are mentioned in the National Strategy of Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030⁴⁹: expansion of all-round cooperation with the regions of the European Union and especially within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as with the regions of "good neighbourhood belt" countries - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia; deepening cooperation with the regions of countries participating in the mega project "One Belt", which will be implemented in the nearest future. But perhaps the most real development of large-scale economic integration so far has been observed with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union (Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan) and especially with the Russian federal subjects within

⁴⁸ Zaleskii, B. Reflection in media of peculiarities of transboundary cooperation of Belarusian regions / B. Zaleskii // Journal Yulika-2018: status, problems and perspectives : proceedings of the 20th International Scientific and Practical Conference, Mshsk, 15-16 lut. 2018 / edited by V.M. Samusevich (editor-in-chief) [i sh.]. - Mshsk : BDU, 2018. - C. 291.

⁴⁹ National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030. - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus. - Minsk, 2017. - C. 137.

the framework of the Union State.

As for **the Eurasian Economic Union**, from the very beginning of its existence in terms of the development of integration measures, it was believed that the level of regional cooperation is an indicator of the relevance and effectiveness of supranational regulatory measures, as historically there is an economic basis for implementing integration measures to stimulate regional development and interregional cooperation, as well as the potential to expand cooperation in various fields and areas of the economy at the level of the EAEU member states' regions. As a result, "consideration of regional aspects makes it possible to more effectively implement measures to stimulate new areas of mutual trade, build sectoral production chains, form transport corridors and plan the location of infrastructure facilities, and in the long term to ensure social development and improve living standards of the population".⁵⁰

If we talk about the bilateral format of interregional cooperation within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, the undisputed leader and impetus for the development of the entire Eurasian integration here is the interaction between Belarusian and **Russian** regions within the framework of the Union State. Suffice it to say that by mid-2018, Belarusian regions maintained "direct trade and economic relations with 80 regions of the Russian Federation, of which 70 are based on long-term cooperation agreements"⁵¹, and the top ten major trading partners included Moscow and St. Petersburg, the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, Perm Krai, and the Bryansk, Kaluga, Moscow, Smolensk and Tyumen regions.

The growing potential for Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation was particularly evident in the outcome of the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in Mogilev in October 2018 and covered such key thematic areas as: agricultural policy, unification and harmonization of

⁵⁰ Main directions of EAEU economic development until 2030. - Eurasian Economic Commission. - M., 2015. - C. 42.

⁵¹ Myasnikovich, M. Work for result / M. Myasnikovich // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: inform.- integr. project / coauthors, interviewing: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zalessky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 5.

legislation, digital economy, youth policy, international activities and economic security. It should be noted that it is largely at the instigation of the Belarusian and Russian media that the Forum of Regions is now defined as "a key project for regional cooperation between Belarus and Russia, an effective platform for a partnership dialogue on economic integration and interregional cooperation"⁵². And this is not an unfounded assertion. Suffice it to say that contracts worth more than half a billion dollars were signed at the aforementioned forum in Mogilev.

It is noteworthy that 76 documents were added to the legal framework of Belarus-Russia interregional cooperation within the framework of the fifth forum. Particularly, Mogilev Oblast Rada has signed agreements on cooperation and development of relations with legislative assemblies of Kaluga Oblast and Krasnodar Krai. The Grodno Oblast Council will cooperate in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural spheres with the Kaliningrad Oblast Duma. Similar spheres of cooperation have been defined by the Gomel Oblast Council and the legislative assembly of Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, as well as by the Mogilev Oblast Executive Committee and the government of Novosibirsk Oblast. But it is also a question not only of integration at the oblast or krai level, but also that "small towns are also involved in this process, which cooperate quite actively, and not only in the field of humanitarian relations, but also by building economic ties"⁵³. As a result, it turns out that cooperation of Belarusian regions with the absolute majority of subjects of the Russian Federation has already been established at the interregional level. But to what extent is it fully reflected in the regional press of Belarus? The question is topical, with a lot of unrealised potential.

⁵² Myasnikov, M. Forum of Regions has become an effective platform for dialogue on integration and interregional cooperation / M. Myasnikov // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/interview-.sovrep.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/forum-regionov-stal-effektivnoj-ploschadkoj-dlja-dialoga-po-voprosam-integratsii-i-mezhregionalnogo-256/>

⁵³ Matveev, V. More than 70 regional agreements signed at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/bolee-70-regionalnyh-soglashenij-podpisano-na-v-forume-321404-2018/>

The coverage of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and its partners in **Kazakhstan**, another member country of the Eurasian Economic Union, with which the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 was signed in November 2017, aimed at implementing a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations, including at the regional level, should become very diverse in the Belarusian regional press. It is pertinent to recall here that back in 2000, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Press and Information, which was supplemented in 2017 by a provision attaching "particular importance to the expansion of media cooperation between the two states"⁵⁴ and which entered into force in October 2018.

The thematic range of publications in the regional press in this regard could be very broad. This includes the operation of joint assembly facilities in Kazakhstan with the participation of the Belarusian side, of which there were eight at the end of 2018, including the production of BelAZ, MTZ, Gomselmash, MAZ, and Bobruiskagromash, which produce quarry, mine, special municipal and firefighting equipment, tractors, harvesters, engines, balers, and medical equipment. This includes the implementation of the Kazakhstan-Belarusian Industrial and Technological Park of Agricultural and Municipal Machinery in Kokshetau, Akmola Region, the first phase of which was launched in 2016. This includes the implementation in Kazakhstan of several dozen joint scientific and technical projects with extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations and scientific developments. In this regard, we would like to remind you that

Belarus and Kazakhstan should reach a trade volume of at least one billion

⁵⁴ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource] .

URL:

<http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=101700071&p1=1>

dollars in 2020. Minsk and Astana believe that "to achieve this goal, it is worthwhile to use the potential of interregional cooperation"⁵⁵.

The topics of Belarus-Kazakhstan interregional cooperation may be particularly relevant to the press of the Gomel, Grodno and Mogilev regions. In particular, in 2014, the Memorandum of Cooperation in Agriculture was adopted by the Grodno and Akmola regions. The Gomel Oblast Executive Committee signed a cooperation agreement with the Pavlodar Oblast Akimat in November 2016. Mogilev region has signed similar agreements with South Kazakhstan (2003) and East Kazakhstan (2009) regions. Belarusian Mogilev and Kazakh Semey also have a cooperation agreement. The effectiveness of interregional cooperation between the Mogilev region and Kazakh partners is evidenced by the following figures. In the three quarters of 2018, "foreign trade turnover between the region's economic entities and Kazakhstan increased by 57% to \$82.8 million, with exports to Kazakhstan increasing by 52.4%"⁵⁶. To a large extent, such strong indicators were the reason for the opening of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Mogilev in November 2018, which will help give new impetus to the development of the Belarus-Kazakhstan interregional

cooperation. But how are all these documents and results reflected in the regional press? "Far from always being adequately reflected in the media sphere. This then has an impact on

a decrease in the interest of partners and for continued cooperation in 57 as a whole"⁵⁷.

Increasing the intensity of interregional interaction is an important component in

⁵⁵ Belarus interested in setting up new joint ventures with Kazakhstan - Myasnikovich [electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sozdanii-novyh-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-s-kazakhstanom-mjasnikovich-323707-2018/>

⁵⁶ Kuliagin, S. Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan opened in Mogilev / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-respubliki-kazakhstan-otkryli-v-mogileve-325498-2018/>.

⁵⁷ Zaleskiy, B. International Relations and the Media. Multi-vector foreign policy in a global crisis of confidence / B. Zaleski. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 57.

strengthening bilateral trade, economic and cultural cooperation with another member state of the Eurasian Economic Union, **Armenia**. Suffice it to say that to date "cities and regions of Belarus and Armenia have signed 21 agreements on twinning"⁵⁸. For instance, as far back as 2008 Borisov, Niasvizh, Soligorsk, Slutsk and Myadel regions signed twinning agreements with such Armenian cities as Kapan, Goris, Agarak, Sisian and Meghri, respectively, within the framework of cooperation between Minsk region and Syunik marz. Moreover, "in May 2011, the list of Belarusian and Armenian regional partners was extended to the Osipovich district and the city of Sevan, in June 2012 to the Vitebsk region and the Lori Marz, the cities of Orsha and Spitak, Vitebsk and Vanadzor, and in October 2012 to the Lepel district and Tashir, Braslav district and Stepanavan"⁵⁹.

Given the fact that Belarusian-Armenian trade has been growing in recent years, that the sides need to reach a higher level of cooperation and create joint productions to maintain this positive trend, and that Belarus is ready to take part in the renovation of Armenia's passenger vehicles and lift renovation programme, parliamentarians of the two countries intend to update the agenda for interregional Belarusian-Armenian cooperation in 2019. In particular, they say that "the work on the agreement on twinning between Minsk and Yerevan will be accelerated. It is now being considered by the Armenian side"⁶⁰. Referring to the analysis of the implementation of the existing agreements, the regional press of Belarus and Armenia could proceed from the fact that Belarusian-Armenian interregional cooperation in general promotes the intensification of joint business activities, restoration of the lost production

⁵⁸ Trade and Economic Relations [Electronic Resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

⁵⁹ Zalesskii, B.L. Belarusian international journalism: peculiarities, trends, perspectives: textbook / B.L. Zalesskii. - Minsk: Belarusian State University, 2014. - C. 221.

⁶⁰ Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of Armenia's passenger vehicle fleet [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armeniiuchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>

relations, humanitarian and human contacts, ensures the promotion of bilateral economic projects and creation of joint competitive products that are in demand both in the domestic markets and in third countries.

Finally, in July 2018, Belarus signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of information with another country belonging to the Eurasian Economic Union, **Kyrgyzstan**, to encourage a regular exchange of information materials on the political, economic, social and cultural life of both states and to develop cooperation between editorial offices. At the same time, "the Kyrgyz side also proposed a new direction for cooperation in the field of information. In particular, it is about cooperation on the level of regional journalism."⁶¹ . The fact that the thematic portfolio of publications in the regional press of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in this regard can be very diverse is confirmed by many facts based on the statement that "KyrgyzBelarusian relations are dynamically developing on a wide range of issues, including political and diplomatic, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres"⁶² .

For example, in 2017, Belarusian exports to this Central Asian country exceeded 300 commodity items: from dairy products and trucks to particle boards, furniture, and wallpaper. More than 50 representative offices of entities of the commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian companies are operating here. In November 2016, it opened an assembly facility for MTZ tractors and a service centre for agricultural machinery at the Bishkek-based Avtomash-Radiant. At the same time, Niva Holding (Soligorsk) registered with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice a Belarusian enterprise, Niva-Shakhtospetsstroy LLC, which plans to produce equipment for the mining and hydraulic

⁶¹ Belarus and Kyrgyzstan sign agreement on cooperation in the field of information [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kyrgyzstan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-informatsiikyrgyzstan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-informatsi-309989-2018/>.

⁶² Matveev, V. Foreign Ministers of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan confirmed their intention to intensify bilateral cooperation / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-mid-belarusi-i-kyrgyzstana-podtverdilihttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-mid-belarusi-i-kyrgyzstana-podtverdili-namerenie-aktivizirovat-dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvonamerenie-aktivizirovat-dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvo-324657-2018/>.

engineering industry from components manufactured at Niva Holding⁶³. There are plans to set up assembly production of Belarusian grain harvesters on Kyrgyz soil, which is mentioned in the signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan, Gomselmash OJSC and the dealer of the Belarusian company Avtomash-Radiant LLC.

In addition, in the framework of the eighth meeting

In October 2018, at a meeting of the Kyrgyz-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation held in Bishkek, the Belarusian side offered its Kyrgyz partners to implement a joint project to set up a milk processing plant, in which the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic immediately expressed its interest. The idea is to set up a plant in the territory of the Central Asian country to produce milk, ice cream, cultured milk products (kefir, yoghurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, soft cheeses) using Belarus-made raw materials and technology specifically developed in Belarus. And "there are plans to introduce the products of these companies to the Chinese market in the future"⁶⁴. In addition, consistently developing regional economic ties with partners in Kyrgyzstan, the Belarusian side delivered 15 low-floor trolleybuses manufactured by Belkommunmash OJSC to the Kyrgyz capital in August 2018, which will also provide training for drivers of the Bishkek Trolleybus Authority. An interesting detail: this "equipment was purchased under the project "Development of public transport in Bishkek", financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and

⁶³ Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Kyrgyz Republic A. Strachko to the information and analytical magazine Market Conjunction (No.1, 2018) [Electronic resource]:

<http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/ba775717cb6a991b.html>

⁶⁴ Belarus offers Kyrgyzstan a joint project to set up a milk processing plant [Electronic resource]. - 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-kyrgyzstanu-sovmestnyj-proekt-po-sozdaniyu-molokopererabatyvajushchego-predpriyatijasozdaniyu-molokopererabatyvajushchego-predpriyatija-322349-2018/>.

Development"⁶⁵ .

An agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian National Centre for Marketing and Price Study and the exhibition company BI Expo Ltd. from Bishkek is aimed at expanding Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation in exhibition and fair activities, which encourages Belarusian exporters to actively participate in international exhibitions and fairs held annually in Kyrgyzstan. In 2018, an exposition of producers from Belarus has already been presented at the FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan, the international food industry exhibition, which is the most important industry event in that country. JV JSC Spartak, JSC Agrokombinat Skidelski, JSC Oshmyanskiy Meat Factory, SE Brestmyasomolprom Concern Holding Management Company, Smorgon Dairy Products - a branch of JSC Lida Dairy and Canning Plant, JSC Pinskiy Meat Factory demonstrated their products in the Kyrgyz capital. Apart from Belarusian exporters, the forum was attended by companies from Bulgaria, France, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Sri Lanka. About three and a half thousand people attended the business forum, 95 percent of whom were food industry professionals.

Perhaps due to this exhibition, "trade turnover between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in January-October 2018 amounted to \$98.49 million, the bulk of which was accounted for by Belarusian exports (\$90.96 million)"⁶⁶ , because the most important positions in Belarusian supplies to the Kyrgyz market are milk and dried condensed cream, butter, cheese and cottage cheese sugar. It should be noted that in April 2019, the exposition of Belarusian enterprises will again be presented at FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan-2019 within such thematic sections as food products, equipment for the food industry, goods and services for catering equipment, packaging products, halal industry.

⁶⁵ Bishkek has received 37 trolleybuses made in Belarus and Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-bishkekhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-bishkek-postavili-37-trollejbusov-belorusskogo-i-rossijskogo-proizvodstvapostavili-37-trollejbusov-belorusskogo-i-rossijskogo-proizvodstva-313496-2018/>

⁶⁶ Belarus to take part in Food Expo Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavke-foodexpo-kyrgyzstan-v-bishkekevystavke-foodexpo-kyrgyzstan-v-bishkeke-333552-2019/>.

In April 2018, Belarusian exporting enterprises also took part in the International Specialised Exhibition MedExpo in Bishkek. They included Belsept ALC, Gomselmash OJSC, the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Neurology and Neurosurgery of the Ministry of Health of Belarus, Exon OJSC, and Arvitmedical LLC. Representatives of the Belarusian medical and pharmaceutical industries were brought to Kyrgyzstan by the fact that in 2017 the state programme on modernisation of the healthcare system was launched in this country, in connection with which it was planned to "purchase modern medical equipment and quality medicines worth \$7 million" here by the end of 2018⁶⁷. This is why the presentation of medical and pharmaceutical products was very timely.

To summarize. In this study, we have cited the facts of the rapid development and increase in the volume of interregional cooperation between Belarus and partners from the Eurasian Economic Union member countries of Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan alone.⁶⁸ If we add to them the similar trends observed in the regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the European Union, the "far arc", the Silk Road Economic Belt, they all convincingly demonstrate the obvious: even in the professional media environment, such an unfamiliar concept as "international regional journalism" should gain its real contours in the media practice of information and communication space of Belarus regions as soon as possible, so that its representatives could competently engage in the

⁶⁷ Belarus to take part in MedExpo and FoodExpo in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primethttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavkah-medexpo-i-foodexpo-v-kyrgyzstaneuchastie-v-vystavkah-medexpo-i-foodexpo-v-kyrgyzstane-297380-2018/>

⁶⁸ Zalessky, B. Belarus - Russia: facets of integration. Chronicle of Union Building / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 96.

Chapter 6

Eurasian Economic Union: A focus on international cooperation

A meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held in Yerevan in early October 2019, where the leaders of the five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) discussed economic interaction, financial policy, energy, as well as key areas for international activities and development of cooperation with third countries. Noting the serious intensification of this integration association's engagement with such international formats as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, President Lukashenka pointed out that "to expand the international agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union we should pay special attention to the 'far arc' countries, where our goods and services are still little recognized"⁶⁹.

By the time of the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Yerevan, the EEU already had a free trade zone with **Vietnam**. The agreement on its creation was signed by the parties back in May 2015, and the document came into force in October 2016. In order to adapt the national economies of the EEU countries to the free trade regime with Vietnam, transition periods of five to ten years were established for certain goods, during which import customs duty rates would be gradually reduced. As of 2017 alone, the Eurasian Economic Union "zeroed out import duty rates for Vietnam in respect of 43% of the total number of tariff lines of the Common Customs Tariff (CCT EEU). Within 10 years, duty-free entry of goods into the common union market for Vietnamese exporters will be expanded to cover 90% of the EEU tariff lines"⁷⁰. And in June 2019, the two sides began discussing ways to expand trade and economic cooperation, as the free trade area agreement quickly proved its

⁶⁹ Participation in the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://http://president.gov.by/ru/news.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/uchastie-y-zasedanii-vysshego-evrazijskogo-ekonomicheskogo-sovet-22132/>

⁷⁰ EAEU Free Trade Zone Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.economy.gov.by/ru/zst-vietnam-ru/www.economy.gov.by/ru/zst-vietnam-ru/>

effectiveness. "Already in the first full year of the agreement - 2017 - there was a 36% (USD 5.6 billion) increase in trade turnover. Meanwhile, Union exports to Vietnam increased by 40% (from USD 1.6 billion to USD 2.3 billion) and imports of goods from Vietnam increased by 35% (from USD 2.7 billion to USD 3.7 billion)"⁷¹. In 2018, the existing trend has continued. Perhaps for this reason, too, the Vietnamese economy grew by more than seven per cent in 2018, the highest since 2008, the trade surplus exceeded seven billion dollars and the amount of foreign investment attracted was 19 billion dollars. At the same time, as Vietnamese researchers point out, "it is not only Russia that benefits from the agreement: more and more joint ventures are being launched in Vietnam by Belarus as well"⁷². In particular, in the province of Hung Yen, a joint venture MAZ Asia is implementing a project for the production of trucks by the Minsk Automobile Plant. The same province is also working on a joint venture to produce dairy products from Belarusian raw materials. This is why the Vietnamese side said at the June (2019) talks with the Eurasian Economic Commission that it would like to maximise relations with the EEU and consider all opportunities to step up cooperation, including in the areas of financial and tourism services.

Apparently, the positive example of the development of relations between the EAEU and Vietnam played no small part in the fact that an agreement on the creation of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union and **Singapore** was signed in Yerevan on 1 October 2019 within the framework of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. This document provides for Singapore to grant duty-free access for all goods from the EAEU countries - Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. Similar commitments - on duty-free access for Singapore goods - have been undertaken by this integration association. In addition, the signed agreement fixed obligations of

⁷¹ EEU and Vietnam discuss opportunities for expanding trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019 . - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/13-06-2019-4.aspx>

⁷² Nguyen, K.T. Benefits of Vietnam and EAEU Free Trade Zone / K.T. Nguyen // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://eurasian-studies.org/archives/11237>

the parties to comply with: international standards for licensing procedures; bans and quantitative restrictions; technical regulation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards; transfers and payments for the supply of products; fees associated with procedures at the border; application of anti-dumping, compensation and special protective measures. It also formulates a "significant groundwork for improving the quality and developing cooperation in such areas as e-commerce, ecology, countering anti-competitive practices, transparency in public procurement, protection of intellectual property rights, which is particularly relevant when discussing technology transfer issues"⁷³. Interestingly, the agreement has been more than two years in the making. In signing it, the Singaporean side emphasised the prospects of the Eurasian market - "it is a large market at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. It has huge potential for economic growth, especially in the areas of logistics and digital. These are all areas of interest to Singapore"⁷⁴, so the creation of a free trade zone "will facilitate the development of industry in the EAEU member states, investments, contacts between people, business representatives"⁷⁵.

In the second half of October 2019, Moscow hosted a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, in which the heads of government of all five member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) focused on developing sectoral areas of interaction, as well as on strengthening the organisation's position in the international arena, emphasising that "international cooperation has a special place in the development of Eurasian integration"⁷⁶. Indeed, in October 2019 alone, this Eurasian integration structure took a number of

⁷³ Pivovarov, E. The EEC revealed details of the agreement on a free trade zone with Singapore / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-eeek-rasskazali-podrobnosti-soglashenija-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-singapuruom-364247-2019/>

⁷⁴ Singapore's prime minister sees great growth potential in the Eurasian Economic Union [e-resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/premier-ministr-singapura-otmechaet-bolshoj-potentsial-rosta-v-evrazijskom-ekonomicheskom-sojuze-364128-2019/>

⁷⁵ EAEU and Singapore sign free trade area agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/caes-i-singapur-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sozdanii-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-364131-2019/>

⁷⁶ Meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9076>

concrete steps to develop interaction with states located both in Europe and Asia.

In particular, the same meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council saw the signing of an agreement on a free trade zone between the EEU and **Serbia**, which, according to the parties, should give new impetus to expanding trade and economic cooperation between its members.

Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan already had bilateral free trade agreements with Serbia before this document came into existence. Nevertheless, the new agreements with the Serbian side, firstly, "open a fundamentally new market for Armenia and Kyrgyzstan - with immediate duty-free access for the overwhelming majority of their exports, and secondly, create new export opportunities for producers in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.⁷⁷ . In doing so, the parties to the agreement receive economic benefits not only in the short term in the form of immediate savings in customs duties on existing exports, but also in the medium term in terms of realising export opportunities while expanding the free trade regime. In addition, the document guarantees stability, predictability and transparency in trade relations, as well as compliance with international standards in terms of licensing procedures, prohibitions and quantitative restrictions, technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, application of anti-dumping, countervailing and special protective measures, and protection of intellectual property rights.

Another example of the EAEU's expanding international cooperation concerns **Iran**, with which a temporary agreement leading to the creation of a free trade zone was signed back on 17 May 2018 and entered into force on 27 October 2019. This document "provides for limited product coverage, but includes almost all major products, which account for 55% of total EAEU exports - agricultural and industrial product groups. <...> Preferential import coverage is

⁷⁷ EEU and Serbia sign free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/caes-i-serbija-podpisali-soglashenie-ohttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/caes-i-serbija-podpisali-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovlesvobodnoj-torgovle-367118-2019/>.

49% of Iran's total supplies to the EAEU"⁷⁸. More specifically, the list of goods for which exporters of EEU countries, including Belarus, have received preferential coverage includes meat and oil products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics. Importantly, the parties will now have to secure most-favoured-nation treatment for all goods traded between the EEU and Iran. And all charges related to imports of goods must no longer exceed the cost of customs clearance services. And unjustified tariff, trade-restrictive measures should no longer be applied to goods listed in the agreement. Besides, welcoming any cooperation with the EAEU in the banking, financial and investment spheres, the Iranian side suggested creating a working group for the development of joint economic projects, the potential for which could be very extensive. For example, "Iranian ports in the Caspian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, railways and roads in the country and a safe environment enable the transit of goods through Iran for neighbouring countries"⁷⁹.

Finally, on the day of the Eurasian meeting

The Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and **China**, signed on 17 May 2018, entered into force on 25 October 2019. This document is not a free trade agreement, as its provisions do not provide for the reduction or elimination of import duties. The purpose of the agreement is different: "to increase the transparency of regulatory systems, to simplify trade procedures, and to develop cooperative links"⁸⁰. In particular, it establishes a

⁷⁸ Pivovarov, E. Temporary agreement on free trade zone between EEU and Iran entered into force / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vremennoe-soglashenie-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovlihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/vremennoe-soglashenie-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-iranom-vstupilo-v-silumezhdu-eaes-i-iranom-vstupilo-v-silu-367284-2019/>.

⁷⁹ Tehran proposes to create a working group on economic projects between Iran and the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/tegeranhttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/tegeran-predlagaet-sozdat-rabochuju-gruppu-po-ekonomicheskim-proektam-irana-i-eaespredlagaet-sozdat-rabochuju-gruppu-po-ekonomicheskim-proektam-irana-i-eaes-364137-2019/>

⁸⁰ Heads of Governments of EEU countries adopted a joint statement with China on the occasion of the entry into force of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EEU and the PRC [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9074.government.by/ru/content/9074>

much higher level of transparency in the parties' systems of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical regulation. In the sphere of customs procedures, the agreement includes an agreement on the release of goods without unreasonable delays, with the designation of accelerated customs clearance of perishable goods. It also fixes significant guarantees for Belarusian, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Armenian exporters with regard to protection and defense of intellectual property rights. For Belarus, which is currently in the accession process to the World Trade Organization, the document is also important from the perspective that it establishes "legal guarantees of compliance with key WTO principles" in its relations with China.⁸¹

According to the development strategies of the EAEU member states, industry and the agro-industrial complex are priorities for cooperation with China. With this in mind, the parties have identified three most important areas for cooperation: 1) creation of a single digital space; 2) localisation of technologies; and 3) effective cooperation in science, technology and innovation. For all these directions to be successfully implemented, a map of industrialization is now being created in the EAEU, which "will designate those areas in which it will be most appropriate to attract foreign investment and technology"⁸². At the same time, the creation of common digital platforms and solutions will remove barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and data. And the key competencies that will form the basis of this industry of the future include electric transport, additive manufacturing, and unmanned technologies.

As for the second area of EAEU's cooperation with China, an important strategic task here is to ensure the transition from localization of production to

⁸¹ The EAEU-China trade and economic cooperation agreement has entered into force [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/soglashenie-ohttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/soglashenie-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskome-sotrudnichestve-eaes-i-kitaja-vstupilo-v-silutorgovo-ekonomicheskome-sotrudnichestve-eaes-i-kitaja-vstupilo-v-silu-367082-2019/>.

⁸² Pivovar, E. EEC has identified three main areas of industrial cooperation between the EAEU and China / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-opredelila-tri-osnovnyh-napravlenija-www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-opredelila-tri-osnovnyh-napravlenija-promyshlennogo-sotrudnichestva-eaes-s-kitaem-365900-2019/>.

localization of competencies, where the starting point should be the prediction of EAEU's unique competitive advantages on the world stage, which can be realized through the creation of technology parks, clusters and technology platforms. It should be noted that the first steps in this direction have already been taken. For instance, Belarus, together with China, has already implemented a project to create the Velikiy Kamen industrial park, which received the status of a territorial special economic zone in 2019, endowing the residents of the industrial park with the maximum customs advantages possible in this integration association in the post-Soviet space and where project investments are already over one billion dollars.

In Russia, the Haier Industrial Park opened in Naberezhnye Chelny in August 2019, with Chinese support, as well as a "smart factory" for washing machine production, where refrigeration, freezing and kitchen equipment and TV sets will also be produced using smart technology. In Kazakhstan, under a contract with China's China National Chemical Engineering Company, Kazakhstan Petrochemical Industries, is building an integrated gas-chemical complex to produce half a million tonnes of polypropylene a year, and will establish a facility to produce polyamide materials from grain using Chinese technology. Speaking of strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, we should emphasise the EAEU's interest in interacting with China in the agricultural sector, in introducing advanced agricultural technologies and innovations, as well as in energy efficiency and productivity of processing facilities.

Another important aspect of the theme in question is that on 1 January 2020, the Republic of Belarus will assume the presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union, and on 1 February the same year the Belarusian representative will chair the Eurasian Economic Commission. The Belarusian side intends to use these formats of activity "to give a new impetus to integration processes and for the formation of common policies by the member states."⁸³ . In particular, to ensure

⁸³ Grishkevich, A. Belarus as chair in the EAEU will seek to create a full-fledged economic union - MFA / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-kak-predsedatel-v-eaes->

that producers from the EEU member states receive the most favorable conditions when exporting their products to foreign markets, and that consumers receive safe, high-quality and affordable goods, the union plans to "accelerate the signing of an agreement on the procedure and conditions for removing technical barriers in mutual trade with third countries, which will establish an effective mechanism to ensure barrier-free movement of goods on the territory of the EEU and third countries"⁸⁴. In fact, since autumn 2019, the EAEU has already started a new cycle of forming a list of priority countries with which this integration association will conclude free trade area agreements. In particular, procedures are being finalised with Israel, "at the beginning of next [2020] negotiations with India. There is also a list of 12 states with which we would like to work within about 2-3 years. This list could be supplemented by other countries"⁸⁵.

Indonesia, one of the key economies in the Asia-Pacific region, is among the states with which the EAEU is going to conclude a free trade agreement in the future. In October 2019, the Eurasian Economic Commission signed a memorandum of cooperation with the government of that country. The document is expected to help build an effective infrastructure for developing trade and economic cooperation. On this basis, the parties have already established a working group, whose first meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2020 in Moscow and which "will focus on issues of supranational competence of the EEC, such as trade facilitation, customs and technical

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-kak-predsdatel-v-caes-budet--sozdanija-polnoformatnogo-ekonomicheskogo-sojuza-middobivatsja-sozdanija-polnoformatnogo-ekonomicheskogo-sojuza-mid-366038-2019/>

⁸⁴ Pivovar, E. EEC proposes to speed up signing an agreement on the procedure for removing technical barriers with third countries / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

[https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-predlagaet-uskorit-podpisanie-soglashenija-o-porj-adke-adke-ustraneni- a-a-tehbarj-erov-s-erov-s-tretj-imi-stranami-3imi-stranami-364105-2019/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-predlagaet-uskorit-podpisanie-soglashenija-o-https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-predlagaet-uskorit-podpisanie-soglashenija-o-porj-adke-adke-ustraneni- a-a-tehbarj-erov-s-erov-s-tretj-imi-stranami-3imi-stranami-364105-2019/)

⁸⁵ Belarus counts on export growth thanks to the EAEU and FTAs with third countries [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-rost-eksporta-blagodarija-soglashenijam-caes-o-zst-s-tretjimi-stranami-365828-2019/>

regulations, and the development of financial markets"⁸⁶. It should also be noted that the Eurasian Economic Commission already interacts with the governments of such countries as Peru, Mongolia and Cambodia in the form of memoranda,

Morocco, Jordan, Faroe Islands, Cuba Thailand, Bangladesh, Moldova, and with the Greek government in declaration format.

This list also includes such South American country as **Chile**, with which the Eurasian P5 has significantly expanded its cooperation in recent years. In particular, in 2018, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost a third, to \$1.2 billion. "At the same time, EEAS exports to Chile increased by 54.8% and imports by 28.7%"⁸⁷. A free trade agreement between the EEU and Chile could open up considerable opportunities for Belarus, because currently the Belarus-Chile trade turnover is only about ten million dollars, of which 90 percent comes from supplies of goods from this South American country. The reason for this phenomenon lies in "the existence of some problems with duties, which are so far significantly higher for Belarusian goods than for other foreign products entering Chile."⁸⁸

Another country, with which negotiations on the establishment of a free trade zone have already entered an active phase, is **Egypt**. This African state will be the first to host a joint industrial infrastructure with the EAEU, the creation of which will "become a window for the countries of the integration association to promote our industrial products in Africa and the Middle East"⁸⁹. Apparently, a

⁸⁶ Pivovar, E. EEC and Indonesia signed a memorandum of cooperation / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/cek-i- indonezija-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-366253-2019/>.

⁸⁷ Pivovar, E. Chile shows interest in creating a free trade zone with the EAEU / E. Pivovar //

[Electronic resource]. - 2019 . - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chili-proj avlj aet-interes-k-sozdaniy u-zony-svobodnoj -torgovli-s-eaes-365298-2019/>

⁸⁸ Grishkevich, A. Chile interested in long-term cooperation with Belarus - Benitez / A. Grishkevich //. [Electronic resource]. - 2019 . - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/chili-zainteresovana-v-dolgosrochnom- sotrudnichestve-s-belarusju-benites-365 275-2019/>

⁸⁹ Pivovar, E. EEU countries intend to create a joint industrial infrastructure in Egypt / E. Pivovar //

memorandum of understanding signed on 24 October 2019 between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the African Union Commission, according to which "the parties intend to interact in infrastructure and agriculture, trade, investment and business development, regional economic integration and other areas of mutual interest" will significantly complement the EAEU's African engagement vector⁹⁰. Under this document, a cooperation plan will be developed with a focus on activities for the business communities of the parties. In the language of numbers, the prospects for this interaction look very impressive. After all, the African Union is an international intergovernmental organisation uniting 55 states of the Black Continent with a population of about one billion people. The EAEU's trade with them has grown almost 2.7 times since 2010, reaching \$21.7 billion in 2018. At the same time, just five African countries - Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia - account for more than 80 per cent of the Eurasian Five's exports. So the potential for partnership development here is indeed considerable.

[Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/strany-eaes-namereny-sozdat-sovmestnujuhttps://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/strany-eaes-namereny-sozdat-sovmestnuju-promyshlennuj-u-infrastrukturu-v-egipte-3u-infrastrukturu-v-egipte-364924-2019/>.

⁹⁰ ECE and the African Union Commission sign a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource] URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/24-10-2019-5.aspx>

Chapter 7

Eurasian Economic Union: Focusing on Long-Term Priorities

The Republic of Kazakhstan, which holds the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) presidency in 2021, has outlined five key areas for its activities in the year of its presidency, guided by the long-term development priorities of this international organisation:

- 1) Give a new impetus to industrial cooperation in the form of joint ventures in the industrial, agro-industrial and services sectors;
- 2) remove remaining barriers to mutual trade between the countries participating in this integration process formations at the central, regional and municipal levels;
- 3) to harness the potential of cross-border transport arteries and logistics hubs to build confidence across the Eurasian continent;
- 4) make comprehensive digitalisation a driving force for the development of the member states' economies, giving a qualitative boost to digitalisation in industry, agriculture and transport;
- 5) expand access to foreign markets, "actively develop trade and economic relations with third countries and integration associations"⁹¹.

The effective and full implementation of the Strategic Development Guidelines for Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, adopted by the heads of the EAEU member states at a meeting of the Supreme Economic Council, should facilitate the implementation of these tasks.

The Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020 and published in January 2021. This document contains 330 measures and mechanisms to develop cooperation, grouped into 11 systemic blocks, the implementation of which should lead to the achievement of results by 2025, such as

- 1) Completion of a common market for goods, services, capital and labour;

⁹¹ Appeal of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

- 2) Increasing the efficiency of regulation of the EAEU common market;
- 3) The transfer to a qualitatively higher level of customs regulation and administration;
- 4) Ensuring the quality and safety of goods;
- 5) forming the digital space of the EAEU;
- 6) Establishing mechanisms for targeted promotion of economic development;
- 7) Building a system for the management of joint cooperation projects and the development of high-performance sectors;
- 8) stimulating scientific and technological progress;
- 9) increasing the effectiveness of EEU institutions;
- 10) deployment of cooperation mechanisms in the fields of education, health, tourism and sport;
- 11) The EAEU's emergence as one of the most significant development centres of the modern world.

In order to implement these strategic directions, "it will be necessary to conclude 13 international treaties, adopt more than 60 normative legal acts, and make some 25 amendments and additions to the EEU Treaty and national legislation"⁹².

All these measures are expected to help increase non-commodity exports to third countries from the EAEU states alone by a quarter by 2025. This can be achieved by creating joint Eurasian companies to complement each other and produce competitive products. For now, "there are 17,500 joint ventures in the EEU with partners in the union, including 2,400 in Belarus. The EEU is interested in implementing investment projects with a total estimated cost of about \$200 billion"⁹³.

⁹² Pivovar, E. Published the strategy of development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025 / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opublikovana-strategija-razvitija-evrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoi-integratsii-do-2025-goda-423997-integratsii-do-2025-goda-423997-2021/>.

⁹³ Pivovar, E. Myasnikovich considers it necessary to develop industrial cooperation in high-tech industries in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-schitaet-neobhodimym-razvivat-v->

Another important segment of Eurasian integration is the implementation of digital projects, as the process of digital technology integration into all aspects of activities is now a key condition for progress. The Republic of Belarus is going to play a not insignificant role in this in the EAEU, where a sufficient infrastructure base for digital transformation has already been created and where the largest IT cluster in Eastern Europe - the High Tech Park - has been functioning for quite some time. "In 2020, its exports exceeded \$2.5 billion - that's more than 20% of Belarus' total services exports"⁹⁴.

At the Digital Almaty Forum 2021 held in February 2021, the Belarusian side named the "Travel without COVID" project of the Eurasian Development Bank as one of the joint digital projects in the EAEU that has actually been implemented for the benefit of the population. At the same time, the forum participants' attention was drawn to the fact that the remaining projects of the EAEU digital agenda are stalled. Few tangible results, including economic ones, have been achieved in three years. This is why the implementation of the digital agenda in the Union has not yet led to the development of national segments. In this regard, it is now very important to set specific tasks, identify performers, develop clear rules of information architecture, and synchronize the pace of work both in the EAEU member states themselves and at the integration level, so that digitalization will bring the real economy, first and foremost, to a new level. In fact, this is the approach taken by Kazakhstan, which holds the EEU presidency in 2021. Suffice it to say that a project initiated by Kazakhstan to create wholesale distribution centres is now among the priorities of the union, as well as the full-scale launch of the digital transport corridor ecosystem proposed by Belarus together with its union partners. In addition, one of the joint projects

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-schitaet-neobhodimym-razvivat-v-caes-promkooperatsij-u-v-vysokotekhnologichnyh-otrasljahu-v-vysokotekhnologichnyh-otrasljah-427278-2021>

⁹⁴ HTP exports to exceed \$2.5 billion in 2020 - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-pvt-v-2020-godu-prevysilhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-pvt-v-2020-godu-prevysil-25-mlrdmlrd-427golovchenko-427222-2021/>

could be a smart city, as all major cities in the EEU have the same tasks of managing lighting, traffic flows, power, water and heat supply. According to the Belarusian side, "all these tasks can be solved with the help of multifunctional digital platforms"⁹⁵, but this will require a lot of coordinated work to produce a powerful synergistic effect.

Another important area of the Eurasian Economic Union's development over the next five years should be the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organizations, which will allow coordinated work on the integration processes in the Eurasian space, including economic interaction "within the framework of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership"⁹⁶. It should be recalled that the idea proposed by the Russian side in 2015 of forming a Greater Eurasian Partnership is a network of dialogues between key players in Eurasia, not only among the largest national economies, but also regional economic associations linked together by a flexible system of international legal norms, transport and logistics, energy, telecommunications and financial infrastructures, joint projects and institutions. This ambitious concept, which has already been called the most ambitious integration project of this century, implies the implementation of a number of basic principles that distinguish it from other Eurasian integration plans.

First of all, it does not pretend to compete with other regional integration structures, but only develops them for a future common Eurasian economic mechanism. The Greater Eurasian Partnership "does not act as an alliance of the Eurasian East against the European West"⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ Belarus stands for accelerated implementation of digital projects in the EEU - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarushttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-uskorenie-realizatsii-tsifrovyyh-proektov-v-eaes-vystupaet-za-uskorenie-realizatsii-tsifrovyyh-proektov-v-eaes-golovchenko>

⁹⁶ Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 9.

⁹⁷ Kortunov, A. Eight principles of the Greater Eurasian Partnership / A. Kortunov // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/vosem-printsipov-bolshogo-evraziyskogo-partnerstva/>

The implementation of this project, whose participants are already characterised by different models of social, political and economic development, is not expected to impose a single set of values on anyone, but only to create the most comfortable conditions for all participants, not dividing them into leaders and outsiders, and providing a variety of flexible forms of connecting individual countries to the partnership. The Greater Eurasian Partnership is expected to affect not only the economy, but also other areas of interaction - science, education, culture, humanitarian field, and, in parallel, to contribute to strengthening food, energy and continental security, to address such global problems as climate change, combating pandemics, and migration. Another distinctive feature of this project should be the principle of implementation from the bottom up, where specific agreements between regional integration associations and individual countries will form the basis for it. In particular, the planned pairing of the Eurasian Economic Union with the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" fits very harmoniously into this scheme. And it is not the only one.

Thus, as early as the East Asia Summit in November 2020, it was stated that further development of various integration projects in the Asia-Pacific region would only contribute to strengthening economic cooperation. In this regard, such "regional and sub-regional associations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can work together in the interests of the entire region and complement each other harmoniously and effectively"⁹⁸.

⁹⁹For its part, Kazakhstan, which is chairing the EEU in 2021, while declaring its approach to consistently expanding its access to foreign markets and actively developing trade and economic relations with third countries and integration

⁹⁸ Asia has created the world's largest free trade zone [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/28129>

⁹⁹ Appeal of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

associations, has focused its attention not only on systematic work to establish an equal, mutually beneficial and pragmatic dialogue of the EEU with the European Union and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also on the fact that "an effective strategy for interaction with the new to Indeed, in mid-November 2020, during the ASEAN summit an agreement was signed on the formation of a potentially the world's largest free trade zone type block between the ten countries of the Association (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and five leading Asian economies - Australia, China, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan. This agreement "brings together countries whose combined gross domestic product approaches \$26 trillion (a third of the world's GDP), <...> and whose population exceeds 2.2 billion people"¹⁰⁰. It is clear that the development of mutually beneficial interaction with such a major partner on the world stage can become a powerful impetus for the EAEU to establish itself as one of the most significant development centres of the modern world.

One of the union's most promising partners could also soon be the Central American Economic Integration Sub-System, which was formed in October 1993. Members include Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. In February 2021, the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America (SIECA), which is the technical and administrative body of the Subsystem, signed a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations aimed at intensifying trade and economic cooperation between the parties in areas such as mutual trade, technical regulation and standardisation, industry and agro-industry, macroeconomics, to share experiences, develop recommendations The EAEU believes that "Central American countries have great potential to increase cooperation. The signing of the memorandum is a first step to intensify trade and investment cooperation and, in the long term, to integrate into global value

¹⁰⁰ Erokhin, V.L. Comprehensive Regional Economic Partnership: review of the main indicators of the trade alliance / V.L. Erokhin // Marketing and Logistics. - 2020. - №6. - C. 25.

chains <...>. Since 2015, mutual trade turnover has grown by 22.6%"¹⁰¹. The parties will soon form a joint working group to implement the memorandum's provisions in practice.

Another country in the Americas with which the EAEU will significantly intensify cooperation in 2021 is Cuba, with which a memorandum of understanding was concluded back in 2018 and which was granted observer status with the EAEU in December 2020 at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. Many facts suggest that the level of development of trade and economic cooperation between the parties to the memorandum has serious potential for growth. In particular, "at the end of 2019, trade turnover between the EAEU and Cuba was \$214.7 million, including exports of \$197.1 million and imports of

\$17.6 million. 2018 recorded the highest level of trade between the EAEU and Cuba since 2010 - \$417.5 million"¹⁰².

Continuing the topic of the bilateral format of the EAEU's international cooperation, we should note that, in pursuing the objectives set by the Strategic directions of Eurasian economic integration until 2025, the Eurasian Economic Commission is now carrying out the necessary work to conclude agreements to establish free trade zones with a number of other countries as well. In Asia, states interested in developing full-fledged cooperation with the EAEU include Iran, with which an interim agreement leading to the establishment of a free trade zone was signed in May 2018 and entered into force in October 2019. In December 2020, the heads of the EAEU member states decided to start negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran by October 2022. Already in February 2021, the participants of these negotiations focused their attention

¹⁰¹ Pivovarov, E. EEC and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America signed a Memorandum / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-i-sekretariat-po-ekonomicheskoy-integratsii-v-tsentralnoy-amerike-podpisali-memorandumtsentralnoy-amerike-podpisali-memorandum-430366-2021>

¹⁰² Pivovarov, E. Cuba appoints representative in Eurasian Economic Commission / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kuba-naznachila-predstavitelja-v-evrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-427078-2021/>

on transport and logistics projects that could "have a positive impact both on the growth of trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Iran, and on increasing the level of transport connectivity of the entire large Eurasian region"¹⁰³.

In 2021, the EAEU intends to establish cooperation between business circles and significantly strengthen trade and economic ties with a South Asian country such as Bangladesh. A memorandum of cooperation with Bangladesh was signed in 2019. The fact that the Bangladeshi economy "has shown substantial growth over the past ten years, with an average GDP growth of 8% a year and even during the pandemic growth of 5.6%" is indicative of the fairly high potential for the development of partnerships¹⁰⁴. And now it is important to identify where the parties have a mutual interest, where trade diversification can be achieved. Furthermore, studies have already begun on the prospects of forming free trade zones with Indonesia and Mongolia. And in the first half of 2021, the negotiation process "with Africa's largest economy, Egypt, as well as with India" resumes¹⁰⁵.

The EAEU is also expected to step up its activities throughout the post-Soviet space, as evidenced by the signing in February 2021 of the Action Plan for 2021-2022 to implement the Memorandum on Deepening Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which provides for the implementation of joint projects and joint events, including with the participation of business communities. As a reminder, the memorandum signed in 2018 provides for

¹⁰³ Chairman of the EEC Board Mikhail Myasnikov held a meeting with Mohammad Behr Galifab, Chairman of the Majlis of the Islamic Council of Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pageshttp://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/09-02-2021-01.aspx>.

¹⁰⁴ Opportunities to intensify trade and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and the EAEU discussed at the EEC [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx> [3.aspx](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx) [eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx](http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx)

¹⁰⁵ Pivovarov, E. EEU intends to create free trade zones with Egypt, India, Indonesia and Mongolia / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-nameren-sozdat-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-egiptom-egiptom-indiej--indoneziej--i-i-mongoliej-426578-2021/>.

cooperation between the EAEU and the CIS "in the areas of customs regulation, traceability and marking of goods with identification means, public procurement, consumer protection, digital economy, tax policy and administration, foreign trade, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, as well as sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary quarantine measures"¹⁰⁶. And bilaterally, Uzbekistan's proposal to jointly build the Trans-Afghan railway is of great interest to the EAEU. This is explained by the fact that "in 2020 the volume of railway transit via the Union states in the direction from Asia to Europe and back has increased by more than 60%, and the efficiency of transportation has noticeably improved. This shows the prospects of this direction and the need for concerted efforts"¹⁰⁷. In other words, by promoting the concept of transport connectivity in Greater Eurasia, the implementation of this project will allow both the EAEU member states and Uzbekistan to increase both the competitiveness of their enterprises and the efficiency of trade, as well as to create new jobs. This is the resulting focus on long-term priorities in the Eurasian Economic Union.

¹⁰⁶ EEC and CIS Executive Committee sign cooperation plan for 2021-2022 [Electronic resource] URL:

<http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-02-2021-07.aspx>

¹⁰⁷ Pivovarov, E. The EAEU will consider Uzbekistan's initiative to build the Trans-Afghan railway / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-rassmotrit-initsiativu-uzbekistana-o-stroitelstvehttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-rassmotrit-initsiativu-uzbekistana-o-stroitelstve-transafganskoy--zheleznj-dorogi-4311-dorogi-431104-2021/>.

Belarus - Russia: regions expand partnerships

The 7th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in September 2020, set a goal to intensify joint activities of the parties in a wide range of areas in politics, economy, social sphere, education, culture, and also actualized "improvement of work in the media space and strengthening economic cooperation on an equal basis"¹⁰⁸.

The Pskov Oblast, located in the Northwestern Federal District of the Russian Federation, is among the Russian regions that are now taking concrete steps to achieve the goal in their interaction with Belarusian partners. This is evidenced by the action plan for 2021-2023 signed in early December 2020 by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Pskov Oblast administration to implement the existing agreement between the parties on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. The adopted joint document aims to return the partnership between the Belarusian regions and the Pskov Oblast to the trajectory of sustainable growth. After all "the goods turnover between Belarus and the Pskov Oblast in January-September 2020 amounted to \$77 million which was 17.3% less compared to the same period last year. The balance for Belarus is positive - \$16.6 million."¹⁰⁹.

As a reminder, the basic agreement between the parties was signed back in October 2000. Later, it was backed up by more than 20 other agreements between the municipalities of the Pskov Region and the Belarusian regions. This contributed to the fact that in 2017 the trade turnover between the parties amounted to almost 200 million dollars, and "more than 100 companies with Belarusian capital are registered in the region"¹¹⁰. True, already "in 2019 the

¹⁰⁸ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Russia need to step up cooperation in politics and economics [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/9593>

¹⁰⁹ Belarus is ready to participate more actively in agricultural development programmes in the Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-aktivnee-uchastvovat-v-programmah-razvitiya-selskogo-hozj-aj-stva-v-pskovskoj-oblasti-418071-2020>

¹¹⁰ Priority directions of regional cooperation development as a key factor of union building:

trade turnover between Belarus and the Pskov region amounted to \$121 million and increased by 12% compared to 2018"¹¹¹. Nevertheless, all these facts allow the leadership of the Russian region to state with good reason that "Belarus is our key foreign economic, foreign trade partner. This partnership accounts for 35% of trade turnover"¹¹².

The three-year action plan to develop cooperation, which was adopted in early December 2020, envisages the implementation of a large potential for cooperation in a wide range of areas. In particular, this document "includes measures for the participation of Belarusian enterprises in the construction of social facilities and housing construction projects"¹¹³. We are talking here about the construction of both housing estates and schools, kindergartens and hospitals, with the use of credit resources of the Belarus Development Bank. The point is that the sides already have good experience in cooperation in this field, as "it was the Belarusian construction companies that built the biggest school in Pskov. And we are satisfied with this experience, because the quality is very high."¹¹⁴.

Another promising area for cooperation is to provide this Russian region with Belarusian passenger, freight, road construction and municipal vehicles. In this regard, the Belarusian side proceeds from the understanding that "the Pskov Region is facing the issue of cardinal renewal of its fleet of city buses, primarily

informational-integration project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 287.

¹¹¹ Roman Golovchenko suggested that the governor of the Pskov region should intensify cooperation in various sectors [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9588>

¹¹² Meeting with Mikhail Vedernikov, Governor of Russia's Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-sru/view/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-pskovskoj-oblasti-rossii-mixailom-vedemikovymgubematorom-pskovskoj-oblasti-rossii-mixailom-vedemikovym-24596/

¹¹³ The Pskov region plans to build social facilities with the participation of Belarusian companies [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-pskovskoj-oblasti-planirujut-stroit-sotsobjekty-s-uchastiem-belorusskih-kompanijpskovskoj-oblasti-planirujut-stroit-sotsobjekty-s-uch-belorusskih-kompanij-418082-2020>

¹¹⁴ The Pskov region is interested in Belarusian agro-towns, machinery and construction services [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pskovskaja-oblast-zainteresovalas-belorusskimi-agrogorodkami-tehnikoj-i-stroitelnyimi-uslugami-408508-2020/>

in the regional capital"¹¹⁵. And already in September 2020 the dealer of Minsk Automobile Plant won the tender for the delivery of 11 extra large buses and 6 large buses to Pskov. A pilot operation of a gas-powered bus from Belarus was also successfully carried out there.

Investment cooperation between the parties should also get additional impetus for development in the next three years. This will be facilitated by the agreement on cooperation signed in September 2020 between the Belarusian National Agency for Investment and Privatization and the Pskov Oblast Investment Development Agency. In this document, the parties agreed, among other things, to "create favourable conditions for mutual investment attraction, development and implementation of joint projects, exchange information about business conditions, investment opportunities and proposed projects, and take joint participation in thematic seminars, conferences, forums and other investment-oriented events"¹¹⁶.

Finally, another new vector of cooperation that will be developed in the near future is in the field of education. The point is that Belarus is starting to train medical personnel for the Pskov Oblast. In this regard, "an agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership was signed between the Pskov State University and three Belarusian universities"¹¹⁷. Relevance of this topic for the Russian region can be expressed by one figure: the shortage of medical personnel in the Pskov region today - almost 50 percent. So assistance of the Belarusian partners is more than necessary here and now.

Another interesting example of the development of relations with Belarusian

¹¹⁵ Igor Petrishenko: Belarus is ready to participate more actively in agricultural development programmes in the Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9668.government.by/ru/content/9668>

¹¹⁶ The Investment Agencies of Belarus and the Pskov Region have signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/agentstva-po-investitsijam-belarusi-i-pskovskoj-oblasti-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-408584-2020/>

¹¹⁷ Belarus will train medical personnel for the Pskov Region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-budet-gotovit-meditsinskijehttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-budet-gotovit-meditsinskije-kadry-kadry-dlj-a-pskovskoj--oblasti-408501-2020/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent

partners in the same Northwestern Federal District is shown by **the Leningrad Region**. In March 2021, the ninth meeting of the joint commission to develop cooperation between the Leningrad Oblast and the Republic of Belarus was held, where the parties signed a new agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical and socio-cultural spheres. As a reminder, the interaction of this Russian region with the Belarusian side began in 1997, when framework agreements on cooperation with four Belarusian regions - Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk, and Mogilev - were signed. "A year later, the agreements were signed by the governments of Leningrad Oblast and the Republic of Belarus. These documents became the basis for the establishment and development of mutually beneficial relations in the following years."¹¹⁸ .

For a long time, the key area of cooperation between the region and the republic in terms of intensity of interaction has remained the sphere of the agro-industrial complex, where close ties of agricultural enterprises are traditionally maintained, cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus has been established. An interesting fact: "About 20 per cent of spring cereal seeds in the Leningrad Region are sown with varieties developed by Belarusian plant breeders <...> Moreover, cultivated varieties year after year show high performance on all parameters, proving the high level of development of plant breeding in Belarus"¹¹⁹ . In this regard, the demand for Belarusian seed material from farmers in the Russian region continues to grow.

In 2019, the Leningrad Region was 11th among Russian regions in terms of trade turnover with Belarus, which then amounted to about 600 million dollars. It is true that in 2020, for well-known epidemiological reasons, it decreased slightly: in the first half of the year it was about 280 million dollars. That is why in September 2020 the parties decided at a high level "to update the cooperation program between Belarus and the Leningrad region and set clear and specific

¹¹⁸ Regions of Russia to the Republic of Belarus: Information and Integration Project. B. Zaleskii, A. Kiselev, E. Korovkin. - Minsk: Theseus, 2009. - C. 65.

¹¹⁹ Priority directions of regional cooperation development as a key factor of union building: informational-integration project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 204.

targets"¹²⁰. Also in 2020, the Russian side increased its purchases of Belarusian forestry equipment and started buying heavy road machinery. Moreover, more than a hundred units of such equipment are planned to be purchased in the region's budget for 2021. "Urban transport is also of interest to the Leningrad Oblast. Piteravto is planning to make a big purchase - up to 1,500 combined buses. The first hundred buses will be purchased already in the first quarter of 2021"¹²¹.

As for the new agreement on cooperation signed in March 2021, it focuses on such an important area as ecology, which includes Belarusian technologies and equipment for water treatment and rubbish recycling, taking into account the prospects for cooperation. The fact is that the Russian region is considering partnerships with the Belarusian side in terms of choosing technologies for the construction of waste recycling facilities, based on the experience of Brest Region in this matter. Suffice it to say that "under the federal project "Clean Water" in Leningrad region 13 Belarusian-made water treatment plants have already been installed, while another 9 water treatment plants and 4 modular sewage treatment plants (wastewater treatment plants) are being installed. During the period from 2021 to 2022, it is planned to purchase 108 water treatment plants and 31 sewage treatment plants produced in Belarus worth 1.65 and 2.40 billion rubles, respectively."¹²². In addition, the action plan for cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural fields for 2021-2023 signed at the ninth meeting of the joint commission provides for "increasing the supplies of public transport that uses various types of fuel, road-building, municipal and agricultural equipment to Leningrad region from Belarus, as well as supplies of pedigree cattle, fertilisers,

¹²⁰ Roman Golovchenko: The Leningrad Region may enter the top five trade partners of Belarus among Russia's regions [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9586>

¹²¹ Meeting with Alexander Drozdenko, Governor of the Leningrad Region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubernatorom-leningradskoy-oblasti-rossii-aleksandrom-drozdenko>

¹²² Ecology - in focus of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9787>

engineering and woodworking products to Belarus"¹²³ .

A good addition to the planned expansion of cooperation between the region and the republic in the next three years could be increased cooperation between the parties at the municipal level. According to the data of the Committee for External Relations of the Leningrad Region, to date, partnership or twinning relations have already been established between such districts as: 1. Volosovsky and Logoisky (2010); 2. Volkhovsky and Mozyr (2006); 3. Vyborg and Rechitsa (2011); 4. Gatchinsky and Nesvizh (2010); 5. Kingisepp and Svetlogorsk (2010); 6. Kirovsky and Myadelsky (2013); 7. Lomonosovsky and Baranovichsky (2008); 8. Luzhsky and Bobruisk city (2017); 9. Luzhsky and Gorodoksky (2014); 10. Podporozhsky and Miorsky (2017); 11. Priozersky and Mogilevsky (2006); 12. Slantsevsky and Shklovsky (2018); 13. Tikhvinsky and Dzerzhinsky (2009); 14. Tosnensky and Rogachevsky (2010); 15. Tosno and Polotsk (2010); 16. Shcheglovo Rural Settlement and Vileika District (2012); 17. The towns of Kommunar and Svetlogorsk (2007); 18. Sosnovoborski Urban District and Ostrovets District (2012, 2016).

As we can see, the potential for cooperation between the Leningrad region and the Republic of Belarus is already considerable. It is only necessary to update it as much as possible in all areas of mutual interest in accordance with the plans adopted by the joint commission. And then the results, which the parties expect, will not be long in coming.

In the Siberian Federal District, **the Tomsk Region** has seriously stepped up cooperation with its Belarusian partners. In December 2020, the first meeting of the working group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with this Russian region was held, at which the parties agreed to focus on expanding the trade turnover, consider opportunities for manufacturing new products, including

¹²³ Belarus and the Leningrad region signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-leningradskaj-a-oblast-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-a-oblast-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-434519-2021/>.

innovative ones, as well as opening joint ventures of various forms of ownership. The more so since "there are plenty of growth points for the development of cooperation in terms of satisfaction of needs in raw materials, components, finished products and natural resources"¹²⁴. In addition, contacts and cooperation in science, education and culture are set to be stepped up. This is the subject of the updated plan of joint activities for 2021-2023, which the Tomsk side submitted to the Belarusian partners for approval.

It should be recalled that the Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Region was signed in 2016 as part of the plenary session of the Third Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. In this document, which gave new impetus to the bilateral cooperation between the republic and the region, the parties identified the main priorities for joint work in a very wide range of areas, drawing on the already existing experience of interaction. And very soon concrete results of the implementation of this agreement appeared.

Thus, "the Agrarian Center of Tomsk Region signed a number of agreements on cooperation with the Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on Mechanization of Agriculture, the Grodno State Agrarian University, and the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University"¹²⁵. National Research Tomsk State University, National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics, and Tomsk Scientific Centre of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences became participants in joint projects with Belarusian partners related to fundamental and applied research and the development of academic mobility among graduate students and faculty

¹²⁴ Belarus is ready to cooperate with Tomsk Region in economic, humanitarian and scientific spheres - Hudyk [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-tomskoj-oblastiju-vhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-tomskoj-oblastiju-v-ekonomicheskoi--gumanitarnoi-i-nauchnoj-sferah-42-i-nauchnoj-sferah-421752-2020/>

¹²⁵ Tomsk region has good opportunities for expanding economic ties with the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. -2018. - URL: <https://tomsk.er.ru/activity/news/u-tomskoj-oblasti-est-horoshie-vozmozhnosti-dlya-rasshireniya-ekonomicheskikh-svyazey-s-respublikoj-belarus>

members.

In particular, as part of the Union State Pramen program, scientists from the Tomsk Institute of Atmospheric Optics SB RAS and specialists from the Institute of Physics of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences jointly developed special complexes for monitoring the atmosphere, which allow not only to determine the distance to an object, but also to scan the composition of the atmosphere along the way. Thus, there is no need for sampling and analysis, as the data appear immediately on the operator's monitor. Another interesting project is the joint work of scientists from National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University and Belarusian State University "to develop nanocomposite coatings that are resistant to radiation for use in nuclear reactors. The research results may also be in demand in other areas where operation in extreme situations is expected: for example, in space, in steam turbines of thermal power plants"¹²⁶.

In line with the signed agreement, the partnership between the Russian region and the Belarusian manufacturer Amkodor is developing very effectively. In June 2016, the Tomsk Region approved a medium-term cooperation plan to expand the supply of its machinery. And today, this equipment is used in this Russian region in the utilities and forestry sectors. In particular, in December 2017, the Verkhneketsky leskhoz purchased a logging complex, which began to be used for selective and clear-cut sanitary felling as part of the execution of state assignments. "This is already the third logging complex that Amkodor has supplied to forestry enterprises of the region. By the way, it will now be easier to maintain this equipment, as the company opened its own service centre in the region in the summer of 2017"¹²⁷.

All these facts show that the basis for cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Oblast is not bad, but it should be developed, because so far

¹²⁶ Technologies and Innovations in Cooperation of the Regions of the Union State as an Impetus for the Development of Eurasian Integration: Informational-Integration Project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2017. - C. 202.

¹²⁷ Priority directions of development of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: informational-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: K. Gusev, B. Zaleski. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 345.

the mutual trade accounts for a small share in the total volume of their foreign economic activities - just over \$10 million in 10 months of 2020. The Tomsk side expects to focus its partnership development on such areas as crop and livestock production, hunting and fishing industry, industry and consumer market, ecological and rural tourism, additional professional education and advanced training,

use of IT-systems for state and municipal needs, support of innovative entrepreneurship"¹²⁸ . The Belarusian side sees prospects in supplying a wide range of export goods - buses, trucks, municipal vehicles, road-building machinery and logging equipment,

In short, the potential for partnership is considerable. In short, the potential for partnership between the sides is very solid. And it inspires optimism that the plans to expand cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Oblast adopted at the first meeting of the working commission will be successfully implemented.

Speaking of the Belarusian partners in the Siberian Federal District, one should remember **Irkutsk Region**, where an agreement on trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural and humanitarian cooperation was signed in December 2016. At that time, the first meeting of a working group formed by representatives of the parties was held to prepare a roadmap - the Action Plan for 2017-2019 - for implementing the signed agreement in a short time frame in order to rapidly increase trade and economic cooperation. The fact is that 2016 marked a serious problem in the development of partnership ties between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region - the trade turnover between the two sides dropped by almost half. This is despite the fact that in 2015 the mutual trade figure was the highest in five years - \$115 million. This gave the two sides a reason to make it crystal clear what the main objective is for the near future:

¹²⁸ Tomsk Region and Belarus agree to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://tomsk.sm.news/tomskaya-oblast-i-belarus-dogovorilis-rasshirit><https://tomsk.sm.news/tomskaya-oblast-i-belarus-dogovorilis-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvosotrudnichestvo-425-61-u3t-u3t5/>.

"Belarus and Russia's Irkutsk region must find reserves to boost mutual trade"¹²⁹

¹³⁰It is worth recalling that in the pre-crisis period the trade and economic interaction between the sides was carried out in quite a wide range of areas, which included the creation of a system of business cooperation using modern information technologies and electronic systems, expanding the range of goods for mutual supplies, organization of service and repair centres for Belarusian-made equipment in Irkutsk region, organization and holding of joint fair and exhibition events, as well as

In their search for new reserves of trade and economic cooperation, the two sides decided to build on the existing experience. First, the Belarusian side suggested using its export potential in Priangarye, where there are significant prospects in terms of supplies of quarry, cargo and other special equipment, as well as loaders for coal and other minerals deposits in the Russian region. After all, Belarus is well aware that Irkutsk Oblast is one of Russia's leaders in mining, so the mining equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant for the region's mining companies would come in handy. Besides, at that time Minsk Automobile Plant was "ready to meet the demand of the region for gas-powered passenger vehicles"¹³¹. The Belarusian side offered such attractive financing schemes as leasing, budget subsidies and preferential lending for its export supplies, which may also affect the latest Belarusian innovations in the form of innovative urban electric vehicles - electric buses and trolleybuses with autonomous travel.

Secondly, an important section of the roadmap

Belarus and the Irkutsk Region were expected to cooperate not only with the

¹²⁹ Negotiations with the Governor of the Irkutsk Region Sergey Levchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubematoromru/view/peregovory-s-gubematorom-irkutskoj-oblasti-sergeem-levchenkoirkutskoj-oblasti-sergeem-levchenko-15007/.

¹³⁰ Common Economic Space: Integration of Regions: Informational-Integration Project / co-comp. and interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovskii, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 118.

¹³¹ Andrei Kobayakov met with the Governor of the Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6866.government.by/ru/content/6866>

companies of the military-industrial complex. In this regard, Belarusian manufacturers were attracted by the territory of advanced socioeconomic development of Ussuriysk-Sibirskoye, which has a special tax regime and could be used for assembly of Belarusian tractors. The more so since "large areas of unused arable land in Irkutsk Oblast are planned to be put into agricultural turnover. The Russian region is resuming its leasing and investment programs for this project. This should facilitate the growth in sales of tractor equipment."¹³²

. The parties also named agriculture, construction, logging and water resources as other reserves for stepping up cooperation. All in all this list includes more than a dozen promising areas of joint activity, which, judging by all appearances, will continue to be supplemented. In particular, we are also talking about interaction between scientific institutions, especially those related to agriculture, as well as in the tourism sphere. All these facts testify to the seriousness of the intentions of the sides to raise the partnership relations to a qualitatively new level. And, it must be said, today these plans are gradually taking shape.

In March 2021, the Irkutsk Region and Minsk Tractor Plant agreed to supply more than 160 Belarusian tractors to this Russian region. They should significantly supplement the fleet of BELARUS-branded machines, which here are already close to ten thousand machines that are in demand in the Angara Region in agriculture and utilities sector. As part of further expansion of this cooperation, the Belarusian side made a statement about the possibility to "transfer forest and special-purpose machines for trial operation in the region's organizations. This kind of machinery has not been supplied to the region before. We are considering the possibility of buying vehicles for volunteers involved in extinguishing forest fires"¹³³. Besides, the leadership of the Russian

¹³² BELARUS tractor assembly plant may appear in Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

<http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoehhttp://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-traktorov-belarus-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-irkutskoj-oblastiproizvodstvo-traktorov-belarus-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-irkutskoj-oblasti-222392-2016/>

¹³³ The Irkutsk region will buy more than 160 BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

region and the Belarusian company have already discussed the possibility of opening a specialized service and technical centre that will make it possible to repair tractors from Belarus quickly and cheaply.

As a reminder, the cooperation agreement between the Irkutsk Region and Minsk Tractor Works was signed in September 2020. At that time, the Russian region suggested "establishing several service stations in the Irkutsk Region to be able to repair Belarusian machinery, including overhauls"¹³⁴. All the more so because the region, as noted above, has territories of advanced socio-economic development with benefits, as well as a surplus of manpower. In March 2021, representatives of MTZ visited the site proposed by the Irkutsk side to organize the overhaul of BELARUS machinery in order to specifically determine all the components of the joint mutually beneficial project.

Note that back in November 2018, the parties agreed to establish and develop joint ventures in various areas. "Especially in those areas that the region is rich in. These are the timber processing complex, machine building, aircraft building"¹³⁵. In September 2020, the Belarusian side also announced its readiness to participate, along with other manufacturers, in tenders for the supply of cargo, timber, passenger, municipal, road-building equipment for the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects in Irkutsk Region. And among the promising areas of cooperation, she noted "cooperation in the forest industry, environmental protection and natural resources, recycling of municipal

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/irkutskaja-oblast-priobretet-boleehttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/irkutskaja-oblast-priobretet-bolee-160- traktorov-belarustraktorov-belarus-433486-2021/>.

¹³⁴ MTZ and the Irkutsk region have signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2020. -

URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-i-irkutskaja-oblasthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-i-irkutskaja-oblast- zakljuchili-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestvezakljuchili-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-408690-2020/>.

¹³⁵ . Matveev, V. Belarus and Irkutsk region have agreed to create and develop JVs in different areas / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-irkutskaja-oblast-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-ihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-irkutskaja-oblast-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-i- razvitii-sp-v-raznyh-sferah-3razvitii-sp-v-raznyh-sferah-325641-2018/>.

waste and provision of clean drinking water to the population"¹³⁶ .

The intensification of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Irkutsk Region five years ago had a positive impact on bilateral trade. Suffice it to say that in 2016-2019, the volume of trade turnover between the parties more than quadrupled and showed a record level of \$284 million in 2019. The basis of Belarusian exports to Priangarye then was made up of supplies of wires, fluorides, trucks, tyres, car parts, rolling stock, paints, varnishes, lifts, milk and cream. For the first time in 2019, special-purpose vehicles and X-ray equipment were shipped to Irkutsk Region from Belarus. And in 2020, two new shops of Belarusian products, Traditions and Tastes, were also opened there. This is largely due to the fact that a variety of Belarusian goods and products have been represented in the region's retail market in recent years. These include "heavy trucks, passenger vehicles, trailed and crane trucks and spare parts of Belarusian manufacturers MAZ and MTZ, women's clothing - Belarusian knitwear, cosmetics, food products - cheese, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetable products"¹³⁷ . But the decline in economic activity caused by the coronavirus epidemic resulted in the fact that in 2020, "in January-October, trade turnover declined 2.1 times"¹³⁸ . That is why in December 2020, at a meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region, the parties decided to focus their efforts on restoring the volume of mutual trade in 2021. The development of cooperation in the industrial sector and timber industry, as well as agriculture and the agro-industrial complex were named the most promising areas. Besides, "Belarusian mining equipment, <...> quarry machinery, public

¹³⁶ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus is ready to participate in tenders for supplies of machinery to the Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://www.government.by/ru/content/95_87

¹³⁷ Priority directions of development of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: informational-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 168.

¹³⁸ The volume of trade turnover between Belarus and the Irkutsk region has doubled in five years [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/objem-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-irkutskoj-oblastiju-za-pjat-let-udvoilsja-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-irkutskoj-oblastiju-za-pjat-let-udvoilsja-420587-2020/>.

transport, electric cars, various types of transport on gas-motor fuel" can be of interest in this Russian region¹³⁹. As we can see, the parties have the capacity to successfully meet the challenge. Let us hope that they will be used to their full potential in the near future.

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¹³⁹ Meeting with Igor Kobzev, Governor of the Irkutsk Region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2020.
- URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-irkutskoy><https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-irkutskoy-oblasti-rossii-igorem-oblasti-rossii-igorem-kobzevym>

Belarus - Russia:

Orientation towards mutually beneficial cooperation

The results of the first two months of 2021 show that trade and economic ties between Belarus and Russia continue to develop on a steady growth trajectory. Thus, "the turnover of Belarus-Russia foreign trade in goods and services in January-February 2021 was \$5.3 bln, an 11.9% increase compared to the same period in 2020. Exports of goods and services to Russia amounted to \$2.3 billion (up 2%)." ¹⁴⁰.

Among the Belarusian companies that feel confident in the Russian market is Minsk Motor Works (MMZ), which doubled its export deliveries to Russia in the first quarter of 2021. The main consumers of its products in the neighboring country are enterprises in Kursk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and Yaroslavl regions, the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Republic of Mordovia. "During 2021 Minsk Motor Works will continue developing the distribution network in Russia in two areas: engines and spare parts, as well as special machinery, to keep up the momentum of exports. Export of the products is planned to increase by 11%" ¹⁴¹. The company also sees one more reserve for increasing its supplies to the Russian market in 2021 in organizing a permanent exhibition of a broader range of engines and special machinery at the trading and exhibition site of Trading House "Minsk Engine Plant" LLC in Noginsk and its partners in every federal district of Russia. Cooperating today with 59 Russian companies, Minsk motor builders are now working on establishing cooperation ties with ten more partners.

Belarus's Gomselmash, which has a distribution network of 60 entities in Russia, including 34 dealerships, two joint ventures and one trading house in Siberia,

¹⁴⁰ Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals on deepening the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high readiness [Electronic resource]: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807>

¹⁴¹ Minsk Motor Works doubled its deliveries to Russia in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raza-uvlichil-postavki-v-rossijumotornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raza-uvlichil-postavki-v-rossiju-437469-2021/>

has also announced ambitious plans to increase supplies of its equipment to Russia in 2021, selling more than 3,200 units of self-propelled grain and forage harvesters in the Russian market over the 13 years of its existence. In 2020, sales of Gomselmash equipment in Russia increased by 163 per cent. Together with Bryanskselmash alone, more than one thousand combines were sold to Russian regions. In addition, "in 2020, the company expanded the borders of supply and opened a new dealership in the Primorsky Krai - AgroSupport LLC"¹⁴². All these facts give good reason for the Belarusian company to set a truly ambitious goal for itself in 2021 - to triple its supplies to Russia.

The Belarusian Steel Works (BSW) is also actively cooperating with Russian companies; its partners in Russia are both suppliers of key raw materials and major consumers of metal products. Suffice it to say that "in January-February 2021, BMZ's exports to Russia exceeded 58 thousand tons, up 8% from the same period in 2020. In monetary terms, exports to the Russian Federation exceeded \$43 million, which is a third more than in the same period last year."¹⁴³.

This was due to an increase in sales of rebar, structural steel, steel wire and steel cord.

The Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ) is another good example of such a plan. In March 2021 alone, it supplied more than 93% of the total volume of machines and spare parts produced to foreign markets with an export growth rate of 142%. An important detail: "At the same time, the share of the Russian market, the largest among the traditional markets of the company, was 89.1% (growth rate 308.1%) in total March shipments"¹⁴⁴. Particularly, under the long-

¹⁴² "Gomselmash plans to triple deliveries of machinery to Russian regions in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmashhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-planiruet-utroiti-postavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godu-planiruet-utroiti-postavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godu-436585-2021/>

¹⁴³ BMZ increases export deliveries [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/>

¹⁴⁴ BELAZ increased production, sales and export volumes in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v->

term agreement on strategic partnership with the mining company Kuzbassrazrezugol JSC, BELAZ is to supply 29 mine dump trucks by the end of April 2021. Three of them, with a capacity of 220 tons, were shipped to one of Kuzbassrazrezugol's production branch - the Kedrovsky coal mine - at the end of January of this year. It is noteworthy that the arrival of the other vehicles will substantially enlarge the technological fleet of more than half a thousand vehicles, which is dominated by the Belarusian equipment at the coal mines. "BELAZ machines are also used at the enterprises of Kemerovo Oblast's flagship coal mining company for mining and transportation operations, special machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer is also used (irrigation trucks, tow-tractors, loaders, bulldozers)"¹⁴⁵. The presence of BELAZ on the Russian market is also secured by a cooperation agreement signed with the St. Petersburg Mining University in April 2021, the implementation of which should help ensure that "in September [2021] modern specialised classrooms equipped with exclusive equipment will start working in one of Russia's largest universities for mining engineering"¹⁴⁶. In this case, we are talking about the opening of the named university's innovative BELAZ Centre of Competence, which will be modelled on the best technological solutions in mechanical engineering, digital and information technology in the mining industry. Its main feature will be the use of virtual reality technologies, which will bring to a new level not only the training of university students, but also advanced training of specialists and managers of companies that operate machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer.

The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is also actively

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v-i-kvartale-velichil-objemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-i-eksporta-produktsii-kvartale-velichil-objemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-i-eksporta-produktsii-437188-2021/>

¹⁴⁵ BELAZ will deliver 29 dump trucks for one of Russia's largest coal companies [Electronic resource] :
<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavit-29-karjernih-samosvalov-dlja-odnoj-iz-krupnejshih-ugolnyh-kompanij-rossii-427978-2021/>

¹⁴⁶ BELAZ will open a competence centre at St. Petersburg Mining University [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otkroet-tsentr-kompetentsij-v-sankt-peterburgskom-gorn-universitete-437447-2021/>

building ties with its partners in Russia. The dynamics of growing interest from Russian businesses in its electronic trading indicate that in 2021 Russia may become a leader on BUCE not only in the number of accredited companies, but also in the volume of exchange commodity turnover. Let us recall that "as at 1 December 2020, 2,482 residents of Russia were using the services of BUCE"¹⁴⁷. And the amount of exchange transactions carried out by them in January and February 2021, "was almost three times higher than during the same period in 2020, amounting to \$12 million"¹⁴⁸. This has put Russia in third place on the list of the largest BTUB export markets. Lithuania (\$32 million) and Latvia (\$18 million) retained the first two places. And at the end of the first quarter of 2021, the sum of all transactions made by Russian exchange traders was close to \$38 million. Such growth in exports of Belarusian goods to the Russian market resulted from comprehensive measures taken by the BUCE to attract business entities from Russia to the exchange trade floor in Belarus. Among the main of them are: 1) simplification of the accreditation procedure at the BUTB; 2) regular webinars and online presentations for representatives of the Russian business community; 3) spot visits to leading industrial, woodworking and agrarian enterprises in various Russian regions. As a result, 30 new Russian companies interested in buying Belarusian meat and dairy products, rapeseed oil, and building materials, as well as in making transit deals for selling their goods to third countries, were accredited at the BUTB during the first two months of 2021. It should be noted that so far the determining factor in the increase in the exchange turnover is the close cooperation of the BUTB with the Russian border regions of Smolensk, Bryansk, and Pskov.

In particular, the mention of the Bryansk Region in this list is explained by the fact that Belarus accounts for about half of the foreign trade turnover of this

¹⁴⁷ Zalesky, B. With an eye to the future. Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 97.

¹⁴⁸ Russia is one of the top three export markets for BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-voshla-v-trojku-krupneishihhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-voshla-v-trojku-krupneishih-eksportnyh-rynkov-butbekspornyh-rynkov-butb-432830-2021/>.

Russian region, which by itself is evidence of a fairly high level of trade and economic cooperation. Nevertheless, at a working meeting with the Bryansk Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry in March 2021, the parties noted the considerable potential for further expansion of cooperation specifically in the field of exchange trade. In this connection, the emphasis this year will be placed on "the agrarian sector and sale of industrial goods as the most promising areas for the development of cooperation"¹⁴⁹. For this purpose, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk Region will use its entire network of business contacts to inform the Bryansk Region business community about the advantages of e-commerce on the BUTB.

The planned cooperation between the Belarusian Steel Exchange and the Chelyabinsk Region looks very promising. At the webinar on exchange trade with Belarus held in the middle of March 2021, several major producers and traders from the Russian region announced their plans to increase sales of metal products on the Belarus Exchange. "Interest in a more active application of the exchange mechanism, in particular, was expressed by representatives of Chelyabinsk Forge-and-Press Plant PJSC, Liteiny Zavod LLC and Trade House MKK LLC. First of all, the matter is about an increase in supplies of ferrous rolled metal products that are in stable high demand among Belarusian industrial enterprises"¹⁵⁰. By the way, we should mention that nearly 800 companies trade in ferrous metals and their products at the Belarusian Currency and Stock Exchange on a daily basis, and the number of transactions at one trading session can reach two million euros. It is clear that the arrival here of the largest Russian metal producers from the Chelyabinsk Region - the undisputed leader in ferrous metallurgy among other Russian regions - will only open up new opportunities

¹⁴⁹ BUTB and the Bryansk Oblast Chamber of Commerce and Industry have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-brjanskoj-oblasti-dogovorilishttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-brjanskoj-oblasti-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-43o-sotrudnichestve-431815-2021/>.

¹⁵⁰ Enterprises of Chelyabinsk Region are interested in selling metal products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. -2021. -URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-cheljabinskij-oblasti-zainteresovany-v-realizatsii-metalloprodukti-na-butb-433059-2021/>

and prospects for all participants in these trading sessions.

At the end of March 2021, with the help of the Volgograd Region Export Support Centre, a meeting with business representatives from this Russian region was held at the BUTB. As a result, several companies from Volgograd region "expressed interest in selling their products within the industrial and consumer goods section of the BUTB. In particular, there are plans to work out the issue of bidding for products for the construction industry, packaging materials and foodstuffs"¹⁵¹. In early April 2021, the prospects for increasing exchange trade in Belarus were discussed with representatives of **Kursk** Oblast business circles during an online conference. Following the discussion, a number of enterprises of the Russian region expressed their readiness to exhibit their products on the BUTB's industrial and consumer goods platform. For instance, "the issue of selling food processing equipment, hi-tech rubber products, paper and corrugated cardboard packaging materials is being considered"¹⁵². The BUOTB also expects real results from the agreement of March 2021 on the activation of co-operation with the Saint Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. The exchange was set up in 2008 and is now the largest commodity exchange in Russia "specialising in oil, oil products, gas, timber and mineral fertilisers"¹⁵³. It must be assumed that the actualisation of cooperation with such a serious partner can also yield equally serious results.

It appears that Russia's role for Belarusian construction services exports in 2021 will also increase markedly. But first, let us note that the growth of services exports in general is an important area for minimizing the dependence of the

¹⁵¹ BUTB plans to establish closer cooperation with Volgograd Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruethhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planirueth-naladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-volgogradskoj-oblasttjunaladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-volgogradskoj-oblasttju-434981-2021/>

¹⁵² Enterprises of Kursk region plan to work in the Belarusian market through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatijahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-kurskoj-oblasti-planirujut-rabotat-na-belorusskom-rynke-cherez-butbkurskoj-oblasti-planirujut-rabotat-na-belorusskom-rynke-cherez-butb-435331-2021/>

¹⁵³ The BUTB and the St Petersburg Mercantile Exchange have agreed to step up cooperation [Electronic resource]. -2021 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-sankt-peterburgskaja-tovamo-syrjevoja-birzha-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-434334-2021/>

Belarusian economy on key factors of the foreign economic environment. In 2021, Belarus continued to strengthen its efforts to increase its exports. Specifically, in the first quarter, "exports of services rose by 3.8% to \$2.287 billion <...>. The balance of foreign trade in services was positive at \$1.041 billion (in January-March 2020, the surplus was \$1.014 billion)." ¹⁵⁴ . The export of construction services, which exceeded half a billion dollars in 2020, is not the least of these figures. Today, it is one of the promising directions of development of the Belarusian construction industry, where comprehensive measures are being taken to further increase and expand its geographic reach, and where the Russian market, which has a significant potential, is beginning to play an increasingly important role. This is largely due to the fact that "there is currently a shortage of construction workers in Russia. The issue of attracting them to key construction projects, such as theatres and cultural centres in Vladivostok and Kaliningrad, and the Vostochny launch site, is an urgent one" ¹⁵⁵ .

Given the growth in construction in the neighboring country, the Belarusian side is already taking concrete steps to promote its export interests there. For example, coordination subgroups for cooperation in construction have already been set up in seven Russian regions, and "a portfolio has been created in Russia for the near future totaling over 3 billion Russian rubles. This includes schools in Kaluga, Voronezh and Leningrad Regions and St. Petersburg, and residential buildings in Kaluga, Kursk and Kaliningrad Region" ¹⁵⁶ . All in all, Belarusian

¹⁵⁴ Belarus increased exports of goods and services by 19.5 percent to \$10.3 billion in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-i-kvartale-uvlechila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-195-do-103-mlrd-441081-2021/>.

¹⁵⁵ Sivak: Belarus is interested in increasing exports of construction services to Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sivakhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/sivak-belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-eksporta-stroitelnyh-uslug-v-rossijubelarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-eksporta-stroitelnyh-uslug-v-rossiju-442169-2021/>.

¹⁵⁶ Parkhamovich, R. The tasks set for the construction industry this year will be fulfilled / R.

Parkhamovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/comments/view/postavlennye-pered-strojtirasljiu-zadachi-v-etom-goduhttps://www.belta.by/comments/view/postavlennye-pered-strojtirasljiu-zadachi-v-etom-godu->

builders plan to build more than ten social facilities in Russia by the end of 2025. In particular, Belstroytsentr Holding "is now simultaneously building about five social infrastructure facilities in the Leningrad and Kaluga Regions"¹⁵⁷.

As for the Voronezh region, which is seriously

¹⁵⁸The Republic of Belarus is interested in expanding cooperation with Belarusian partners in the construction sector, first of all, by implementing a joint pilot project in the urban village of Strelitsa in the Semiluki district to build a school for 520 pupils, the participation of Belarusian companies Belininginzhinvest LLC and Stroitelny Trust №12 OJSC in the construction of pre-school and general educational institutions in the Semiluki district, and the use of Belarusian prefabricated houses in the regional development programme being drafted

the aforementioned theatre and cultural centre in Vladivostok is to become one of the largest construction projects in 2021 in cooperation between Belarus and the Primorsky Krai. This centre will also house the Mariinsky Theatre's maritime stage and exhibitions of famous Russian museums. And in general, according to the governor of this Russian region, O. Kozhemyako, this centre "will become a real jewel of the entire Asia-Pacific region and can be compared, for example, to the theatre in Sydney, Australia."¹⁵⁹

Another Russian region, where the possibility for participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of housing and social facilities is being carefully considered, is Novgorod Region. There are 15 organizations with Belarusian

[budut-vypolnenybudut-vypolneny-7784](#)

¹⁵⁷ More than 10 social facilities in Russia are to be built by the end of 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: http://mas.gov.by/ru/http://mas.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/do-kontsaru/view/do-kontsa-2025-goda-planiruetsja-postroit-bolee-10-sotsialnyx-goda-planiruetsja-postroit-bolee-10-sotsialnyx-objektov-v-rossii-ektov-v-rossii-1313/

¹⁵⁸ Voronezh region is interested in expanding cooperation with Belarus in construction [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/voronezhskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-v-stroitelstve-429176-2021/>

¹⁵⁹ Belarusian specialists to build turnkey theatre building in Primorye [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-stroiteli-budut-stroit-pod-kljuch-zdanie-teatra-v-primorje-434288-2021/>

capital already registered here, but until recently, cooperation with partners from Belarus was mainly in the agro-industrial sector in the form of supplies of agricultural machinery, food products and processing. This contributed to the fact that in 2020 the trade turnover between the parties reached \$57.5 million. In this case, supplies of Belarusian goods - dairy products, eggs, plastics, sugar, timber, fertilizers, electrical machinery and equipment - increased by almost 20 percent. By all appearances, it is the construction industry that will soon be contributing to these figures. The fact is that "the region needs at least two new schools and several kindergartens. The quality of work of builders from Belarus is always quite high <...>. We have already had the experience of interaction: Belarus built the so-called medical house for us. We are interested in the construction capacity of our Belarusian colleagues."¹⁶⁰ . The parties have also discussed the idea of Belarusian specialists building a new runway "near Veliky Novgorod, in the place where Krechevitsy military airfield used to be"¹⁶¹ . The Bryansk and Gomel regions also offer great opportunities for cooperation in the construction sector. In particular, in April 2021 the parties discussed the prospects of Belarusian companies' participation in the implementation of such projects as "Construction of the Bryansk 1 - Bryansk 2 (1st stage) motorway protective levee", the Educational establishment "secondary school No 71" and the palace of martial arts in the Sovetsky district of Bryansk"¹⁶² . As we can see, the Russian vector of Belarusian exports of construction services is already quite broad and diverse. And it continues to expand. Let us hope that this trend will

¹⁶⁰ Pivovar, E. Novgorod Oblast is studying the possibility of participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of social objects / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novgorodskaja-oblast-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnosthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/novgorodskaja-oblast-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnost- uchastija-belorusskih-stroitelej-v-vozvedeniiuchastija-belorusskih-stroitelej-v-vozvedenii-438576-2021/>.

¹⁶¹ Pivovar, E. In Novgorod region they plan to restore air communication with Minsk and Gomel / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-novgorodskoj-oblasti-planirujut-vosstanovithttps://www.belta.by/society/view/v-novgorodskoj-oblasti-planirujut-vosstanovit- aviasoobschenie-s-minskom-i-gomelemaviasoobschenie-s-minskom-i-gomelem-438579-2021/>.

¹⁶² The Gomel and Bryansk regions will discuss the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-brjanskaja-oblastihttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-brjanskaja-oblasti-.-razvitie-sotrudnichestvaobsudjat-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-437066-2021/>

only contribute to the successful performance of the tasks set for the country's builders.

Many Russian regions are actively developing ties with their Belarusian partners in 2021. Among them is the Republic of Tatarstan, which is among those with which trade turnover in January-February 2021 grew considerably - by more than 80 percent to nearly \$175 million. At the same time, Belarusian exports increased by nearly a quarter, reaching nearly \$55 million. This was due to an increase in supplies from Belarus of tractors and tractor units, oil gases, stranded ferrous metal wire without electrical insulation, parts and accessories for cars and tractors, tyres, seamless pipes, tubes and profiles made of ferrous metals, waste from the extraction of soybean oil, fresh or chilled beef, unalloyed steel wire, cheese and curd, tyre cord materials, non-aqueous synthetic polymer-based paints and varnishes, furniture and furniture parts. The parties signed a protocol of understanding in April 2021 that "provides for further mutual interest in the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan"¹⁶³, which will focus on the development of cooperation in the production and science and technology spheres.

It should be recalled that the interaction between the parties is currently developing within the framework of the intergovernmental Agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation of 23 June 2004, which created the preconditions for the formation of a common scientific, technological and innovation space. Last year saw the completion of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 to implement the basic agreement. Due to the fact that Tatarstan today pays special attention to the development of high-tech production and the establishment of joint ventures, in this Russian region Belarusian partners are given the opportunity to work at the "investment sites of the Republic. It is important to deepen cooperation of commodity producers,

¹⁶³ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Tatarstan are actively developing cooperation [Electronic resource]: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9816>

first of all, in the field of mechanical engineering and high technology"¹⁶⁴ .

It should be noted that back in 2017, the two sides set a goal to restore the record level of trade turnover of two billion dollars, which was achieved in 2012. ¹⁶⁵The 7th meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan, held in October 2019, identified specific areas for joint work in the coming years to achieve the goal, "including supplies of passenger buses, Amkodor machinery, a wide range of agricultural equipment; implementation of joint projects in the gas vehicle sector, in particular - production of passenger vehicles, tractors, municipal and agricultural equipment, engines; expansion of the volume and range of supplies of vehicles and equipment for passenger transport, tractors, agricultural machinery, and engines. At the same time, cooperation agreements were signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Kazan Federal University.

As a result of implementing the provisions of the 4-year plan, by February 2020, Tatarstan had already: two assembly factories - Belarusian tractors and Mogilevliftmash - were in operation; four companies with Belarusian capital were in operation: OOO TIC MTZ-Tatarstan, OOO Amkodor-Bel, OOO Molodechnomebel Trading House and a representative office of Pinskdiv Holding dealer network of such Belarusian enterprises as Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Works, Mogilevliftmash, Minsk Automobile Plant, Amkodor, Borisov Plant of Automobile and Tractor Electrical Equipment; TPC MTZ-Tatarstan LLC became the official distributor of MTZ OJSC in Russia, having its own

¹⁶⁴ Minnikhanov, R. It is important to deepen cooperation of commodity producers, first of all, in the sphere of mechanical engineering and high technologies / R. Minnikhanov // Technologies and innovations in cooperation of the Union State regions as an impulse of Eurasian integration development: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewers: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2017. - C. 30.

¹⁶⁵ The 7th meeting of the working group on cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation was held in the Concern [Electronic resource], - 2019. - URL: <http://www.belneftekhim.by/press/news/ea4c42c9330d3164.html.belneftekhim.by/press/news/ea4c42c9330d3164.html>

production base, transport and logistics division, being engaged in service maintenance. Successful development of cooperation in machine building has led to the fact that "almost 60% of Tatarstan's fleet of agricultural machinery is equipped with MTZ tractors, over 60% of forage harvesters and 40% of grain harvesters - with Gomselmash equipment". The fleet of passenger vehicles in Kazan consists of more than 50% of MAZ buses and Belkommunmash trams"¹⁶⁶. And there are good prospects for cooperation in the NGV sector, where there are joint projects implemented by RariTEK together with Minsk plants - automobile, tractor and motor works.

At the 8th meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation, which was held via videoconference in November 2020, the parties noted the active development of economic ties between enterprises in the engineering and petrochemical industries, as well as in agriculture, passenger transport, ecology, healthcare science, while emphasizing that "the key area remains cooperation in the petrochemical sector, which accounts for half of Belarus' trade with Tatarstan"¹⁶⁷. As a result, the Action Plan 2021-2023 was approved, which envisages many new interesting joint projects. Already in January 2021, in the Kichketan rural settlement of the Agryz municipal district of Tatarstan, Belarusian UP

"Polymerkonstruktsiya has "successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology on water treatment"¹⁶⁸. And now the question of participation of this UE in the implementation of projects at other sites in Tatarstan is being solved. Another Russian region I would like to mention in this context is the Sakhalin Oblast which signed an action plan for 2021-2023 to implement the agreement

¹⁶⁶ Pivovar, E. Petrochemicals, industrial cooperation, transport projects - Semashko visited Tatarstan / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource] : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/neftehimija-promkooperatsija-transportnye-proekty-semashko-posetil-tatarstan-378550-2020/>

¹⁶⁷ Belarus and Tatarstan approve cooperation plan for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource] . - 2020 . - URL: <http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/53efd46968aa.html>

¹⁶⁸ The Belarusian company UP "Polimerkonstruktsiya" has successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology in the Republic of Tatarstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/29939dd56309.html.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/29939dd56309.html>

between the governments on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation in May 2021. This took place during a meeting of the working group for the development of bilateral cooperation which focused on prospects of "increasing deliveries of foodstuffs, agricultural, quarry, passenger and road construction machinery, lift equipment and other products"¹⁶⁹. It should be recalled that the cooperation agreement between the parties was signed in September 2015 at the venue of the Second Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. The main objectives set out therein were to increase mutual trade turnover, intensify business contacts, and cooperate in the social sphere - health care, education, and social protection.

Note that this Russian region is characterised by active foreign economic activity, which it conducts primarily with Asia-Pacific countries - South Korea, Japan and China. Overall, "foreign trade turnover Sakhalin Oblast in 2020 was \$12.2 million."¹⁷⁰ THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS HAS BEEN DEVELOPING ITS NICHE IN THESE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT. Nevertheless, the Republic of Belarus has developed its niche in these international partnerships since the signing of the cooperation agreement, as evidenced by concrete facts.

Thus, in 2017, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Sakhalin amounted to almost five million dollars. The Russian consumer market saw a sharp increase in the number of Belarusian meat, sausage, dairy products, textiles and knitwear, footwear and leather haberdashery. Suffice it to say that in August 2020 in the administrative centre of the Russian region - Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk - the fourteenth (!) shop of the retail network Belorusskiy Firm was opened, where products from Belarus are represented by a wide range of sausages and meat delicacies from Brest and Grodno meat processing plants,

¹⁶⁹ Belarus and the Sakhalin region have signed an action plan on cooperation for 2021-2023: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sahalinskaia-oblast-podpisali-plan-meropriatii-po-sotrudnichestvu-na-2021-2023-gody-441087-2021>

¹⁷⁰ Sakhalin Oblast Foreign Trade Results for 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=152>

dairy products from Minsk Dairy Plant, confectionery products from Kommunar, Spartak, Red food producer factories, canned products from ABC Group. "In addition to the traditional assortment, Belarusian ice cream of 10-12 titles has appeared in the product line of the shop"¹⁷¹ .

Machinery of various classes from Belarus is widely used here for agriculture, housing and communal services, road construction, and forestry. "Due to the large number of Belarusian-made machines in operation in Sakhalin Oblast, the need for a unified service centre to service them was raised. Thanks to joint efforts, in April 2017, BelMashService LLC opened a service centre to service equipment manufactured in the Republic of Belarus in the regional capital"¹⁷² .

Over the past five years, the partnership between the republic and the Russian region in the field of agriculture has developed strongly. Already "in 2016, the Belarusian side resumed potato cultivation on Sakhalin after a 30-year break, planting its seeds on the island on the first 40 hectares"¹⁷³ . Later a dairy farm for one thousand cattle was built at the Korsakov Sovkhoz using Belarusian technologies. Interestingly, this construction was divided into two stages. First there were eight hay and silage trenches with a capacity of two thousand tonnes each. In the second stage buildings and constructions of the main production, biomass processing, engineering and transport infrastructure were built. Three cowsheds and three heifer houses were erected to house animals. "When the enterprise reaches its designed capacity, it will give 7 thousand tons of milk and 200 tons of meat annually to the inhabitants of the island region. <...> The agricultural project, which has been implemented in the south of Sakhalin, has been included in the sectoral state agricultural development programme."¹⁷⁴ . An

¹⁷¹ Another "Belarusian branded" shop opened in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk [Electronic resource] . - 2020 . URL: <http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/khabarovsk/news/fe085b1056fe.html>

¹⁷² Belik, A. Our plans are to expand the range of cooperation / A. Belik // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: inform.-integration project / compiled, interviewed by: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zalessky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 323-324.

¹⁷³ Zalessky, B. The formula for multi-vectorism. Opportunities for international cooperation in the context of globalization / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2017. - C. 60..

¹⁷⁴ A 1,000-head dairy farm has opened in southern Sakhalin [Electronic resource] . URL:

agro-town with 50 one-storey three-bedroom houses of the Belarusian type was also built here. In February 2018, the first nine families of state farm workers received the keys to flats in the new buildings on Belorusskaya Street. "This is now the largest modern rural housing development in Sakhalin Oblast"¹⁷⁵.

As for other areas of cooperation, back in December 2017, the Belarusian side proposed to improve coal mining and transportation methods in Sakhalin, as these proposals "can significantly improve the infrastructure of the island's coal company and give a powerful boost to the development of the coal mining industry in the region as a whole. This is a whole new level of interaction between our parties."¹⁷⁶. And already in 2020 the island's Solntsevo coal mine "started using 14 new Belorussian mine dump trucks with the capacity of 220 tonnes"¹⁷⁷. The parties see serious potential for further development of interaction in active cooperation through the chambers of commerce and industry - in organising online negotiations, holding joint exhibitions, seminars, as well as establishing direct links between business circles and economic entities of the republic and the region. They have a result-oriented mindset.

At the April 2021 meeting of the leaders of the governments of Belarus and Russia, it was noted that "the topic of integration in the economic sphere is a priority issue on the bilateral agenda"¹⁷⁸. The trend towards the restoration of the bilateral Belarusian-Russian trade turnover, which has been taking shape since the beginning of 2021, shows that the sides are successfully developing

[https://sakhlin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=12461](https://sakhlin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=12461)

¹⁷⁵ Pivovarov, E. An agro-town based on a Belarusian project erected on Sakhalin [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/agrogorodok-po-belorusskomuhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/agrogorodok-po-belorusskomu-proektu-vozveli-na-sahalineproektu-vozveli-na-sahaline-289289-2018/>.

¹⁷⁶ Pivovarov, E. Belarus will help improve methods of coal mining and transportation in Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-usovershenstvovat-metody-dobychi-i-transportirovki-uglj-a-na-sahaline-277311-2017/>.

¹⁷⁷ Pivovarov, E. Deliveries of Belarusian heavy trucks and cooperation in the agro-industrial complex - Semashko visited Kuzbass and Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskih-bolshegruzov-i-sotrudnichestvo-vhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskih-bolshegruzov-i-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-semashko-posetil-kuzbass-i-sahalin-40491apk-semashko-posetil-kuzbass-i-sahalin-404918-2020/>.

¹⁷⁸ Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals to deepen the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high gear [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807.government.by/ru/content/9807>

integration cooperation in many areas, despite the known objective difficulties. This gives new positive impetus to the fuller realization of the Union State's potential.

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Chapter 10

\Belarus-North Caucasus: Current Issues of Interaction

Back in May 2016, the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia adopted a resolution "On the Action Plan to Create a Common Information Space of the Union State for 2016-2020", the implementation of which would allow systematising information activities in the Union State and improving the quality of topical publications, including on cooperation between regions of Belarus and Russia, which is a crucial area of bilateral relations within the Union State. After all, as it was noted at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in Mogilev in October 2018, "it is in the regions of our countries that many production, technological chains for the production of joint products begin"¹⁷⁹. Suffice it to say that the contractual and legal framework of this interaction already includes more than three hundred agreements concerning the increase in the volume of mutual supplies of goods, expansion of the distribution network, strengthening of production cooperation and establishment of assembly facilities. And today it is very important that the implementation of these joint projects be constantly in the spotlight of the central and, most importantly, the regional mass media of the two countries.

It should be noted that the leading positions in the Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation have been occupied by the Central, Ural, Volga and Northwestern Federal Districts for many years now. The North Caucasian Federal District is still noticeably behind in the development of partnership ties with the Republic of Belarus, but it certainly has considerable potential and prerequisites to

to make positive changes in this regard. After all, it "has favourable conditions for the development of the agro-industrial complex, tourism, sanatorium and health resort sector, mining and

¹⁷⁹ Speech at the plenary session of the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/vystuplenie-na-plenarnom-zasedanii-v-foruma-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-19684/>.

manufacturing sectors, as well as developed transit functions"¹⁸⁰. It is possible to realise these natural advantages of the region by actively developing foreign economic relations, given that one of the key factors in the long-term socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District, as stated in the Strategy for socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025, is integration into the Eurasian economic space, which 'will ensure an inflow of investment into the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District, provided that a favourable investment and business climate is created'¹⁸¹. In this case, the Republic of Belarus can be one of the effective partners of the entities of the North Caucasian Federal District. The analysis of publications in the Belarusian media shows that the leaders in establishing partnerships with Belarus in the North Caucasian Federal District are **Stavropol Krai, the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Dagestan**.

Thus, the agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and socio-cultural cooperation between the governments of **Stavropol Territory** and the Republic of Belarus was signed in mid-March 2017. This document markedly expanded the existing contractual and legal framework of interaction of this Russian region with the Belarusian side, once again eloquently emphasizing the conclusion that "integration with the regions of Belarus is the conceptual direction of development of external relations of the Stavropol Territory"¹⁸². After all, back in 2000 and 2002 the government of Stavropol Krai signed agreements on cooperation with Brest and Gomel regional executive committees, providing for cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural fields. An agreement on cooperation between the Stavropol Krai

¹⁸⁰ Strategy for socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025

[Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://skfo.gov.ru/district/soc/sed/.gov.ru/district/soc/sed/>

¹⁸¹ Amirova E.A. Analysis of features of socio-economic differentiation of development of the regions of the North Caucasian Federal District / E.A. Amirova // Regional problems of economic transformation. - 2014. - №9. - C. 159.

¹⁸² Vladimirov, V. Market expansion is always a benefit for entrepreneurs / V. Vladimirov // Eurasian Economic Union: regional aspect: inform.-integr. project / comp., interviewer. B. Zalesskii, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesofset, 2014. - C. 56.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was adopted in 2008. Today the products of a number of leading Belarusian industrial enterprises are widely represented in the region. These include the Minsk Tractor Plant and Minsk Automobile Plant. Belarusian food products are also popular here, which prompted the opening of a chain of shops selling meat and dairy products from Belarus in Stavropol. In turn, Stavropol enterprises mastered supplies to the Belarusian market of: agricultural raw materials and products of their primary processing - wheat, flour, sunflower and sunflower oil, sheep wool; engineering products - electricity meters and semi-trailers; chemical industry products - polymeric materials, plastics, aerosols.

All these facts show that the Stavropol Territory is one of the most promising economic partners of Belarus in Russia. Back in 2013, the trade turnover between the region and the republic increased by half compared to 2012 and amounted to 6.7 billion Russian rubles. It is true, however, that there was a certain decline thereafter. And it was only in 2016 that the volume of mutual trade reached 140 million dollars. This meant that after two years of decline, its growth dynamics exceeded 9 percent. At the same time, this fact demonstrates that the Stavropol Territory and the Republic of Belarus now have real potential for a significant increase in trade turnover and expansion of bilateral cooperation. That is why Governor of Stavropol Region V. Vladimirov's visit to Belarus in March 2017 was regarded in Minsk as a serious intention of the Russian side "to significantly increase mutual trade and launch new promising projects in the sectors where we are interesting and useful to each other"¹⁸³. Among such promising areas, the two sides believe: the development of cooperative ties in industry; effective cooperation in the agro-industrial sector; implementation of promising projects in the construction sector; intensification of cooperation in light industry; and actualization of the innovation component

¹⁸³ Talks with Vladimir Vladimirov, Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news/ru/view/peregovory-s-gubemator-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15-800/>

of the partnership.

As for industrial cooperation, back in 2013, it was noted that "more than ten enterprises with participation of Belarusian investments are registered in the territory of Stavropol Territory"¹⁸⁴. And further, to expand cooperation ties, the Belarusian side suggests "implementing joint projects of MAZ and Autocomponents Holding with enterprises of Stavropol Territory"¹⁸⁵. Especially since Stavropol Territory "wants to get back to the issue of organizing assembly production of Belarusian machinery and its service"¹⁸⁶. They are also talking about expanding deliveries of various machines from Belarus to the Russian region - passenger, municipal, cargo, and road-building machines - for the implementation of major infrastructure projects there. At the same time, "machinery may be supplied on leasing terms"¹⁸⁷. In the agro-industrial sector two trends are of great interest: supplies of modern technological equipment for the reconstruction of dairy farms with the involvement of Belarusian specialists in the implementation of projects to reconstruct and build livestock farms; supplies of specialized equipment of Minsk Tractor Plant in view of Stavropol Krai's plans to develop viticulture. In the field of innovations, Belarusian and Stavropol scientists can really cooperate in robotics and resource conservation, geoinformatics and geophysics, microbiology and biotechnology.

As for **the Chechen Republic**, it signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Belarus in June 2017 at the Fourth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. This

¹⁸⁴ Vysheslavov, V. In Perspective - joint development of innovative technologies / V. Vysheslavov // Common Economic Space: integration of regions: inform.- integr. project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 79.

¹⁸⁵ Meeting with the Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7111>

¹⁸⁶ Talks with Vladimir Vladimirov, Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15-800/

¹⁸⁷ Belarus expects to increase supplies of machinery to the Stavropol Territory and create new joint ventures - Kobayakov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-uvvelichenie-postavok-tehniki-v-stavropolskij--kraj-i-sozdanie-novyh-sp-kobjakov-237868-20-i-sozdanie-novyh-sp-kobjakov-237868-2017/>

document has seriously strengthened the contractual and legal foundation for cooperation between Minsk and Grozny in virtually all areas of partnership, which started with the agreement between this Russian region and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation signed back in July 2002.

At that time, this document was one of the first concluded by the Chechen Republic with foreign countries after the beginning of the reconstruction period. "However, due to objective reasons existing at that time, including the general socio-economic situation in the [Chechen] Republic and concerns of potential investors about possible risks in the field of investment activities, these agreements, unfortunately, were not developed further"¹⁸⁸.

But years later, when the Chechen government considerably stepped up efforts to implement all the previously signed agreements with foreign countries, the relationship with the Belarusian side began to evolve as well. New impetus to cooperation between Belarus and Chechnya was given by the understanding that this Russian region has considerable economic and resource potential, which makes it possible to form a competitive economy that is beneficial for the development of interaction with Belarusian administrative and territorial entities, business entities, and public and cultural organizations. That is why "in order to discuss issues of mutually beneficial cooperation, a delegation of the Chechen Republic headed by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic visited the Republic of Belarus for the first time on July 6, 2015"¹⁸⁹. And supplies of Belarusian household appliances, textiles, cosmetics, tyres, as well as road-building, municipal and agricultural machinery of the Amkodor holding began to be delivered to the Russian region.

However, a new stage in cooperation between the two sides was certainly

¹⁸⁸ Kadyrov, R. It is necessary to give a new impulse to cooperation with Belarus / R. Kadyrov // Belarus - Russia: cooperation of regions: inform.-integration project / co-comp. Zaleskii B.L., Korovkin E.A., Korovin M.E. Kovorovkin M. E., Minsk. - Minsk: BELTA, 2010. - C. 58.

¹⁸⁹ Umarov D., Umarov D. The most promising direction is seen in the establishment and development of cooperative ties in the production sphere / D. Umarov // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: information-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 60.

opened by the visit of the head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, to Belarus in September 2017, during which attention was focused both on the development of trade cooperation and the key topic of bilateral cooperation - industrial cooperation, which both Minsk and Grozny consider the most advanced, mutually beneficial form of cooperation, "which helps meet the needs of the regional market and also creates high-tech jobs"¹⁹⁰ . As for trade cooperation, the sides believe that the potential for its multiplication in the coming years lies in the supply of Belarusian passenger, freight, quarry, agricultural, road-building and municipal equipment to Chechnya. A concrete project in this regard could be the participation of Minsk Automobile Plant in the modernisation of the Chechen truck and bus fleet.

The first step in the development of Belarusian-Chechen manufacturing cooperation appears to be the establishment of an assembly facility in this Russian region by the Belarusian enterprise Bobruiskagromash. At least, an agreement to that effect has already been signed with the Chechen Ministry of Agriculture, and there is clarity about both the sites and the stages of the project. And this may become a kind of prologue to large-scale cooperation of the parties in the field of production cooperation, because "Belarus and Chechnya need to develop other joint projects, especially to supply equipment and spare parts to automotive industry enterprises of Chechnya,"¹⁹¹ . Among other promising areas for the development of cooperation the parties identified the following: agrarian sector - introduction of advanced technologies in production and processing of agricultural products, establishment of dairy farms, supply of modern milking halls, crop production, breeding livestock and veterinary medicine; construction and housing and utilities sector - road construction,

¹⁹⁰ Meeting with the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-glavoj-chechenskojru/view/vstrecha-s-glavoj-chechenskoj-respubliki-ramzanom-kadyrovym-respubliki-ramzanom-kadyrovym-17164/

¹⁹¹ Meeting with the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/7518.government.by/ru/content/7518>

design and construction of housing and infrastructure, supply of road construction and utility equipment, construction materials and lifts.

In other words, Minsk and Grozny have seriously embarked on filling the agreement signed in June 2017 with concrete, mutually beneficial projects, taking into account the principle voiced by the Chechen leader - "there is interest on the Chechen side to work directly, without intermediaries"¹⁹². And there is every reason to believe that the implementation of the action plan for 2018-2020, which outlines all promising areas for Belarus-Chechnya cooperation, will be another eloquent illustration of the fact that the establishment of ties between Belarus and Chechnya is a new stage in the strengthening of Belarusian-Russian relations.

As for another subject of the North Caucasus Federal District - **the Republic of Dagestan** - the Republic of Belarus signed an agreement with this Russian region on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation back in 2002. In April 2014 the agreement between the Standing Committee of the Union State and the Government of the Republic of Dagestan on cooperation in the field of trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation was added to the legal framework of this interregional interaction, based on mutual interest in maintaining and expanding the Belarusian-Russian relations, creating appropriate organizational, economic, legal and other conditions for strengthening the partnership of the regions, ensuring effective interaction, exchange of experience and information. Under the document the sides expressed their intention to promote joint programmes and events aimed at developing economic ties between the regions of Belarus and Dagestan, create conditions to expand trade and economic ties between the sides' economic entities, and cooperate in decision making concerning investment and innovation activities, including the attraction of foreign capital and advanced

¹⁹² Kadyrov, R. On the word of the President, the image of Chechnya and cooperation / R. Kadyrov // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/interview/view/o-slove-prezidenta-imidzhe-chechni-i-sotrudnichestve-kadyrov-podelilsja-vpechatlenijami-ot-vstrechi-sprezidenta-imidzhe-chechni-i-sotrudnichestve-kadyrov-podelilsja-vpechatlenijami-ot-vstrechi-s-5791/>.

foreign technologies. The Dagestani side immediately expressed its interest in supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery, because "Dagestan has a need to organize processing of agricultural products"¹⁹³.

In 2014, the foreign trade turnover between Belarus and Dagestan came close to USD 14 million, with the share of Belarusian export reaching about USD 13 million, based on "mineral products, metal products, timber, pulp and paper products, machinery, equipment and vehicles, chemical industry products, rubber, textiles, textile products and footwear, raw hides, fur products, food products and agricultural raw materials"¹⁹⁴. At the "Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia" event in Makhachkala in June 2014, the parties agreed, as part of the implementation of joint investment projects in Dagestan, to study "the issue of introducing Belarusian technologies for growing agricultural products, milk processing technologies, cheese production, raising broiler meat and using new technologies in egg production in the republic"¹⁹⁵. In September 2014, the parties agreed to establish and implement joint projects aimed at building rural tourism infrastructure. In particular, the Treaty of Intent was then signed by the Dagestan Tourism Committee and the Belarusian public association Recreation in the Countryside. This document "implies interaction between the parties in the sphere of rural tourism and cultural cooperation, attracting tourists, and promoting the brand of Dagestan as a tourist territory"¹⁹⁶. In March 2015, Minsk Tractor Works opened its machinery dealer centre in Dagestan - at the base of Dagselmash in Buynaksky District, where at the first

¹⁹³ Signed Cooperation Agreement with the Standing Committee of the Russia-Belarus Union State [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: https://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/https://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/podpisano_soglasenie_o_sotrudnichestve_s_postoy The agreement on cooperation with the Standing committee of the union state of russia and belorussia was signed [Electronic resource].

¹⁹⁴ Abdulatipov, R. Regional cooperation is strategically necessary in the conditions of sanction policy of the West / R. Abdulatipov // Interaction of regions: Union State - locomotive of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewing: B. Zalessky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 22.

¹⁹⁵ Dagestan and Belarus agree on business cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://http://www.dag.aif.ru/society/details/1186729.dag.aif.ru/society/details/1186729>

¹⁹⁶ Belarusians will teach Dagestanis to develop rural tourism [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.interfax.by/news/belarus/1167841.by/news/belarus/1167841>

stage "tractors will be restored and new machinery will be sold in the future"¹⁹⁷ . To this end, they have set about preparing an exhibition area for Belarusian tractors, as well as training specialists, providing them with the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills for maintenance and repair of machinery at the training centre of the Minsk Tractor Works. Also in 2015, a highlight of interregional cooperation was a fair of Belarusian producers in Dagestan, which featured products from the agricultural sector and light industry: sweets, honey of different varieties, sausage products, clothing, footwear, textiles, and much more. As a result, the Dagestan side estimated that in 2017 it had "the largest trade transactions with Azerbaijan - \$47.93 million, Iran - \$34.54 million, China - \$17.81 million, Belarus - \$16.67 million."¹⁹⁸ .

Let us sum up. All of these facts clearly demonstrate how wide the thematic range of publications in the media of both countries is already becoming on the organization of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and Stavropol, Chechnya and Dagestan. The most important task for the Belarusian, Stavropol, Chechen and Dagestani media today is to ensure an adequate media articulation of this interregional cooperation, where all joint projects should be fully reflected in the media space to ensure the transition of union integration into a qualitatively new state - total interaction at all levels.

¹⁹⁷ MTZ has opened a dealership in Dagestan [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mtz-otkryl-dilerskij-tsentr-vhttps://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mtz-otkryl-dilerskij-tsentr-v-dagestane-i-0000020779.html>

¹⁹⁸ On the results of foreign trade of the Republic of Dagestan for 2017. [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: https://makhachkala.mid.ru/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnicestvo/-/asset_publisher/ZPNsLt1FS6Qn/content/ob-itogah-vnesnei-torgovli-respubliki-dagestan-za-2017-g-?initRedirect=false

Belarus-Kazakhstan: topical media issues in bilateral interaction

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of press and information back in 2000. In this document, the parties agreed to support and encourage partnerships between media editorial offices and news agencies in order to promote "the formation of a single or common information space and the strengthening of friendly relations between the two brotherly - Belarusian and Kazakh - peoples"¹⁹⁹. In April 2014, the legal framework of Belarusian-Kazakh relations in the media sphere was supplemented by another document - an agreement between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Kazinform Agency, which "implies cooperation in the exchange of information, photo materials and other media content, in addition, the parties agreed on internships for journalists"²⁰⁰. And in November 2017, a new version of the intergovernmental agreement was already adopted, with the preamble stating that the parties attach "particular importance to enhancing media cooperation between the two states"²⁰¹. And this reflects the current stage of development of the information spaces of Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as laying down a serious legal foundation for expanding interaction between the agencies and organisations of the two countries towards a mutual presence in each other's media space.

The emergence of the new media cooperation agreement is significant because it took place in the year of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Kazakh diplomatic relations - in November 2017, when the presidents of

¹⁹⁹ Zalessky, B.L. Journalism of the global community. Theory and practice / B.L. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2012. - C. 62.

²⁰⁰ BelTA and Kazinform agree on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://bsj.by/2014/04/belta-i-kazinform-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve/.by/2014/04/belta-i-kazinform-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve/>

²⁰¹ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://egov.kz/wps/portal!/ut/p/b0/04/Sj9CTykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfljc7PyChyKtUvKTS3NT80_r0WUj9KNGPM8U_cgAQzMEDEAzMQBJ5STmpZcmpqfqRxaV6hfk5lqUOyoqAgAahz7G/#z6

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 with a programme of specific activities for its implementation for the same period. "This programme document is designed to consolidate the promising relations between the two countries and open up new opportunities in the development of comprehensive cooperation"²⁰², as the parties have come to the conclusion that the base of bilateral partnerships established since 1992 allows Minsk and Astana today to move to a new technological level of interaction with a focus on innovation and high technology. All the more so since the trade turnover between the countries increased by almost 65 percent at once to about \$500 million in the first three quarters of 2017. However, according to the heads of state, even this positive trend does not yet match the potential for integration cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan. This is why the governments of both countries have set an ambitious task - to increase the volume of mutual trade to one billion dollars within the next two-three years through the implementation of promising projects in various fields: petrochemistry, agriculture, energy, transport, logistics and new technologies. Meanwhile, industrial cooperation will remain the main driver of bilateral economic cooperation, with Belarus

stated its readiness to increase the level of localisation of jointly produced products in Kazakhstan, which would create additional jobs there. By the way, "today there are 260 Belarusian enterprises operating in Kazakhstan"²⁰³. As a matter of fact, this document determines the focus of the activities of Belarusian and Kazakhstani media in the coverage of the bilateral cooperation, which is expected to grow in the next few years.

Specific solutions to the task of increasing Belarus-Kazakhstan mutual trade

²⁰² Official talks with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://http://president.gov.by/ru/news.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnye-peregovory-s-prezidentom-kazaxstana-nursultanom-nazarbaevvm-17546/.

²⁰³ Relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan have reached a high strategic level - Nazarbayev [electronic resource]. -2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnosheniya-belarusi-i-kazahstana-vyshli-na-vysokij-strategicheskij-uroven-nazarbaev-278130-2017/>

were thoroughly discussed by the parties at the largest business forum in the history of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan, held in Minsk in November 2017, which was attended by about 400 representatives of the business community of the two countries, while 55 Belarusian companies presented over 100 cutting-edge developments, each of which deserves attention of the media sector representatives at the parallel exhibition.

There are great prospects for increasing Belarusian supplies to Kazakhstan, for example, in the wood processing industry. Suffice it to say that between January and September 2017, enterprises of the Belarusian concern Bellesbumprom increased their exports to the Kazakhstani market by 42.3 percent, or up to \$18.3 million. It is noteworthy that "the Concern's enterprises supply almost all types of woodworking products to Kazakhstan, primarily furniture, which accounts for more than 60 percent of total exports. The second position in terms of sales volume is occupied by

Particleboards"²⁰⁴ And then there are wood-fibre boards, plywood, lumber, doors, windows, wallpaper, paper, cardboard, matches. And practically each of these export positions in the Kazakhstani market shows a systematic growth in volumes.

Another solid export item from Belarus to Kazakhstan is trucks and agricultural machinery. Thus, in the framework of the above-mentioned Belarus-Kazakhstan business forum, the Belarusian Automobile Plant and AstanaBelAZService LLP signed an agreement to supply 25 dump trucks worth nearly USD 25 million to this Central Asian country. In addition, in accordance with the signed memorandum between Minsk Automobile Plant and Hyundai Trans Auto, 100 sets of dump trucks and utility vehicles are to be delivered to Kazakhstan in 2018. Finally, in 2018, Minsk Tractor Plant will ship two thousand vehicles to Belarusian Tractor Trading House LLP, and Gomselmash will supply 500

²⁰⁴ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports to Kazakhstan by 42.3% in January-September [Electronic resource]. -2017 . - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-janvare-sentjabre- uvelichili-eksport-v-kazahstan-na-423 -278065-2017/>

combine harvester sets to Kazakhstan's AgromashHolding. Another important fact is that Gomel companies granted their partners, Agromashholding JSC, exclusive dealer rights to sell their entire product line in Kazakhstan, which will allow them to expand the range of harvesters they are exporting. In particular, the plan is to supply "the southern part of Kazakhstan with equipment for rice harvesting"²⁰⁵. Gomselmash has such a machine, which is now being prepared for serial production.

Belarus and Kazakhstan also have ambitious plans for cooperation in the development of digital transport corridors to Western and Northern Europe, which is very important given the geographical location of both countries on the Silk Road Economic Belt. The strategic objective here is to double container transit volumes in order to transport "1 million containers a year by 2020 and 2 million by 2025"²⁰⁶. It is important that on average a container from Central Asia reaches Western Europe within two weeks. The parties intend to meet this challenge through coordinated work with their Chinese and Russian counterparts. This means that the topic of creating digital transport corridors becomes relevant not only for international journalists in Belarus and Kazakhstan, but also for their colleagues in Russia and China for many years to come.

The Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026, signed between Belarus and Kazakhstan in November 2017, and aimed at "implementing a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations , involving mutual capital penetration with a focus on innovation and high technology"²⁰⁷, as noted

²⁰⁵ Dylenok, Y. Agromashholding JSC became an exclusive dealer of Gomselmash in Kazakhstan / Y. Dylenok // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekskljuzivnym-dilerom-gomselmasha-v-kazahstane-stalohttp://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekskljuzivnym-dilerom-gomselmasha-v-kazahstane-stalo-ao-agromashholding-27ao-agromashholding-278165-2017/>.

²⁰⁶ Dylenok, Y. Belarus and Kazakhstan intensify cooperation in the development of digital transport corridors / Y. Dylenok // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-v-vhttp://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-v-razviti-tsifrovyyh-transportnyh-koridorov-27razviti-tsifrovyyh-transportnyh-koridorov-278213-2017/>.

²⁰⁷ Review of the Foreign Policy Outcomes of the Republic of Belarus and Activities of the Ministry of

above, implies that projects that create joint products with high added value and provide employment will continue to be the driving force behind the strategic Belarusian-Kazakhstani partnership. It should be reminded that as of the end of 2017, there were eight joint ventures operating in Kazakhstan

assembly plants where "assembly of quarry, mining, special municipal and fire-fighting equipment, tractors, harvesters, engines, balers, medical equipment

equipment"²⁰⁸. At the outset, we should note that the specific experiences of each of them can and should remain in the focus of the media of the two countries, both at central and regional levels. This, unfortunately, has not yet been observed. There is, however, much to tell our readers, viewers and listeners.

Thus, one of the obvious Belarusian leaders in the market of Kazakhstan is Minsk Automobile Plant, which in 2010 opened Trade House MAZ - Kazakhstan LLP in Astana and by now has established its distribution network in this country, which includes nine dealers, as well as a network of 12 authorized service stations for Belarusian vehicles. The logical continuation of this cooperation was the opening in June 2017 of production of heavy-duty dump trucks MAZ 5516H5 and MAZ 6501H9 "with a load capacity of 20 tons at the assembly plant of Hyundai Trans Auto, a member of Astana Motors Group, in Almaty. A full welding, assembly and painting cycle is carried out"²⁰⁹.

The following example. Even earlier - in 2007 - cooperation of Belarusian Gomselmash OJSC and Kazakhstan's AgromashHolding JSC started. For ten

Foreign Affairs in 2017 [Electronic resource]. - 2018.

- URL:

<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a8a5169b6e487b3b.html>

²⁰⁸ Matveeva, N. Relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan have become allied and strategic - Bulegenov / N. Matveeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnosheniya-belarusi-i-kazahstana-priobremeniya-uznicheskij-i-strategicheskij-harakter-bulegenov-266564-2017/>

²⁰⁹ Production of MAZ vehicles was launched in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2017.

- URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-kazahstane-zapuscheno-proizvodstvo-avtotekhniki-maz-256106-2017/>

years the joint Belarusian-Kazakhstani assembly plant based in Kostanay on the base of AgshromashHolding managed to assemble more than three thousand grain harvesters. And that's assuming that the capacity of the Kazakhstani market for this equipment is one thousand new machines a year. In 2018, the joint venture will start producing two more new models of agricultural machinery. We are talking in this case about the KZS-575 and KZS-10 models. "These machines will expand the range of combine harvesters produced in Kostanay, which will allow for a more flexible response to the needs of the local market"²¹⁰.

Another good example of the development of bilateral mutually beneficial Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation

The first phase of the Kazakhstan-Belarus Industrial and Technological Park for Agricultural and Municipal Machinery project was commissioned in 2016. The implementation of this major investment project began back in 2012, with the aim of setting up in Kokshetau, Akmola Region, under licences from a number of Belarusian factories, "a complete production line for the assembly of trailers, press pickers, attachments, rollers and forage harvesters, excavators, loaders of various sizes and modifications"²¹¹. The first phase of the project is almost 10,000 square metres of space. "Once the second stage is put into operation and the enterprise is fully loaded, about 230 new jobs will be created"²¹². The parties are confident that successful implementation of this project will allow to create a powerful cluster of

²¹⁰ Sidorchik, V. Two new models of grain harvesters will be mastered at the Belarusian-Kazakh joint venture in 2018 / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<http://www.belta.by/newscompany/view/dve-novye-modeli-zemouborochnyh-kombajnovhttp://www.belta.by/newscompany/view/dve-novye-modeli-zemouborochnyh-kombajnov-osvojat-na-belorussko-kazhstanskom-sp-v-2018-goduosvojat-na-belorussko-kazhstanskom-sp-v-2018-godu-278818-2017/>.

²¹¹ . How Kazakhstan's economy is being lifted in the field [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

https://forbes.kz/process/economy/kak_v_polevyih_usloviyah_podnimayut_ekonomiku_kazhst_ana/

²¹² Akashin, V. Minsk - Kokshetau: a mutually beneficial project / V. Akashin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://apgazeta.kz/2016/10/01/minsk-kokshetau-vzaimovyygodnyjhttp://apgazeta.kz/2016/10/01/minsk-kokshetau-vzaimovyygodnyj-proektproekt/>.

Belarusian-Kazakh machine building in Kokshetau, and will also serve as a good example for dissemination of this positive experience of industrial cooperation in other areas of cooperation. In particular, "there are plans to create similar parks for the production of passenger buses, quarry and mining equipment, and road-building machinery"²¹³. The implementation of these plans is another topical area of publications in the Belarusian and Kazakhstani press.

In total, several dozens of joint scientific and technical projects are planned for the next few years, with extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations and scientific developments. In particular, a project "to create a joint production of unmanned aerial vehicles" is planned²¹⁴ with the organization of their production in Kazakhstan. Joint cooperation projects in the oil sector, including geological exploration, well operation, introduction of various methods of production enhancement and oil recovery enhancement, which were discussed at the meeting between the heads of the governments of the two countries, A. Kobyakov and B. Sagintayev in August 2017, may also become new areas for successful work of Belarusian companies with Kazakh partners. Sagintayev in August 2017 in Astana. In total, there are six joint ventures in Kazakhstan today that are still "in the active phase of formation"²¹⁵, which shows a very high willingness of the parties to continue actively seeking new forms of industrial cooperation. In this case, much will depend on the ability of the two countries' regions to realize the cooperation potential inherent in them. Accordingly, the role of the regional press of the two countries in media support of the implementation of these cooperative prospects is increasing manifold.

It should be recalled that in 2016, trade turnover between Belarus and

²¹³ Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Kazakhstan Anatoly Nichkasov to the Kazakh news agency Khabar (11 June 2014)
[Electronic resource]. - URL:
<http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d8d30fc5ce4d68be.html>

²¹⁴ Belarus and Kazakhstan outline project to set up joint drone production [Electronic resource]. -2017 .- URL:
<http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-namechajut-proekt-po-sozdaniju-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-bespilotnikov-278212-2017/>

²¹⁵ Bilateral trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:
http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/relations/trade_economiceconomic/

whole 2016 the volume of mutual trade of Gomel and Pavlodar residents was marked at the level of two and a half million dollars, only "in January-February 2017 the trade turnover between the regions was \$1.4 million (growth rate - 393.8%), including export - \$0.9 million (256.1%). Main export items: condensed milk and cream, railway track equipment, metalware, tableware and kitchenware made of porcelain. Imported from Pavlodar region ferrosilicon²¹⁸ for the needs of the Belarusian Steel Works.

The interregional meeting in Gomel showed that the parties intend to significantly expand the framework of interregional cooperation. For instance, Pavlodar residents were quite interested in the Belarusian experience in the improvement of settlements, including small towns. In this connection, the Kazakh party even suggested inviting Gomel architects and public utilities services workers to Pavlodar so that they could work there for some time, passing on their experience. Another promising area for cooperation is the purchase of Gomselmash agricultural machinery: "We are talking about a KZS-5 combine designed to work on small fields, primarily in farms"²¹⁹. These promising areas of cooperation between the Belarusian and Kazakh regions can be complemented by the planned purchase of young cattle in Gomel Oblast to develop dairy farming in Kazakhstan and expansion of supplies of Belarusian furniture there. Interaction between free economic zones located on the territory of the regions, the agreement on which was signed in Gomel as part of an interregional meeting, can also be very productive. The fact is that the SEZ of the Pavlodar oblast invites interested partners to participate in projects on joint use of subsurface resources on its territory. In particular, "an aluminium cluster is being created in this Kazakhstani region with the involvement of large

²¹⁸ Sidorchik, V. Delegation of Pavlodar Region of Kazakhstan to visit Gomel Region on 19-20 April / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsija-pavlodarskoj-oblasti-kazahstana-posetithttp://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsija-pavlodarskoj-oblasti-kazahstana-posetit-gomelskij-region--region-19-20-aprelja-24341-20-aprelja-243412-2017/>.

²¹⁹ Sidorchik, V. The head of the Pavlodar region was interested in the Belarusian experience of urban improvement / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/glavu-pavlodarskoj-oblasti-zainteresoval-belorusskij-opythttp://www.belta.by/regions/view/glavu-pavlodarskoj-oblasti-zainteresoval-belorusskij-opyt-blagoustrojstva-gorodov-243790-20stva-gorodov-243790-2017/>.

companies from Germany, Poland and Turkey"²²⁰ , and Belarusian representatives of this market segment could be involved.

It is important to note that the interests of the Pavlodar region to develop partnerships in Belarus are not limited to the Gomel region. Thus, in the Minsk Region, the Kazakhstani side showed great interest in cooperation in the construction of dairy and cattle complexes. When handing a package of standard projects of agricultural facilities to the citizens of Pavlodar, the representatives of the Belarusian capital expressed their readiness not only to consult them on this subject, but also to construct milk farms on mutually beneficial terms. Ekibastuz, located in the Pavlodar region, and Partizan district of Minsk, which signed an agreement in April 2017 that envisages "expansion of trade and economic cooperation, assistance in establishing contacts between business entities, holding exhibitions, fairs, business forums, as well as development of cooperation in education, culture, sports and tourism"²²¹ , intend to contribute to expansion of ties between regions of the two countries in the near future.

The urgent issue of intensification of cooperation with the regions of Kazakhstan is relevant for the Mogilev region, which has signed "agreements on cooperation with the East Kazakhstan (2009) and South Kazakhstan (2003) regions"²²² . Since then, a number of Mogilev region enterprises have become exporters of their products to the Kazakh market: Belshina OJSC, Mogotex

OJSC , Bobruisk

The following companies have been established: Mogilev Machine-Building

²²⁰ Pavlodar and Minsk regions show mutual interest in developing cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/pavlodarskaja-i-mjnskaja-oblasti-projavljajut-vzaimnyjhttp://www.belta.by/regions/view/pavlodarskaja-i-mjnskaja-oblasti-projavljajut-vzaimnyj-interes-k-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-selskominteres-k-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-selskom-243719-2017/>.

²²¹ The Partizan district of Minsk has signed a cooperation agreement with the Kazakh city of Ekibastuz [Electronic resource]. -2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/partizanskij-rajon-minska-podpisal-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kazahstanskim-gorodom-ekibastuzom-243437-2017/>

²²² Tkacheva, O. Kazakhstan is interested in intensifying inter-regional cooperation with the Mogilev Region / O. Tkacheva // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/kazahstan-zainteresovan-v-aktivizatsii-mezhregionalnogohttp://www.belta.by/regions/view/kazahstan-zainteresovan-v-aktivizatsii-mezhregionalnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-sotrudnichestva-s-mo-gilevskoj--oblastj-juju-31160-2013>

Plant, Mogilev Strommashina Plant, Osipovich Dairy Plant, Bykhovmoloko, Legpromdevelopment, Jockey Plastic, Stl-Extrusion, and Babushkina krynka. Almost all of them are ready only to increase their supplies to Kazakhstan regions. Representatives of the international segment of the Mogilev Oblast media, who have creative contacts with their Kazakh colleagues, could well help them in advertising and media promotion of export products.

Back in 2014, the Akmola and Grodno regions were about to establish close partnerships, signing a memorandum on cooperation in agriculture at the time and noting the great potential for cooperation "in terms of investment, trade in goods and services"²²³. Examples of such intentions could be continued. The problem is that they are not always adequately reflected in the media sphere. This then has the effect of decreasing the interest of partners and the continuation of cooperation in general. To prevent this from happening, Minsk and Astana have presumably updated the agreement on cooperation in the field of mass media, which was adopted back in 2000.

²²³ Stasiukevich, E. Akmola Oblast of Kazakhstan is interested in adopting the agricultural experience of Grodno Oblast / E. Stasiukevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/akmolinskaja-oblast-kazahstanahhttp://www.belta.by/regions/view/akmolinskaja-oblast-kazahstana-zainteresovana-zainteresovana-perenj-at-at-selskohozi-aj-stvennyj-opyt-opyt-grodnenskoj-oblasti-oblasti-38047-2014>

Belarus-Kazakhstan: partnership priority - agriculture

The results of 2020 show that in the relationship between Belarus and Kazakhstan, the key area of cooperation has been the interaction of agro-industrial complexes, the implementation of joint projects in agriculture and the further development of joint projects in the field of agricultural engineering. This is largely due to the fact that, even in the face of constraints associated with the spread of coronavirus infection, the agro-industrial complex of both countries continued to grow in 2020. This is evidenced by data from the Eurasian Economic Commission that "agricultural production in the territory of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states increased by 2.3% in 2020 to 114.3 billion US dollars. The highest production growth among the EAEU countries was recorded in Kazakhstan (by 5.6%) and Belarus (by 4.9%)." ²²⁴.

Positive trends in the growth of interaction between the two countries in the agro-industrial sector were also recorded at the second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Kazakh working group on the development of promising areas for bilateral cooperation in agriculture, which was held in Minsk in February 2021. The meeting focused on the issues of trade in foodstuffs, crop and livestock production, veterinary medicine, breeding and selection, taking into account that "in 2020 the trade turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs between Belarus and Kazakhstan increased by 1.2 times by 2019 and reached \$307.2 million. Export was equal to \$289.9 million (more than 20% growth)" ²²⁵. The two sides noted the serious potential for further stable growth of trade turnover

²²⁴ On the meeting between the Belarusian Ambassador and the Kazakh Minister of Agriculture [Electronic resource] . URL:

<http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c66dcb28873a0b75.html>

²²⁵²²⁵ Belarusian agricultural exports to Kazakhstan increased by more than 20% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoi-selhozproduktsii-v-kazahstan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-nabelorusskoi-selhozproduktsii-v-kazahstan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-na-20-430100-2021>

and the consolidation of positive trends in mutual trade.

On the Belarusian side, these prospects are seen in the supply of equipment for the construction of dairy farms, introduction of new technologies, expansion of procurement of agricultural equipment, and retraining of personnel for the agro-industrial complex. The Kazakh side is particularly interested in Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries, as well as other areas of agricultural production. The nature of this interest lies in the fact that "the coronavirus has shown how much demand there is for all agricultural products now. New niches are opening up"²²⁶.

In particular, the parties are pinning great hopes on the continuation of cooperation between Belarus's Gomselmash and Kazakhstan's largest manufacturer of agricultural machinery AgromashHolding KZ, which increased its output by 1.7 times in 2020. The joint assembly of combine harvesters by these companies on Kazakh soil began back in 2007. "In 2019, the organisation produced 429 harvesters and tractors, and in 2020, 730 units of machinery."²²⁷. This includes the first ESSIL KZS-790 combine harvester, which has already been tested in the Karaganda region and has shown good results. The new machine has increased engine power and cleaning area, and threshing is done by a combination of drum and rotor. In 2021 we plan to start serial production of this model. In addition, the production of self-propelled mowers will also increase, which is explained by the growing demand for them among farmers in Kazakhstan. We would also remind you that more than 70 machine sets of the KZS-10 MAX model were sent from Gomel to Kazakhstan back in the summer of 2020. "The innovations introduced on this model of combine harvester, relating mainly to more comfortable work of machine operators, were liked by the agrarians of Kazakhstan. This prompted them to order another 30 such

²²⁶ Kazakhstan is interested in Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries [Electronic resource]. -2021 .-URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kazahstan-zamteresovan-v-belorusskom-opyte-razvitiia-molochnoj-i-saharnoj-otraslej -430102-2021>

²²⁷ "Gomselmash and AgromashHolding KZ will expand the range of agricultural machinery in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-i-agromashholding-kz-rasshirj-at-linej-ku-agrotehniki-v-2021-godu-424825 -2021/>

harvesters"²²⁸ . And in the second half of December 2020, this additional batch of 30 sets of machines was shipped to the Kazakhstani partners.

Among the events that should positively affect the development of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in agriculture in 2021, let us mention a few more. First, an interesting result could be brought by the idea discussed at the November 2020 meeting of the Belarus-Kazakhstan Business Council, which was attended by representatives of over 160 enterprises of the two countries. Given the fact that one of the most important issues in the development of relations between the two former Soviet republics is the holding of exhibitions, "Belarus and Kazakhstan are considering the possibility of holding an agricultural road show Belagro in Kazakhstan"²²⁹ . This could be another concrete step towards intensifying bilateral cooperation and increasing mutual trade turnover. Second, back in November 2020, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) offered Kazakhstani companies to buy Belarusian meat and dairy products and sugar on the exchange trades. At the same time, BUTB could help Kazakh companies sell their products on the Belarusian market. Following up on this proposal, in January 2021, the BUOTB agreed to intensify cooperation in electronic trade with the Astana Universal Commodity Exchange, which "will make it possible to form a unified database with commercial offers of Belarusian and Kazakh companies and facilitate the growth of mutual trade"²³⁰ .

²²⁸ "Gomselmash has shipped 30 more KZS-10 MAX machine sets to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-dopolnitelno-otgruzil-v-kazahstan-30-mashinokomplektov-kzs-10-max-421382-2020/>

²²⁹ Utyupin: the possibility of holding the Belagro exhibition in Kazakhstan is being considered [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/utiupin-rassmatrivaetsja-vozmozhnost-provedenija-vystavki-belagro-v-kazahstane-417045-2020/>.

²³⁰ BUTB and Kazakhstan's Astana Exchange intend to develop cooperation in the area of electronic trade [Electronic resource]:
<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kazahstanskaja-birzha-astana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-elektronnoj-torgovli-425206-2021>

Belarus-Kazakhstan: Aiming at trade and production cooperation

At the end of June 2021, a Belarusian government delegation led by Prime Minister R. Golovchenko visited Kazakhstan, where the two sides made serious progress in terms of the development of bilateral trade and economic relations, which are the foundation of Belarusian-Kazakhstani engagement. The visit took place against the backdrop of a very positive trend in mutual trade between the two countries. Suffice it to say that "in 2020, the trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan amounted to \$847.9 million. The main Belarusian export items were tractors, combines, beef, milk, cream, sugar, cheese, cottage cheese, furniture and medicines"²³¹. The figures also speak for themselves. Fifty-four companies with Kazakhstani capital, including 13 joint ventures and 36 foreign ones, are operating on the Belarusian soil today. And 366 companies with Belarusian participation are operating in Kazakhstan. In addition, there are enterprises with Belarusian technologies operating in different regions of the country at ten production sites. And now the parties are focused on increasing the localization of machinery produced there - the same tractors and cars, so that in 2021 "to reach new figures in mutual trade - for goods and services totaling more than \$1 billion a year"²³².

The contracts signed between the economic entities of the two countries at the end of June 2021 should help achieve this goal. In particular, Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 590 vehicles worth ten million dollars to Kazakhstan. "Another contract was signed between MAZ and Hyundai Trans Auto LLP for the supply of MAZ trailers for \$1.3 million. Also, BELAZ and ASTANABELAZSERVICE LLP signed a contract for the supply of BELAZ

²³¹ Ruslan Golovchenko visited major enterprises in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/roman-golovchenko-posetil-krupnye-predpriyatiya-kazakhstana-447818-2021/>

²³² Belarus has agreed with Kazakhstan on oil deliveries [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-dogovorilas-s-kazakhstanom-o-postavkah-nefti-447959-2021/>

machinery for \$1.2 million"²³³ . In the same list of Belarusian exporters is Bobruiskagromash, a company that has been working closely in the Kazakh market for the past five years, where it has an assembly facility for trailers, balers and mowers. In 2020, it increased its exports of agricultural machinery to that country by one and a half times. In 2021, the results promise to be no worse. At least, that is what the signed one million dollar contract with Bobruiskagromash's distribution network in Kazakhstan promises. An agreement to develop cooperation in 2021-2022 was also signed by Gomselmash and AgromashHolding KZ JSC, which is the only industrial enterprise in this country that produces a wide range of combine harvesters, tractors and additional products and is the exclusive distributor of Gomel's products in Kazakhstan.

But the Minsk tractor plant, which already has three assembly plants and its own trading house in Kazakhstan, is perhaps the most prominent in terms of the development of production cooperation with Kazakhstani partners, and plans to develop another assembly plant in this Central Asian country - with an investment of \$50 million - at the Composite Group Kazakhstan facility in Kostanai. Now the assembly line here is calculated on release of 1200 tractors "Belarus". But plans on development of a platform, creation of new workplaces, increase in quantity of the carried out technological operations directed on growth of localization of manufacture are already generated. In particular, "in the first stage, a workshop for production of cabins will be constructed together with our Kazakh partners. The next stage is the construction of another 25,000 square metre building to assemble engines and radiators of all types. It is also planned to produce a new product - diesel pumps"²³⁴ . It is quite possible that the

²³³ Belarus increases supplies of equipment to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-tehniki-v-kazahstanhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-tehniki-v-kazahstan-447970-2021/>.

²³⁴ Belarus and Kazakhstan industrial enterprises intend to sign major contracts [Electronic resource] URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prompredpriyatija-belarusi-i-kazahstana-namerenyi-podpisat-krupnye-kontrakty-447828-2021/>

enterprise will become an important element of the Belarusian industrial centre being created in the industrial zone of Kostanay. "It will be a multidisciplinary structure that will combine not only production facilities, but also scientific and technical activities and training of specialists"²³⁵. And there is every reason to believe that such a centre could become the core of innovative development.

Other areas of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation that should receive accelerated development in the near future include agriculture and construction. For Belarusian agrarians, the market of that Central Asian country is important because it ranks second after Russia in terms of food supplies from Belarus. By the end of 2021, the Belarusian side plans to "reach 120% of our exports to Kazakhstan as compared to the previous year: in 2020 it was over \$300 million."²³⁶. In addition, the two sides plan to implement a major joint agricultural project related to milk production. To do this, the Kazakh partners were given a project of a Belarusian farm so that they can then expand this area throughout the country. As for the construction sector, the Belarusian side plans to double its exports. This applies to the supply of construction materials, as well as possible joint investment projects. In particular, we are talking about the construction of cattle farms for 2,400 heads, the expansion of exports of sheet glass and ceramic tiles. "In order to systematize these supplies, a trading house is being set up that will include Keramin, Berezasstroyaterialy, Belarusian Glass Company"²³⁷. All these facts testify to the fact that trade and economic relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan, even under the current difficult conditions, are capable of making a serious addition in the spheres of mutual interest.

²³⁵ Golovchenko: trade and economic relations are the foundation of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. -

URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-fundament-belorussko-kazahstanskogo-sotrudnichestva-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnosheniya-447956-2021/>

²³⁶ Brylo: Belarusian food exports to Kazakhstan increase every year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brylo-eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-kazahstan-kazhdyj-god-uvelichivaetsja-a-447921-2021/>

²³⁷ Belarus plans to double exports of construction materials to Kazakhstan - Parkhamovich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-udvoit-eksport-strojmaterialelov-v-kazahstan-parhamovich-447920-2021/>

Belarus-Uzbekistan: billion-dollar target

In June 2019, Minsk hosted the seventh meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission for bilateral cooperation, during which the parties discussed priority areas for cooperation, which include the agro-industrial complex, machine-building, food and pharmaceutical industries, and light industry, paying special attention to **industrial cooperation**. The fact is that back in September 2018, during the talks between Presidents Lukashenka and Merzиеv, it was noted that "the countries have the potential to increase trade turnover up to \$1 billion"²³⁸. The objective is expected to be achieved within three to four years, updating all possible areas of cooperation. But the priority area of cooperation "should be the expansion of industrial cooperation in mechanical engineering, agro-industrial complex, transport and pharmaceutical industries, and the sphere of information technologies"²³⁹. A little later, in November 2018, it was announced at the level of the two countries' heads of government that the parties would "work on the establishment of joint productions of milk, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, mini-tractors and attachments, as well as bicycles, and a joint transport and logistics enterprise"²⁴⁰.

By the time the road map for the development of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was signed, three assembly factories of Belarusian machinery were already operating on Uzbek soil. In particular, the joint venture Amkodor-Agrotechmash produces road-building machines. "UzBelAgroMash produces

²³⁸ Matiyevsky, M. Lukashenko and Merzиеv believe it is possible to raise the level of trade turnover to \$1 billion / M. Matiyevsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-mirzиеv-schitajut-vozmozhnym-podnjathttps://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-mirzиеv-schitajut-vozmozhnym-podnjat-uroven-tovarooborota-do-uroven-tovarooborota-do-1 -mlrd-3-mlrd-317697-.2018/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent

²³⁹ Talks with Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Merzиеv [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom- uzbekistana-shavkatom-mirzиеvym-19489>

²⁴⁰ Signing of the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/8364.government.by/ru/content/8364>

the line of machines from Bobruiskagromash: these are tractor trailers, fodder mixers, mowers. In addition, the Tashkent Plant of Agricultural Machinery assembles MTZ tractors. Cooperation between the enterprises was launched in 2016".²⁴¹ . As for Minsk Tractor Plant, in September 2018, at the Belarus-Uzbekistan business forum in Tashkent, the company's management announced plans to open another assembly facility in Uzbekistan - this time for crawler and garden machinery. "The new enterprise, which has been agreed to be located in Karakalpakstan, will produce about 200 agricultural machines a year."²⁴² .

Gomselmash Holding also considers opportunities to establish joint machinery assembly facilities in Uzbekistan, whose specialists held negotiations in February 2019 "with representatives of the Tashkent Region Khokimiyat, the management of Uzagrotekhsanoatholding JSC, Technolog JSC, visited the dealer centre of SN INVEST LLC"²⁴³ . Interesting prospects for the development of industrial cooperation with Uzbek partners are opening up today for other business entities of Gomel region. These include the Gomel Oblast Agricultural Experimental Station, the Spartak Confectionery Factory and Svetlogorsk Khimvolokno, whose products are in high demand in this Central Asian country. For this reason, "Uzbek investors are ready to invest their capital to develop the enterprise"²⁴⁴ .

²⁴¹ Matievsky, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, engineering and agribusiness / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apksovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-i-apk-317534-2018/>.

²⁴² MTZ to open assembly production of track and garden machinery in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-otkroethttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-otkroet-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-gusenichnoj-i-sadovoj-tehniki-v-uzbekistanesborochnoe-proizvodstvo-gusenichnoj-i-sadovoj-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-318069-2018/>.

²⁴³ "Gomselmash plans to establish joint assembly facilities in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/gomelmash-planiruethttps://belta.by/economics/view/gomelmash-planiruet-sozdat-sovmestnye-sborochnye-proizvodstva-v-uzbekistane-338356-20sozdat-sovmestnye-sborochnye-proizvodstva-v-uzbekistane-338356-2019/>.

²⁴⁴ Uzbekistan is interested in industrial cooperation with the Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-promyshlennoj-kooperatsii-s-gomelskoj-oblastju-327270-2018/>.

The Grodno Region also plans to contribute to the development of Belarusian-Uzbek industrial cooperation. Thus, within the framework of the international business forum Euroregion Neman-2018, held in Grodno in September 2018, it was announced that the construction of a cotton processing plant in Smorgon with the participation of Uzbek capital will begin. "The investment will amount to about 30 million euros. <...> The plant will employ about 1.2 thousand people."²⁴⁵ . And it is expected that the new company will be up and running within two years. An important detail: the plant will be erected by Uzbek company Evroplastiks Invest, a resident of the free economic zone Grodnoinvest. The enterprise's products are planned to be exported to the markets of the European Union countries - Poland, France and Germany. At the same time, in September 2018, the Baranovichi Production Cotton Association joined the Uzbek cluster of cotton producers. The essence of this interaction is to grow cotton on Uzbek land, process it and "take the material for yarn, yarns, which are needed <...> at the mill. This turns out to be cheaper and more expedient"²⁴⁶ .

In addition, Motovelo zavod LLC, which signed a letter of intent with the Andijan regional khokimiyat in August 2018 to set up production of bicycles in the region, plans to become an active participant in production cooperation with Uzbek partners. The parties agreed "to establish long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as to provide the JV with preferences and benefits established for other joint ventures with foreign investment in Uzbekistan"²⁴⁷ . UzShoes, a shoe-making enterprise founded by the Belarusian holding company Marko, has been operating on Uzbek soil since 2018. Note

²⁴⁵ A cotton processing plant to be built in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zavod-po-pererabotke-hlopka-postroijat-v-smorgonihttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/zavod-po-pererabotke-hlopka-postroijat-v-smorgoni-317921-2018/>.

²⁴⁶ Matijewski, M. Baranovichi mill entered the Uzbek cluster of cotton producers / M. Matijewski //. [Electronic resource]. - 2018 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/baranovichskij-kombinat-voshel-v-uzbekskij-klaster-proizvoditelej-hlopka-317839-2018/>

²⁴⁷ Motovelo zavod will set up a JV in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/motovelo zavod-sozdast-sp-v-uzbekistane-314017-2018www.belta.by/economics/view/motovelo zavod-sozdast-sp-v-uzbekistane-314017-2018/>

also that "in September 2018, the presidents of Belarus and Uzbekistan opened a new Amkodor machinery assembly plant in Tashkent"²⁴⁸. Finally, Belarus and Uzbekistan intend to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in the confectionery industry, where "we are talking about the establishment of licensed production. On the Belarusian side, the Kommunarka confectionery factory is taking part in the project"²⁴⁹.

At the seventh meeting of the intergovernmental commission the Belarusian side proposed to implement new large-scale projects in the **machine-building industry** to set up production of trucks, special and trailed vehicles, and gas-powered buses. Moreover, Minsk Automobile Plant is already "ready to take part in the creation of such facilities with

high degree of localisation"²⁵⁰. With regard to cooperation in **agriculture**, the sides agreed to establish dairy complexes in Uzbekistan "at the expense of the Uzbek side with the involvement of Belarusian design and construction organisations, complete with Belarusian equipment, as well as supplies of Belarusian-bred cattle"²⁵¹. And they have already made concrete steps in this direction. In particular, back in April 2019, a joint venture Zdravushka Tashkent was set up in the Tashkent Region to build a milk processing plant and a dairy complex for one thousand cattle.

Speaking about the prospects of cooperation in the **light industry**, the trade turnover of Bellegprom Concern's enterprises with Uzbekistan exceeded four and a half million dollars in the first quarter of 2019. Belarus supplied fabrics of Mogotex OJSC, Kamvol OJSC, pile fabrics of Belfa OJSC, corsetry of JV

²⁴⁸ Belarus-Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/bilateral/cis/uzbekistan/>

²⁴⁹ Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to establish a joint production of confectionery products [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planiruiut-sozdat-sovmestnoe-proizvodstvo-konditerskih-izdelij-306531-2018/>

²⁵⁰ Uladzimir Dvornik took part in a meeting of the intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://government.gov.by/ru/content/8847.gov.by/ru/content/8847>

²⁵¹ The Belarusian government offers large-scale machinery projects to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravitelstvo-belarusi-predlagaet-uzbekistanu-masshtabnye-proekty-po-proizvodstvu-tehniki-113-2019/>

Milavitsa CJSC to the Uzbek market. The main imports were cotton yarn, knitted fabrics and cotton fibre. Nevertheless, Bellegprom is considering additional opportunities for cooperation and development of cooperative ties with its Uzbek partners. This involves joint work "on the supply of in-demand products - yarn from synthetic fibres, fabrics, pile fabrics, corsetry and hosiery, and cotton yarn"²⁵².

New opportunities for Belarus-Uzbekistan cooperation in **the pharmaceutical industry** are offered by the agreement signed in June 2019 by the administrations of the free economic zones Vitebsk and Kosonsoy-Pharm in the Namangan Region of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the investment and information areas. The fact is that the Kosonsoy-Pharm FEZ, established in May 2017, specialises in the development of pharmaceutical companies, which is also the business of several residents of the Vitebsk FEZ. For this reason, "attracting investment in projects to establish production facilities for medicines and medical products is one of the most promising areas of cooperation between the administrations of the two FEZs"²⁵³.

In autumn 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan also signed an intergovernmental agreement on social and economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which reflected key agreements at the highest level to develop Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bring them to a qualitatively new level, including in **the science and technology sector**.²⁵⁴ At the same time, the State Science and Technology Committee and the Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan signed an agreement on

²⁵² "Bellegprom plans to expand cooperation with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-planiruet-rasshirithttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-planiruet-rasshirit- sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanomsotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-333-2019/>.

²⁵³ FEZ Vitebsk and Uzbek Cosonsoy-Pharm will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

²⁵⁴ Belarus and Uzbekistan sign agreement on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-podpisali-soglashenie-o- sotrudnichestve-v-oblasti-nauki-tehnologii-317747-2018/>

cooperation in science and technology. The document stipulates development and strengthening of long-term scientific and technological cooperation in such priority areas as energy, medicine, nano- and biotechnology, information and communication technologies, robotics, agro-industrial technologies, and contains the agreement to "implement joint scientific and technological projects in the three priority directions". To coordinate this interaction, the parties established a joint commission on cooperation in science and technology, the first meeting of which was held in April 2019 in Minsk and under which an executive programme of scientific, technological and innovative cooperation for 2019-2020 was signed.

Under this document, the two former Soviet republics have agreed to develop scientific and technological cooperation on advanced technologies, carry out joint scientific and technological projects, cooperate in the exchange of scientific and technological information, and conduct research and development of mutual interest. This includes projects in mechanical engineering, agriculture and agro-industrial technologies, medicine and pharmacy, new materials, information and communication technologies, genetics, biotechnologies selected "based on the results of a competition of joint scientific and technical projects for 2019-2021, which was held in the priority areas of bilateral cooperation <...>. In addition, the parties plan to establish at least two joint research laboratories in Belarus and Uzbekistan"²⁵⁵. All in all, a list of 15 joint projects in various fields for co-financing has thus been agreed upon. And a number of concrete steps have already been taken to develop this area of cooperation.

Thus, in February 2019, the Belarusian National Technical University and Tashkent State Technical University named after Islam Karimov agreed to establish a joint science and technology park, which will be the first university-based innovation infrastructure entity in Uzbekistan. The Science and

²⁵⁵ Belarus and Uzbekistan implement 15 joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-realizujut-15-sovmestnyh-nauchno-technicheskikh-proektov-343295-2019/>.

Technology Park "Polytechnic" of BNTU will be a co-founder of the project; it will "integrate scientific and innovation potential of BNTU and TashSU, scale the experience of the Belarusian university in business incubation of high-tech projects, jointly develop science-intensive production of international level involving students, graduate students and doctoral students of both universities"²⁵⁶. And the first joint innovative project in the technopark will be the development and production of medical products.

²⁵⁷In April 2019, it became known that the same universities - the Belarusian National Technical University and the Tashkent State Technical University - will be the founders of the Belarus-Uzbekistan Inter-Sectoral Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications, where the main focus will be "training, retraining, internships and advanced training of personnel in areas of strategic importance for Uzbekistan based on joint educational programmes, as well as implementation of scientific, innovative activities and its commercial Training at the new institute will be conducted in Russian in areas such as intelligent devices, machines and manufacturing, computer mechatronics, biotechnical and medical devices and systems, and innovation project management for industrial companies. An important detail: graduates will receive a diploma from a Belarusian university, which is recognised as a higher education document in this Central Asian country.

The Belarusian State University is also serious about cooperation with its Uzbek partners. The thematic range of potential cooperation in the innovative sphere was clearly demonstrated by its exposition at the exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, held in September 2018 in Tashkent, where more than 30 scientific and technical developments in the fields of agriculture, medicine and pharmaceuticals, food industry, as well as measuring instruments,

²⁵⁶ The first university technopark is being created in Uzbekistan with the participation of BNTU [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/v-uzbekistane-pri-uchastii-bntu-sozdaetsja-pervyj-universitetskij-tehnopark-335511-2019/>.

²⁵⁷ The Belarus-Uzbekistan Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications will be established in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-institut-prikladnyh-tehnicheskij-kvalifikatsij-sozdatut-v-tashkente-345862-2019/>

equipment for the production of polyurethane foam products, technologies for applying functional coatings, and the creation of heat-resistant water treatment materials were presented. The exhibitors and visitors also showed great interest in the stand of the BSU for the antitumour drugs Temodex, Prospidelong and Cisplacel. They cause the death of cancer cells, prevent metastasis, and help reduce the toxic burden on the body"²⁵⁸. We should note that this topic is also important for Belarus and Uzbekistan in terms of industrial cooperation. After all "the parties plan to establish two pharmaceutical enterprises. One will specialize in the production of oncological drugs, the other - in the production of medicines developed on the basis of herbs grown in Uzbekistan"²⁵⁹. All in all, more than a hundred scientific and technical developments from organizations of the Ministry of Education and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus were presented at this exhibition in Tashkent.

The Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank is also actively cooperating with its Uzbek partners, which in September 2018 facilitated the opening of a Belarusian-Uzbek educational centre on the basis of the Nizami Tashkent State Pedagogical University, considered by the parties "as a platform for the development and strengthening of Belarus-Uzbekistan cooperation in the sphere of education and culture"²⁶⁰. In addition, the above-mentioned universities are now jointly implementing an educational programme in speech therapy and a project within the framework of a second higher education programme in the network form of cooperation in the fields of "inclusive education" and "remedial pedagogy".

As we can see, the documents adopted by the heads of state and government of

²⁵⁸ More than 30 scientific and technical developments will be presented by BSU at an exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/boleee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-b-gu-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-317246-2018/>.

²⁵⁹ Matievsky, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, engineering and agribusiness / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apk-317534-2018/>.

²⁶⁰ Grishkevich, A. The Belarusian-Uzbek Educational Centre opened at Tashkent Pedagogical University / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-obrazovatelnyj-tsentr-otkrylsj-a-v-tashkentskom-peduniversite-318451-2018/>.

Belarus and Uzbekistan in the fall of 2018 quickly began to have a real impact. Suffice it to say that in 2018, "mutual trade turnover increased 2.5 times"²⁶¹. And there is every reason to believe that if the current dynamics of the expansion of Belarus-Uzbekistan cooperation is maintained, the goal set by the presidents of the two countries to reach a mutual trade turnover of one billion dollars in the coming years will be successfully achieved.

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²⁶¹ Growth in trade turnover and new projects - Uzbekistan's ambassador on the dynamics of relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/rost-belaru-tovarooborota-i-novye-proekty-posol-uzbekistana-o-dinamike-otnoshenij-s-belarusju-333099-2019/>.

Belarus-Uzbekistan:

Commission outlines priorities for cooperation

The eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission for bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was held in early March 2021 in Tashkent. The meeting focused on the development of trade and economic, investment and cooperation ties, strengthening of relations in the scientific and educational, social and humanitarian spheres, interregional cooperation, information technologies, and tourism.

It should be recalled that diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover grew by another 17 percent and exceeded 280 million dollars, with the share of supplies from Belarus exceeding 237 million dollars. "The main items of Belarusian exports last [2020] were trucks, tractors and truck tractors, meat and meat products, sugar and dairy products, medicines, vaccines and blood serums"²⁶². While noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission nevertheless focused their attention on those issues whose resolution would help bring the bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of the urgent priorities is to expand the legal framework of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction that totaled more than 70 agreements by March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed a cooperation agreement in Tashkent, which defines the main areas of cooperation for the next five years. The document deals with the close partnership of the parties in the development and implementation of programmes for the creation of national and working measurement standards. "Another direction is participation in the development of interstate documents on the uniformity of measurements to solve the problems of harmonization of

²⁶² Belarus aims to further develop bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736.government.by/ru/content/9736>

national legislation and work out common principles of activities in this area"²⁶³. In addition, the cooperation program for 2021-2023 was adopted by the State Committee for Standardization of Belarus and the Agency Uzstandart, which outlined the conduct of comparisons of state measurement standards, calibration of measurement standards and working instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programs. All this, together with the planned establishment of a permanent group, should help to resolve issues related to technical barriers to trade between the two countries. Another important prospective aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union now has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for removing technical barriers to mutual trade with third countries, which is in a high degree of readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart "is working on the possibility and making a proactive proposal that the first pilot project under this agreement, once it enters into force, be implemented with Uzbekistan"²⁶⁴.

At the beginning of March 2021, ten more cooperation documents were signed by the higher education institutions of the two countries. They added to the already very extensive legal framework for cooperation between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already numbered around two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint faculties are successfully operating today, and Belarus-Uzbekistan educational programs, including those involving the issuance of two diplomas, are being implemented. A joint Belarus-Uzbekistan inter-industry institute of applied technical qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The establishment of an Uzbek-Belarusian university of materials science is under consideration. The following figures are quite

²⁶³ Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan sign an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]:
<https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>

²⁶⁴ The Gosstandart of Belarus and the Uzstandart Agency have signed a cooperation programme for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021 . - URL:
<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gosstandart-belarusi-i-agentstvo-uzstandart-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2021-2023-gody-431298-2021/>

eloquent: "In the academic year 2020-2021, educational institutions in Belarus will admit about 2,000 Uzbek students. Exports of educational services to Uzbekistan last year [2020] amounted to \$1.7 million, an increase of almost 14% compared to the previous year"²⁶⁵. We have to assume that the emergence of another ten documents on cooperation between the universities of the two countries will only contribute to further expansion of the Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the educational sphere.

It should be noted that a number of national universities have shown considerable interest in developing cooperation with their Uzbek partners. These include the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the P.M. Masherov State University of Vitebsk, the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, and the Francysk Skaryna State University of Gomel. The Belarusian State University (BSU) is also implementing major plans to expand its presence in the Uzbek education market and is planning to seriously expand its line of joint educational programmes here.

In particular, the agreement signed in April 2021 on cultural and scientific cooperation between BSU and the Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, the first and leading institution of higher education in Central Asia, offers great opportunities in this regard. Established in 1918, it now has 12 departments: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Social Sciences, History, Geology and Geoinformation Systems, Geography and Natural Resources, Foreign Philology, Journalism and Taekwondo and Sports Activities. Until recently, cooperation between the two universities involved joint training of Uzbek students in biomedical sciences and medical ecology at BSU's Sakharov International State Ecological Institute.²⁶⁶ The document,

²⁶⁵ Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vyzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-431140-2021>

²⁶⁶ BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan reach a new level of cooperation [Electronic

signed in April, covers not only cooperation in student and professor exchange, preparation of theses, dissertations and publications, joint scientific research and events, exchange of books, periodicals, but also expands the subject area of inter-university relations in new directions, including "the parties have outlined increase of joint educational programs in humanitarian and natural sciences, organization of summer schools, interaction between universities of the two countries". In addition, the Uzbek side was interested in the BSU experience in organizing a system of continuous legal education, which is implemented through the law college and faculty, as well as the Institute for the retraining and professional development of judges, prosecutors, court personnel and judicial institutions. It is also quite possible that Belarusian scientists with relevant experience will participate in the development of a satellite for the Uzbek university.

The topic of expanding the range of educational programmes is also relevant in the interaction between BSU and the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, where joint training of Uzbek students in Oriental (Chinese) philology has been underway since 2019. New areas under discussion include the use of BSU's experience in training specialists for the IT industry, as well as the development of interdisciplinary specialisations. In particular, in April 2021, "an initiative to jointly train students in computational linguistics"²⁶⁷, as well as the implementation of youth start-up projects, was supported.

A concrete result of the implementation of the roadmap signed in April 2021 between the Belarusian State University and the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi will be the opening of an Uzbek language and literature classroom in Minsk in December 2021, whose activities "will be aimed at strengthening educational and cultural

resource]:
<https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-natsionalnyj-universitet-uzbekistana-vyhodjat-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-436206-2021/>

²⁶⁷ BSU plans to expand joint educational programmes with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-planiruet-rasshirit-s-uzbekistanom-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-435893-2021/>.

relations between the two countries, creating conditions for the study of language, history and ethnic features of Uzbekistan"²⁶⁸ .

An agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian State University and the Tashkent State Law University has been in place since 2020. This year, this cooperation will be expanded through the joint training of Uzbek students at the College of Law of the Belarusian university with the prospect of subsequent enrollment at the BSU Faculty of Law, as well as the opening of joint programs with the Faculty of International Relations of the BSU. Here it is worth noting that the Uzbek partners were "very interested in the BSU's participation in international rankings, according to which the Belarusian university is close to the top 1% of universities in the world"²⁶⁹ . In April 2021, the parties agreed to create a working group to quickly elaborate documents for the implementation of the proposed initiatives, as well as to organise a joint educational programme for the training of legal personnel in September. Finally, in cooperation with the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan, discussions are underway on the possibility for Uzbek teachers to receive internships at BGU, to study there for professional development programmes and to invite employees of the Belarusian university to give lectures in Tashkent.

Another important outcome of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek Business Council in Tashkent, which brought together over 170 representatives of business circles of the two countries, who were able to discuss "specific cooperation projects in agriculture, mechanical engineering, logistics, food industry, chemical and pharmaceutical production, science and education and information technologies"²⁷⁰ . The

²⁶⁸ The Uzbek language and culture cabinet will open at BSU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbekskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bguhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbekskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bgu-435914-2021/>.

²⁶⁹ BSU to expand cooperation with Uzbekistan in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-shhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-v-oblasti-uzbekistanom-v-oblasti-obrazovanij-a-436565-2021/>

²⁷⁰ More than 170 representatives of Belarusian and Uzbek businesses took part in a business council meeting [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

implementation potential of these projects is eloquently demonstrated by the example of Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought over four million dollars worth of contracts to the Uzbek capital. This is largely due to the fact that "MMZ's commodity distribution network in Tashkent is represented by BURAN-SAVDO, SIGMA, INDUSTRIAL MARKETING, FUTURE GENERATION MARKETING. In 2019-2020 MMZ has sold more than 1,000 engines to Uzbekistan's primary and secondary markets"²⁷¹.

A logical continuation of the first meeting of the business council was the participation of 23 Belarusian companies in the international exhibition INNOPROM in April 2021. The Great Industrial Week in Uzbekistan, where exporters from Belarus presented products of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, and chemical industry.

The Belarusian companies have been involved in the Belarusian automotive industry, pharmaceutical industry, medical equipment, as well as scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of the participation of Belarusian manufacturers in this exhibition event was the signing of an agreement of intent by a subsidiary of the Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC - to "supply chassis and vehicle components for assembling cars in the Uzbek market for \$10 million. Also a contract was concluded with a private Uzbek company to supply 50 MAZ vehicles for a total of \$3 million"²⁷². So there are serious prospects for the development of economic relations between the two countries.

As a reminder, the roadmap for cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, adopted in November 2018, is the basic document for trade and economic

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-sovieta-431374-2021>

²⁷¹ MMZ plans to sign contracts worth more than \$4 million during an intergovernmental commission in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/m mz-vo-vremja-mezhpravkomissii-v-uzbekistane-planiruet-podpisat-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-4-mln-431277-2021/>

²⁷² More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan

[Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-kmpnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

interaction between the two countries, which contains 158 measures. Already by May 2020, more than a third of them had been implemented. This had an immediate impact on the state of the Belarus-Uzbekistan partnership: "At the end of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the countries reached \$239 million and increased 1.5 times over 2018"²⁷³. This means that the parties intend to reach the goal, which the two heads of state had outlined in 2018, of increasing bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars as quickly as possible. "The goal is expected to be achieved in three to four years, updating all possible areas of cooperation"²⁷⁴, among which agriculture is one of the most promising. The fact is that the main trend in the development of Uzbekistan's agro-industrial complex today is the formation of a cluster production system. In other words, clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and its processors into industrial enterprises. The Belarusian experience in this regard is seen by Uzbek partners as very positive, so they demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is evidenced by the figures. In 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth 35 million dollars were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018. The positive dynamics of mutual trade in this area continued next year, despite restrictions caused by the spread of the coronavirus. "Belarusian food exports more than doubled in 2020 and reached \$73 million. Supplies of Belarusian beef to Uzbekistan more than doubled, sugar increased 3.5 times, milk powder doubled, fish and fish products increased 1.5 times."²⁷⁵. Of course, cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan is not limited only to mutual supplies of food products, but also includes a wide range of interaction,

²⁷³ Vladimir Dvornik held talks with Sardor Umurzakov, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/9423.government.by/ru/content/9423>

²⁷⁴ Zalessky, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. A view from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 223.

²⁷⁵ Belarusian food exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-uzbekistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-dva-razabelorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-uzbekistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-dva-raz-431838-2021/>

including in the development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising

The areas of cooperation in the agricultural sector include the participation of the Belarusian side in the construction of dairy complexes, the organization of milk processing, the establishment of joint ventures for the production of veterinary drugs, cooperation in breeding, and the organization of training and retraining of Uzbek specialists at Belarusian agricultural educational institutions"²⁷⁶.

The first Belarus-Uzbekistan Agrarian Forum held in 2020, which brought together more than 700 participants, demonstrated this diversity of effective partnerships. The business part of the Belarusian delegation alone included about 150 representatives of exporters of agricultural and food products, research and educational institutions. In particular, an active participant of the forum was Gomselmash OJSC, which signed an agreement with the Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Plant in autumn 2019. "The document envisages the establishment of an assembly plant for combines in the capital of Uzbekistan."²⁷⁷. Delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from relevant ministries and organisations of the agro-industrial complex were represented on the Uzbek side. As a result, "Belarusian exporters have signed over 30 agreements and contracts with their Uzbek partners"²⁷⁸. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan adopted a

²⁷⁶ On the outcome of Vladimir Dvornik's visit to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9301>

²⁷⁷ "Gomselmash will present its potential at an agricultural forum in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmashhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-predstavit-svoi-potentsial-na-agramom-forume-v-uzbekistanepredstavit-svoi-potentsial-na-agram-forume-v-uzbekistanc-380486-2020>

²⁷⁸ More than 30 agreements and contracts signed as a result of the Belarus-Uzbekistan Agrarian Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenii-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogamhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenii-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorussko-uzbekskogo-agramogo-forumabelorussko-uzbekskogo-agramogo-foruma-381350-2020/>

Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation.

At the same time as the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organised in Tashkent, where the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus alone presented more than 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Among the novelties of the Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Centre for Food of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, vegetable marmalade aroused great interest. "The range includes marmalade made of sweet corn, red carrot, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial colourings"²⁷⁹. The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry demonstrated a range of complex mineral fertilizers with a balanced ratio of nutrition elements for cultivated crops. The S.N. Vysheslesky Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine showed vaccines for the prevention and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases in farm animals. Scientists from the Centre for Identification Systems and Electronic Business Operations have proposed technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. The Scientific and Practical Centre for Potato Growing interested visitors in new potato varieties - Manifest, Uladar, Palac - resistant to a range of diseases. As we can see, even this brief list of innovations presented in Tashkent clearly shows what attractive prospects are opening up for the development of Belarusian-Uzbek agricultural partnerships in the near future.

²⁷⁹ The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented more than 60 innovative developments for agriculture in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]:
<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>

Gomel region: The Uzbek vector of cooperation

In May 2021, the Belarusian **Gomel** and Uzbek **Navoi** regions outlined the main areas for the development of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, education, tourism and agriculture, as well as in the operation of technology parks and the creation of favourable conditions for the development of the IT industry. These agreements were a logical continuation of the agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres, which the two regions signed in 2019 at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan. Now, the Gomel and Navoi regions have expressed their intention to significantly intensify their partnership.

Gomel residents are also developing interaction with other Uzbek partners, cooperation agreements with which were signed at the First Forum of Regions of the two countries. For example, in July 2020, an online forum of representatives of business circles of the Gomel and **Fergana regions** was held, which included business entities from the Belarusian side, such as JSC Gomel Meat and Milk Holding Management Company, SE Gomeloblprom, and JSC Sozh Trading House. The participants of the forum constructively considered "the issues of bilateral cooperation in terms of trade of fruits and vegetables, textile, meat and dairy products, construction materials, agricultural machinery and equipment. The sides also discussed the possibility of opening a trade house of Ferghana region in Gomel"²⁸⁰. In particular, Uz-Segang JV LLC, one of the major exporters of fruit and vegetable products in Ferghana Region, suggested collaborating with its Gomel Oblast partners in setting up a single distribution centre for Uzbek vitamin products. Gomeloblprom applied to textile company A. Akbarali Ltd. Akbarali to establish supplies of cotton yarn to the Belarusian region.

²⁸⁰ Uzbek companies are interested in cooperation with partners from the Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoj-oblasti-398194-2020/>

Khorezm Region is Gomel Region's third Uzbek partner. The cooperation agreement signed by the parties in July 2019 named "trade and economic, scientific and cultural spheres, tourism, and healthcare" among promising areas for cooperation²⁸¹. At the same time, Gomselmash entered into a cooperation agreement with Urgenchkormmash, a joint-stock company from Khorezm Region, a forage harvester plant. All in all, in preparation for the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, Gomel Oblast companies signed contracts with their Uzbek partners worth nearly 1.5 million dollars.

All of these facts suggest that the Uzbek market is very promising for enterprises in the Gomel region. In 2020, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with this Central Asian country grew by almost 65 percent and exceeded 17 million dollars. "Polymers, dairy products, wallpaper, screws, hardware, timber are exported to Uzbekistan. Among the exporters are KolorMaster JLLC (polyvinyl chloride), Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC (mechanical devices, machine tools), Milkavita OJSC, Kalinkovich Dairy Plant UE (milk powder), SvetlogorskHimvolokno OJSC (chemical yarns)"²⁸².

Obviously, the first Belarus-Uzbekistan Regions Forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 and opened "new horizons of cooperation in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, food industry, as well as in cultural, humanitarian, information and communication, and scientific spheres," which has already been mentioned above, contributed significantly to boosting cooperation between specific regions of the two countries²⁸³. The forum was attended by over two hundred participants from Uzbek regions such as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzax, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent. The

²⁸¹ Gomel region will sign three agreements with Uzbekistan at the First Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaia-oblast- podpishet-tri-soglasheniya-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionov-356296-2019/>.

²⁸² Gomel Region and Navoi Region of Uzbekistan intend to develop cooperation in IT-industry [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-navoijskij-region-uzbekistana- namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-it-otrasli-440395-2021/>

²⁸³ Forum of Regions opens new horizons for Belarus and Uzbekistan in many areas - Safaev [e-resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-regionov-otkryl-novye-gorizonty-dlja-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-vo-mnogih-oblastjakh-safaev-356612-2019/>

forum's impact is borne out by the fact that 26 direct agreements between the regions were adopted at the forum. In addition to the three documents of Gomel Oblast, agreements on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres were signed by the regions of Grodno with Samarkand and Andijan, Vitebsk with Namangan, Brest with Bukhara and Syrdarya. Similar documents have been signed between the Mogilev, Andijan, and Dzhizak regions. Minsk Oblast Executive Committee has agreed on cooperation in the social sphere with Tashkent Oblast. An action plan has been signed for 2019-2020 to implement the agreement between the Tashkent Khokimiyat and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation"²⁸⁴ .

The growing importance of Uzbek partners for the Belarusian regions as a whole is evidenced by these figures already for 2021. According to the results of the first quarter, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by another quarter to \$67.5 million. An important detail: "The export of Belarusian goods during this period rose by 37.4% to \$58.7 million <...>. The balance of Belarus' foreign trade in goods was positive and totaled \$49.8 million"²⁸⁵ . This happened due to the increase of supplies of chilled and frozen beef, medicines and polymers, tractors and trucks to the Uzbek market. Without the most committed involvement of Belarusian regions, it would have been extremely difficult to achieve such results.

²⁸⁴ Package of interregional cooperation agreements signed at First Forum of Regions Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/paket-mezhregionalnyh-soglashenii-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisan-na-i-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-356632-2019/>

²⁸⁵ Belarus-Uzbekistan trade increased by 25.3% in the first quarter to 67.5 million [Electronic resource]. -2021 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-mezhdu-belarusiiu-i-uzbekistanom-za-i-kvartal-uvlichilsia-na-253-do-675-mln-440482-2021/>

Belarus-Tajikistan: Towards a strategic partnership

In June 2019, Presidents of Belarus and Tajikistan A. Lukashenka and E. Rahmon signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in Minsk. Lukashenka and Rakhmon signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, in which they consolidated a qualitatively new level of Belarusian-Tajik bilateral relations and confirmed their intention to actively develop them in all areas of mutual interest. It is expected that implementation of the provisions of this document will give a new impetus to further work in all areas. And especially in the trade and economic sphere, as the trade turnover between the two former Soviet republics was only about forty million dollars in 2018, which, according to the parties, "is absolutely inconsistent with the potential of Belarusian-Tajik cooperation"²⁸⁶. That is why, when signing the aforementioned document, the parties stated the necessity of significant deepening and expansion of cooperation. Among the main promising areas are industrial cooperation; supplies of Belarusian trucks, road-building and passenger vehicles; renovation of the fleet of railway cars; expansion of cooperation in agriculture, including agrarian education; and intensification of interregional cooperation.

Developing a Belarus-Tajikistan **industrial cooperation**, Minsk and Dushanbe proceed from the premise that "direct cooperation, joint production of quality competitive goods should become a driving force for further development of economic cooperation between our countries"²⁸⁷. And the first steps in this direction have already been taken. In particular, a joint assembly facility for MTZ tractors has been in operation for two years in the Tajik city of Gissar. And in January 2019, in order to provide the domestic market with high-quality dairy products and the prospect of entering the markets of neighboring countries, an agreement was signed to

²⁸⁶ Negotiations with President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/peregovory-s-prezident-tadzhikistana-emomali-raxmonom-21425/>

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

establish a joint venture LLC "Production of dairy products "Vatan" in Dushanbe, whose founder from the Belarusian side is JSC "Minsk Dairy Plant №1". Raw milk will be supplied from Belarus to this enterprise, as well as finished dairy products for the network of distributors of the Tajik partner. The fact that Tajikistan has already expressed its interest in setting up another joint venture to produce dairy products speaks volumes. This time it will be based on Avicenna, where Grodno-based Molochny Mir will take part on the Belarusian side. Avicenna has already purchased a dairy farm for more than 1,500 cattle, as well as production sites and equipment for a dairy company in Hissar. The company is now negotiating with the International Finance Corporation on the allocation of appropriate financing. The implementation of the project is designed for the Afghan market²⁸⁸. As a result, it is expected that dairy products produced jointly with the Belarusian side at the plants in Dushanbe and Gissar will reach the market of this Central Asian country in early 2020.

As for the prospects **of supplies of Belarusian equipment** to Tajikistan, it is very encouraging to see interaction with the Tajik partners of the Belarusian company Belkommunmash, which is working on a contract to supply its equipment to Tajikistan for thirty million dollars. The point is that in recent years Dushanbe has stepped up efforts to modernize and upgrade its passenger transport and municipal vehicles. Suffice it to say that the budget of the Tajik capital for 2019 provides for the purchase of more than three hundred vehicles. Already in May 2019, four trolleybuses with autonomous running for one million dollars were delivered with a loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development from Belarus as part of the "Sustainable Development of Public Transport in Dushanbe" project. Also in May 2019, Belkommunmash and the Dushanbe Mayor's Office signed an agreement of intent to supply 100 autonomous trolleybuses. However, the possibility of

²⁸⁸ Matveev, V. The first dairy products of the Belarus-Tajikistan joint venture will enter the market in 2020 / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervaj-a-produktsij-a-molokopererabotki-sp-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-vyj-det-na-rynok-v-2020-godu-353105-2019/>.

supplying already 150 units is currently being discussed."²⁸⁹ . Autonomous trolleybuses will help solve many problematic issues in the Tajik capital city. Firstly, they can be used to create new routes and extend the old ones, to extend additional trolleybus lines to residential areas or to areas with underdeveloped transport infrastructure. Secondly, the use of new trolleybuses can have a beneficial effect on reducing traffic congestion on Dushanbe's streets, since conventional trolleybuses stand on the road for hours in the event of a power outage, impeding traffic flow. Thirdly, "the innovative trolleybus is capable of travelling up to 15 km without power lines, whereas conventional trolleybuses can travel no more than 500 m on autonomous travel"²⁹⁰ . And the Belarusian side plans to set up a service centre here to train local specialists, with the prospect of turning it into a base for assembly production and continuing to work in third countries.

Interesting prospects for the Belarus-Tajikistan relationship

The cooperation is also opening up today in **the field of education**. Statistics state that so far about 1,500 Tajik students are studying at Belarusian universities. Moreover, thanks to the creation of five joint faculties in Tajikistan's leading institutions of higher education, it is now possible to receive a Belarusian education in this country as well. Nevertheless, according to the Tajik leader Rahmon, "the time has come to study the possibility of implementing new joint Tajik-Belarusian educational projects"²⁹¹ . At the same time, "the establishment of branches of Belarusian universities in Tajikistan, the opening of new joint faculties and even institutions of higher education are

²⁸⁹ . Matveev, V. Belkommunmash is working on a \$30 million contract to supply equipment to Tajikistan / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belkommunmash-prorabatyvaet-kontrakt-na-postavkuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belkommunmash-prorabatyvaet-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-tadzhikistan-na-30-mln-tehniki-v-tadzhikistan-na-30-mln-353062-2019/>.

²⁹⁰ Belkommunmash electric buses will start running in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/elektrobusy-belkommunmash-nachnuthttps://belta.by/economics/view/elektrobusy-belkommunmash-nachnut-kursirovat-v-dushanbe-333003kursirovat-v-dushanbe-333003-2019/>.

²⁹¹ Krishenik, E. Rahmon: we are interested in attracting advanced technologies of Belarus to the real economy / E. Krishenik // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rahmon-my-zainteresovany-v-privlechenii-peredovyh-tehnologij-belarusi-v-realnyj-sektor-ekonomiki-353119-2019/>

promising"²⁹² .

It should be recalled that Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in the field of education is currently based on several intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements: on cooperation in higher and postgraduate education (2013), on cooperation in education (2000); on cooperation in pre-school education (2018). These partnerships between universities in the two countries are particularly dynamic. Suffice it to say that "contractual relations of Belarusian higher education institutions with Tajik educational institutions are implemented in the framework of 77 inter-university agreements in the field of education"²⁹³ . And, indeed, joint Belarusian-Tajik faculties, of which there were already five as of mid-2019, have become a very effective form of implementing these agreements.

The first "swallow" in this respect is the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, opened in 2012 at the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi and the Belarusian National Technical University. Instruction at this faculty is conducted in Russian in two phases. The first is implemented at the Tajik higher education institution and includes training first in preparatory courses for students who do not speak Russian, and then in the first and second courses. The second stage is study in Minsk with the defence of a diploma project. In the 2017/2018 academic year, 476 Tajik students studied at the faculty. Their most popular fields of study are construction, architecture, mechanical engineering and instrument engineering. "In 2017, the first graduation of the joint faculty took place - 24 graduates"²⁹⁴ .

²⁹² Talks with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentomru/view/peregovory-s-prezident-tadzhikistana-emomali-raxmonom-21425/

²⁹³ Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of education is actively developing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://edu.gov.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-mezhdu-respublikoy-belarus-i-respublikoy-tadzhikistan-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-aktivno-rtadzhikistan-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-aktivno-r/](http://edu.gov.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-mezhdu-respublikoy-belarus-i-respublikoyhttp://edu.gov.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-mezhdu-respublikoy-belarus-i-respublikoy-tadzhikistan-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-aktivno-rtadzhikistan-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-aktivno-r/)

²⁹⁴ Joint BNTU-TTU Engineering Faculty [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.bntu.by/engineering-and-technical-faculty-bntu-ttu.html.bntu.by/engineering-and-technical-faculty-bntu-ttu.html>

At the same Tajik Technical University named after academician M.S. Osimi, in 2016, together with the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation, a civil aviation department was established to train specialists in

The following areas of study are offered: "Technical operation of aviation equipment (instrumentation and electrical and lighting equipment)", "Technical operation of aviation equipment (radioelectronic equipment)", "Air transport traffic management and flight operations (air traffic management)". "There are currently 25 students enrolled in the joint faculty in the first year and 28 students are continuing their studies at BSAA in the second year."²⁹⁵ .

Two joint faculties also operate today at the Belarusian State and Tajik National Universities. Firstly, there is the joint Faculty of Information Technology, which was signed in June 2015 and since then has been training students in "applied mathematics" and "computer science".

security", "mathematics and information technology"²⁹⁶ . Secondly, this is the Faculty of Environmental Technology, established in 2016, where 101 first- and second-year students were enrolled at the beginning of 2018 "in the specialties of the first stage of higher education: 'Energy Efficient Technologies and Energy Management', 'Nuclear and Radiation Safety' and 'Medical and Biological Science'^{m297} .

Finally, in March 2019, a joint department of Polotsk State University and Tajikistan University of Technology was opened. This allowed for the first enrolment of students at the new faculty in 2019 in two specialities - Machines and Apparatuses of Chemical Production and Construction Materials Enterprises and Design, Construction and Operation of Gas and Oil Pipelines and Gas and

²⁹⁵ Faculty of Civil Aviation of the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation - Tajik Technical University named after academician M.S. Osimi (FSA BSAA-TTU) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://ttu.tj/ru/university-ru/structure/fmt-dmtbhttp://ttu.tj/ru/university-ru/structure/fmt-dmtb-dtt/fga-bgaa-ttudtt/fga-bgaa-ttu/>

²⁹⁶ BSU and the Tajik National University have opened a joint department of information technology [Electronic resource]. -2015 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-tadzhikskij-natsionalnyj-universitet-otkryli-sovmestnyj-fakultet-informatsionnyh-tehnologij-4702-2015/>

²⁹⁷ Faculty of Ecologically Sustainable Technologies of TNU [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://www.iseu.bsu.by/fakultet-ekologosberegayushhih-tehnologiy-tnu/.iseu.bsu.by/fakultet-ekologosberegayushhih-tehnologiy-tnu/>

Oil Storages. As a result of negotiations between representatives of Polotsk State University and the Tajik National University, plans were outlined to "implement cooperation in training specialists, undergraduates and postgraduates, joint participation in academic mobility programmes, conducting scientific research and implementing joint educational programmes in "Practical Psychology" and "Tourism and Hospitality"²⁹⁸.

It is to be assumed that other higher education institutions of the two countries will soon move on to more advanced forms of cooperation. In particular, this applies to the Belarusian State Medical University and the Tajik National University, which signed an agreement on academic and scientific cooperation back in October 2016. The Belarusian side expressed its interest in such partnerships, "especially if it is possible to give the cooperation a pronounced practical orientation, for example, in the context of research on cardiovascular diseases"²⁹⁹.

Another important element in the implementation of the Strategic Partnership Agreement is the development of **interregional cooperation** between regions, cities and districts of Belarus and Tajikistan. When signing this document, the parties declared their desire to "contribute in every possible way to the expansion of direct ties between the regions of our countries and economic entities"³⁰⁰. Representatives of the parliaments of the two countries also talk about the need to "use the regional potential"³⁰¹. It should be reminded that so

²⁹⁸ Alekseeva, D. Opening of a joint department with the Technological University of Tajikistan / D. Alekseeva // [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: <https://www.psu.by/novosti-mezhdunarodnoj-deyatelnosti/11961-otkrytie-sovmestnogo-fakulteta-s-tehnologicheskimi-universitetom-tadzhikistana>

²⁹⁹ Stasevich, M. Visit of the Delegation of Tajik National University (Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan) to BSMU / M. Stasevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.bsmu.by/allarticles/rubric2/page121/article1593/www.bsmu.by/allarticles/rubric2/page121/article1593/>

³⁰⁰ Talks with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentomru/view/peregovory-s-prezident-tadzhikistana-emomali-rahmonom-21425/

³⁰¹ Myasnikovich: new forms of work are important for expanding trade and economic relations with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. -2018 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/miasnikovich-novye-formy-raboty-vazhny-dlja-rasshirenija-torgovo-ekonomicheskikh-otnoshenij-s-295210-2018/>

far there have been concluded agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between Vitebsk and Sughd regions, Minsk and Sughd, Gomel and Khatlon regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, Yavan and Uzden regions as well as agreements on cooperation between Mogilev and Sughd regions, on mutual cooperation between the cities of Mogilev and Khujand.

Launch of the Belarus-Tajik Interregional

The cooperation was established more than twenty years ago, when in the summer of 1998 the capitals of the two former Soviet republics became twinned cities. Then **Minsk and Dushanbe adopted** two documents at once. The first document - the Town Twinning Agreement between Minsk and Dushanbe - says of the mutual commitment to "in every possible way contribute to the creation of the most favorable conditions for friendly relations between the residents of our cities, co-operation between businesses, organizations and firms"³⁰². The second document - the Agreement on Cooperation in Trade and Economic, Scientific and Technical and Cultural Spheres - contained the parties' intention to render assistance in establishment of joint ventures, joint-stock companies, financial and industrial groups, trading houses, commercial and regional information centres to collect, process and issue the information necessary for producers and consumers of goods and services to study the market conjuncture. It seems that both of these documents have not lost their relevance today, as they only contribute to the development of twinning and partnership relations between the two capitals and their specific business entities. In this sense, the current example of cooperation between the Minsk-based Belkommunmash enterprise and the Dushanbe city hall to upgrade the passenger public transport in the Tajik capital only confirms the timeless nature of the documents adopted more than twenty years ago.

Of the other participants in the Belarus-Tajikistan

The Sogd Region stands out, as it is actively developing partnership relations

³⁰² Zalessky, B. Second Breath / B. Zalessky // Vecherny Minsk. - 1998. - 3 Aug.

with three Belarusian regions - Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev. An agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation with **Vitebsk region** was signed in April 2012. At the same time, "the machine-building, furniture industry, leather processing and light industry were named as priority areas for cooperation"³⁰³. A similar agreement with the **Minsk region** was signed in May 2014. And, it should be noted, the Belarusian capital region's engagement with Tajik partners generally brings good results. Suffice it to say that "according to the results of 2018, Minsk Region's exports to the Republic of Tajikistan amounted to USD 6.4 million <...>. The main export commodity items are sugar and chemically pure sucrose in solid state; oil refined products; book products"³⁰⁴. To consolidate this positive trend, in June 2019, a number of enterprises in the Minsk region, including Slutsk meat processing plant, Minsk meat processing plant, Borisov meat processing plant and Slutsk cheese factory, demonstrated their products at the Sughd 2019 international trade fair, which resulted in 14 agreements and memorandums of cooperation.

As for interaction between Sughd and Mogilev regions, the partnership between **Mogilev** and the city of **Khujand**, located in this Tajik province, which was sealed by an agreement in May 2014, can be called its core. From the outset, the parties declared their intention to "move to a new level of cooperation - from trade and exchange of goods to cooperation between industrial enterprises and establishment of joint productions"³⁰⁵. At the same time, the Tajik side expressed interest in cooperating with Mogilevliftmash to establish an assembly facility for lifts in Tajikistan. In June 2015 the parties reached an agreement on

³⁰³ Rafieva, S. Sogd and Vitebsk signed an agreement on cooperation / M. Rafieva // [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: [https://news.vitebsk.cc/2012/04/26/sogd-i-vitebsk-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve/](https://news.vitebsk.cc/2012/04/26/sogd-i-vitebskhttps://news.vitebsk.cc/2012/04/26/sogd-i-vitebsk-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve/).

³⁰⁴ A delegation from the Minsk Region paid a working visit to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.mlyn.by/2019/06/delegatsiya-https://www.mlyn.by/2019/06/delegatsiya-minskoj-oblasti-s-oblasti-s-rabochim-vizitom-posetila-tadzhikistanrabochim-vizitom-posetila-tadzhikistan/>.

³⁰⁵ Kuliagin, S. Tajikistan is interested in developing cooperation with the enterprises of the Mogilev region - Coimdods / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-razvitii-kooperatsii-s-www.belta.by/regions/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-razvitii-kooperatsii-s-predprii-atij-ami-mogilevskoj-oblasti-koimdodov-174610-2015/>

the supply of lifts and lift equipment to Khujand for the needs of municipal services, as well as on the establishment of a joint production facility for the production of lifts with a view to their sale in Tajikistan and neighbouring countries. Besides, the Tajik side has expressed its 'great interest in establishing joint ventures in Khujand with the furniture producing enterprises Mogilevdev and Mogilevmebel. There is also willingness to consider proposals to establish a joint venture to produce confectionery products"³⁰⁶ .

Finally, in December 2017, the **Gomel and Khatlon regions** signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation to give new impetus to the development of relations between the two regions, as well as to help strengthen trade and economic cooperation. The fact is that in the three quarters of 2017, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with Tajikistan totaled only \$818,000. "Gomel enterprises supplied soap, capping products, wallpaper and cattle carcasses"³⁰⁷ . All in all, there were thirteen exporting enterprises, including TUE "Gomel Traditions of Taste", IPUE "Alkopak", ALC "Vimala" and JSC AFPK "Zhlobin Meat-Packing Plant". It should be assumed that the signed agreement will play an important role in strengthening cooperation between the regions in the light of the recently adopted course towards the Belarusian-Tajik strategic partnership.

³⁰⁶ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev and Tajik Khujand intend to create joint productions / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mogilev-i-tadzhikskij-xudzhand-namerenyhttps://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mogilev-i-tadzhikskij-xudzhand-namereny- sozdat-sovmestnye-sozdat-sovmestnye-proizvodstva_i_0000025058.html

³⁰⁷ The Gomel and Khatlon regions signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://newsgomel.by/news/society/15070-gomelhttps://newsgomel.by/news/society/15070-gomel- skaya-i-hatlonskaya-oblasti-podpisali-soglashenie-o-skaya-i-hatlonskaya-oblasti-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve.html>

**Belarus - Tajikistan:
in line with the positive dynamics of cooperation**

The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which was established back in 1999, plays a key role in the development of effective bilateral interaction between Belarus and Tajikistan today. The scope of its interests "covers such priority areas as: the supply of engineering products on the basis of new leasing schemes; cooperation in the agricultural and energy sectors; participation in joint economic projects; and the creation of a network of joint manufacturing enterprises in both countries."³⁰⁸

In April 2021, Dushanbe hosted the 14th meeting of the Tajik-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, which addressed topical issues of cooperation in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, healthcare and education, investment and information technology. At the same time, an exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus; a Belarus-Tajikistan-Afghanistan business forum ; a forum

"TajBelAgro. All these events once again demonstrated that "despite the crisis phenomena in the world, Belarusian-Tajik trade and economic cooperation shows a positive and dynamic nature. Since 2016, the mutual trade turnover has grown 5.5 times, reaching \$111.7 million in 2020."³⁰⁹ . At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Tajik market have increased more than six-fold over the same period and reached almost \$110 million last year, while the surplus amounted to \$107.5 million due to deliveries from Belarus of cars, sugar, tractors and tractor trucks, flour, meat offal and fish, paper and cardboard stationery, wood and chipboard.

³⁰⁸ Zalessky, B. Real multi-vectorism. Belarus in the system of foreign relations / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2015. - C. 87.

³⁰⁹ Belarus and Tajikistan need to implement agricultural projects more actively - Kroupko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-.-v-selskom-hozjajstve-krupkoproyekty-v-selskom-hozjajstve-krupko-435795-2021/>

Among the major joint projects implemented recently is the shipment to Afghanistan of the first batch of Belarusian tractors assembled at JSC "Agrotekhservis" in the Tajik town of Hissar, where it is planned not only to produce modern equipment for the agricultural sector - forage harvesters, attachments, expanding the range of assembled tractors, but also to create over a hundred qualified jobs in view of further development of the project. In this regard, at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission an agreement on expanding the assembly production through the development of tractor semi-trailers PST-9 at the site in Hissar was signed by UKH Bobruiskagromash and Agrotekhservis. "In addition, the companies signed a contract for the supply of the first batch of machine sets, which is planned to be shipped in the second quarter of 2021"³¹⁰. We would like to remind you that with the help of Belarus "there is also a training centre in Gissar for training specialists for effective operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment operating in the fields of Tajikistan"³¹¹. The contract for the delivery of one hundred Belarusian self-propelled trolleybuses to Dushanbe is in its final stage.

In 2020, Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in agriculture was also developing very dynamically. Suffice it to say that the volume of mutual trade in agricultural and food products between the two former Soviet republics reached almost ten million dollars. An important detail is that "Belarusian food exports to this country grew by 1.4 times and totaled \$9.5 million <...>. In January 2021, domestic agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$775 thousand were supplied to Tajikistan (a sevenfold increase compared to the same period of the

³¹⁰ "Bobruiskagromash will expand assembly production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-rasshirithttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-rasshirit-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-v-tadzhikistanesborochnoe-proizvodstvo-v-tadzhikistane-436621-2021/>.

³¹¹ Belarus and Tajikistan discuss trade and economic cooperation and industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. -2021 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudih-razvitie-torgovohttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudih-razvitie-torgovo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiuekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiiu-436006-2021/>

previous year).³¹² . And there is every reason to believe that this positive trend will continue in the medium term. For instance, the Bellegprom Concern is now exploring opportunities to supply flax to this Central Asian country, which is of keen interest to Tajikistan's business circles. In particular, the intergovernmental commission discussed "the issue of supplies of Orsha flax mill products and Kamvol's flax-containing fabric to the Tajik market"³¹³ .

The exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, which was held in Dushanbe, also aimed to promote exports from Belarus to Tajikistan, and showcased products of 40 domestic companies from key industries: Agrofood - agriculture and food; TechMach - machinery and technology; Wood - woodworking and furniture products; Health - healthcare and pharmaceuticals; FMCG - consumer goods. Tajik partners were also able to learn about export opportunities of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex and the prospects of bilateral cooperation in crop and livestock farming at the agricultural forum TajBelAgro, where they discussed not only mutual supply of agricultural products and machinery, but also the development of options for cooperation. Finally, at the Tajikistan-Belarus-Afghanistan Business Forum, attended by over two hundred enterprises from the three countries, "eight documents were signed on developing partnerships in the areas of industry, education, food and drink supply"³¹⁴ , which demonstrates the growing dynamics of partnership also in this trilateral format.

³¹² Belarusian agricultural exports to Tajikistan increased by 1.4 times in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-.-selhozproduktssii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-v-14-razabelorusskoi-selhozproduktssii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-v-14-raza-434869-2021/>

³¹³ "Bellegprom is exploring the possibility of supplying flax to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/behegpromhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/behegprom-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnosti-postavok-lna-v-tadzhikistanprorabatyvaet-vozmozhnhni-postavok-lna-v-tadzhikistan-435980-2021/>

³¹⁴ Belarus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan sign eight documents on partnership development at business forum [Electronic resource]:
<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-tadzhikistan-i-afganistan-podpisali-na-biznes-forume-8-dokumentov-o-razvitii-partnerstva-435998-2021/>

Belarus-Georgia: complementarity yields results

It is known that in recent years Belarusian-Georgian bilateral relations have become stable. The dynamic development of cooperation between the two countries is largely due to the complementarity of their economies, as "there is a demand for Georgian fruit and vegetables in Belarus and Georgia is interested in supplies of Belarusian engineering products, pharmaceuticals, wood processing, mineral fertilizers and food products"³¹⁵. This gave the parties grounds to declare several years ago their aspiration to reach \$200 million trade turnover by 2020. And it must be said that a number of concrete steps have recently been taken in this direction. Thus, in 2017, the volume of Belarus-Georgia foreign trade in goods and services amounted to \$112 million. At the same time, the range of products supplied from Belarus to Georgia has expanded significantly. And today it is represented in almost all sectors of the Georgian economy. "In particular, agricultural products, from seed potatoes to foodstuffs, agricultural machinery, trucks. Medicines are well represented; they have a good rate of entry and registration on the Georgian market. Petrochemicals are also present - tyres, synthetic threads and cables. Belarusian furniture is supplied"³¹⁶. Special mention should be made of the Belarusian foodstuffs which are available in dozens of shops of the two trading networks in Georgia, ranging from bread to liqueurs and spirits. As a result, "the share of Belarusian products in Georgia's total imports is 15%, for butter 12%, cheese around 9% and sausages and meat products 20%."³¹⁷

How to address the task of further growth in bilateral trade by expanding trade

³¹⁵ Belarus and Georgia: promising cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<https://export.by/news/belarus-i-gruziya-perspektivnoe-sotrudnichestvoexport.by/news/belarus-i-gruziya-perspektivnoe-sotrudnichestvo>

³¹⁶ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Georgia M. Myatlikau to BelTA news agency (21 March 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<http://http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html>

³¹⁷ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Georgia M. Myatlikau to BelTA news agency (21 March 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<http://http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html>

and economic cooperation was discussed in Tbilisi in March 2019 at the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission for Economic Cooperation, where, among other things, they discussed ways to implement specific projects in such areas as industrial cooperation, transport and logistics, science and technology, development of interregional ties.

The focus on **industrial cooperation** in this case is quite understandable, as "Belarus is interested in launching a joint Georgian-Belarusian production for the assembly of tractors in Georgia, and the Georgian side is interested in opening a shop for Georgian agricultural products in Belarus."³¹⁸ . These plans took quite concrete shape during the fifth meeting of the intergovernmental commission, as it resulted in "agreements on further development of the assembly production of lifts of JSC "Mogilevliftmash" in Georgia, opening of the assembly production of Belarusian small tractors in Batumi, continued cooperation in the field of cattle breeding, mutual supply of agricultural products"³¹⁹ .

It should be reminded that Georgia is already implementing a project to set up an assembly production of lifts. The fact is that about 25 thousand lifts, at least 50% of which are made in Belarus (Mogilevliftmash) and supplied during the Soviet era, "need to be completely replaced in this country. That is why the project is first of all aimed at the Georgian market, at towns such as Tbilisi, Batumi and Kutaisi. <...> *This is* the kind of project that makes it possible to make a JV with the necessary level of localisation"³²⁰ . Plans for the development of production and cooperation links in the field of pharmaceuticals also look tempting. For this reason it is planned "to open a Belarusian pharmaceutical company in Georgia in 2020. Today exports of this group of

³¹⁸ Belarus and Georgia plan to launch a joint tractor assembly plant [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-ihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzija-i-planirujut-zapustit-sovmestnoe-proizvodstvo-po-sboru-traktorovgruzija-i-planirujut-zapustit-sovmestnoe-proizvodstvo-po-sboru-traktorov-340718-2019/>

³¹⁹ Mikhail Rusiy paid a visit to Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/8695.government.by/ru/content/8695>

³²⁰ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Georgia M. Myatlikau to BelTA news agency (21 March 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://http://mf.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html.gov.by/press/smi/aaeb2c722e229f16.html>

goods make a significant contribution to the overall turnover of the two countries"³²¹. Suffice it to say that during the Belarus-Georgia Business Council held in Tbilisi in March 2019, eight out of the 15 agreements signed were related to the supply of pharmaceutical products.

Interesting plans for cooperation are also outlined in **transport and logistics**, where a positive growth trend in freight traffic between Belarus and Georgia is observed today. In particular, "in 2018, the total volume of shipments amounted to 94,000 tonnes, which is 10.6% more than in 2017. The volume of foreign trade in transport services also increased compared to the previous year - by 27.6% to \$16.4 million."³²². This is despite the fact that the only way to get products to Georgia today is via the Georgian Military Road, a pass through the Caucasus Mountains. The fifth meeting of the intergovernmental commission discussed several promising projects in this area. First, it was decided to study the issue of forming a single ship consignment from Belarus to Georgia by direct water transport. This would mean the development of ferry service and transit of Belarusian cargo to Georgia via Ukraine. Second, we discussed the possibility of organising rail container shipments via Tbilisi - Baku - Minsk, taking into account the experience of such shipments between Tbilisi and Baku - Tbilisi.

Finally, cooperation between Belarus and Georgia in **science and technology** can be very effective. The results of the first meeting of the Belarusian-Georgian commission for scientific and technical cooperation, which was held in Tbilisi in March 2019, in particular, attest to this. In the framework of this new format for coordinating partnership ties, the sides agreed to hold a competition for joint scientific and technical projects in topical areas of bilateral cooperation, including agriculture, medicine and pharmaceuticals, nano- and biotechnologies.

³²¹ Belarus and Georgia expand areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belarus24.by/news/economics/belarus-i-gruziya-rasshiryayut-sfery-sotrudnichestva/>

³²² . Belarus, Georgia and Azerbaijan will discuss the possibility of container transport by rail between their capitals [Electronic resource]. -2019 . - URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-gruzija-i-azerbajdzhan-obsudjat-vozmozhnost-kontejnernyh-perevozok-po-zhd-mezhdu-ih-stolitsami-341087-2019/>

As a reminder, the parties signed an agreement on cooperation in science and technology in Minsk in 2016. "Currently, Georgian and Belarusian scientists are jointly involved in six projects under the European Union, in particular, graphene, new genetic tools for biological assessment of aquatic ecosystems in Europe, improvement of indoor living space: smart living"³²³. Furthermore, one of the priorities of S&T cooperation with Georgian partners, in addition to the implementation of bilateral projects, is the joint submission of applications to European Union programmes, including Horizon 2020. In addition, Belarus and Georgia participate in the Eastern Partnership programme initiative, which includes the EaP Connect project aimed at supporting links between researchers and students.

The great potential for cooperation in the field of science and technology is evidenced by the fact that at the exhibition Made in Belarus, held in Tbilisi in March 2019, the Belarusian side presented 125 scientific, technical and innovative developments of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, the National Academy of Belarus. And during the exhibition itself, the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed two new agreements on scientific cooperation - with the Institute of Phytopathology and Biodiversity of Batumi State University and with the Botanical Institute of Ilia State University. On the whole, the exhibition presented the most innovative and promising projects in a wide range of fields, from new materials and biotechnologies to potato growing and innovative technologies in coffee roasting.

As for the development of **interregional ties**, back in March 2018, a Treaty on the Basis for Cooperation between Belarus and Georgia was signed at the highest level, in which the parties expressed their intention to promote the expansion of interregional cooperation. Concrete facts show that the capitals of the two states - Minsk and Tbilisi - are a very eloquent illustration of the

³²³ Belarus and Georgia to hold a competition for joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-gruzija-provedut-konkurs-sovmestnyh-nauchno-technicheskikh-proektov-2019/>.

implementation of this commitment in practice.

Minsk and Tbilisi became sister cities in September 2015, agreeing then to promote investment and innovation activities, cooperation in healthcare and education, sports, culture, and an exchange of experiences in local government organisation. This twinning relationship became a good impetus for intensifying Belarusian-Georgian cooperation in various areas in the following years. Suffice it to say that "the trade turnover of enterprises in Minsk with Georgia in 2017 increased by 13.5% to \$18.8 million, exported goods worth \$7.9 million and imported goods worth \$10.9 million. 161 commodity items were supplied. There are 14 enterprises with Georgian capital registered in Minsk (5 of them are joint ventures, 9 are foreign)"³²⁴.

In March 2018, Minsk Days were held in the Georgian capital, during which the parties tried to make the best use of such tools to strengthen partnership and twinning ties as the Belarusian-Georgian business forum and the exhibition of goods by Minsk manufacturers. The format of these events allowed the citizens of Minsk to generously share with their Tbilisi counterparts their experience in implementing the system "Smart City", demonstrate the capabilities and convenience of travel with a map of the Belarusian capital, demonstrate features of design and construction of the underground, innovations in passenger transport, new technologies in the food industry. Georgian businessmen were able to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the products of such Belarusian exporters as Kommunarka, Slodych Confectionery Factory, Minsk Kristall, Minskkhlebprom, Belita, Modum - Our Cosmetics, Minsk Automobile Plant, Amkodor, Minsk Tractor Plant.

The official part of Minsk Days in Tbilisi was also rich. First, the two sides signed the Programme for Trade and Economic Cooperation for 2018-2020, in which they identified partnership areas in economy, tourism, culture, education, transport, and housing. In particular, "the cities intend to exchange experience in

³²⁴ Belarusian-Georgian business forum to be held during Minsk Days in Tbilisi [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorussko-gruzinskij-biznes-forum-projdet-vo-vremja-dnej-minska-v-tbilisi-293959-2018/>.

public services, maintenance and overhaul of housing stock, energy saving, high-tech and innovation, as well as investment proposals, advertising and information materials"³²⁵. Secondly, a number of documents on cooperation of Minsk enterprises with the Georgian partners were agreed at the above-mentioned business forum. Thus, "within the section "Modern Minsk and Tbilisi" a memorandum between Kommunarka and Bel Trade Ltd. and an agreement between Minsk Tourist Information Centre and Resistorgeo LLC were signed³²⁶, and an agreement between Minsk City Technopark LLC and Tbilisi Technopark. Besides, Minsk Automobile Plant within the framework of the concluded contract with Georgia's Profauto LLC has granted this company exclusive rights to sell automobile equipment on the Georgian land and will supply 20 dump trucks for over one million USD to Georgia. Also Minsk Automobile Plant has worked out possible contracts for supply of fire fighting equipment for the Ministry of Emergencies of Georgia and discussed "possibility to supply passenger buses to Tbilisi"³²⁷. Minsk tractor plant has signed a contract with the Georgian supplier of agricultural machinery Hermes Ltd. for the supply of 50 sets and is opening assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Batumi. The management of the Belarusian company is sure that "2018-2020 will be the most successful years for the tractor factory in the Georgian market"³²⁸. It is expected that at least two to three hundred machines will be assembled here per year, as Georgia has a demand for various tractors,

³²⁵ Minsk and Tbilisi will define a cooperation programme for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-i-tbilisi- opredeljat-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-godyopredeljat-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-gody-293935-2018/](http://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-i-tbilisihttp://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-i-tbilisi- opredeljat-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-godyopredeljat-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-gody-293935-2018/).

³²⁶ Matveev, V. About 30 documents signed at the Georgian-Belarusian forum in Tbilisi / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018 . - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-30-dokumentov-podpisano-na-gruzinsko-beloruskom-biznes-forume-v-tbilisi-295186-2018/>

³²⁷ . Matveev, V. MAZ will supply dump trucks to Georgia for \$ 1 million / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-v- gruziju-samosvaly-na-1-mlngruziju-samosvaly-na-1-mln-295227-2018/](http://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-vhttp://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-v- gruziju-samosvaly-na-1-mlngruziju-samosvaly-na-1-mln-295227-2018/).

³²⁸ Matveev, V. Assembly production of Belarusian tractors opens in Batumi / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoc-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-tractorov- otkryvaetsja-v-batumi-295203-2018/>

from low-power to power-packed ones.

Finally, interesting prospects are opening up in the Georgian market, where not only in Tbilisi there is a need to renew the public transport fleet and an interest in using electric buses, for the Minsk-based Belkommunmash. Similar interest has also been expressed by three other major Georgian cities. This is why the creators of the Belarusian electric buses are already thinking about the possible localization of production of their environmentally friendly vehicles on Georgian soil. In particular, "the production of Belarusian electric buses may be set up in Tbilisi"³²⁹. In the meantime, in the next few months, the miners will deliver one electric bus to the Georgian capital for pilot operation, and a little later they will present a detailed concept and business plan of the project of production cooperation.

The trend towards an expansion of the Belarus-Georgia interregional cooperation was reinforced by the agreement signed in July 2018 on cooperation in the socio-economic, scientific and technical, cultural and humanitarian fields between the Glubokoe District Executive Committee of the Vitebsk Region and the Telavi municipality. In practice, the parties have been cooperating since 2014, but until recently - mostly only in the field of culture. By signing the agreement, Hlubokoe and Telavi announced real plans to expand the areas of partnership. In particular, the Georgian side has expressed its willingness to cooperate "in the fields of medicine, agriculture and sports"³³⁰.

Another very effective way to expand trade and economic ties between Belarus and Georgia is to intensify **trade-fair** cooperation. The experience of the past few years shows that "the annual holding of Belarusian exhibitions in Georgia has become a good tradition and reflects the active development of cooperation

³²⁹ Matveev, V. Production of Belarusian electric buses may be set up in Tbilisi / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-belorusskih-elektrobusov-mozhet-byt-sozdano-v-tbilisi-295211-2018/>

³³⁰ Shcherbitsky, A. Glubokoe will cooperate with the Georgian town of Telavi / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. -2018 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/glubokoe-budet-sotrudnicat-s-gruzinskim-gorodom-telavi-311294-2018/>.

between the two countries: the range of products supplied is expanding and shops with national goods are opening in Tbilisi and Minsk"³³¹. As a reminder, the national exhibition of Belarus was held in the Georgian capital back in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, large-scale Belarusian expositions were shown in Tbilisi as part of the international AgroFood exhibition. In March 2019, the exhibition of Belarusian producers Made in Belarus was held in the central pavilion of the Expo Georgia exhibition centre, where more than 70 companies from almost all regions of Belarus showed their best products. As a result, 13 contracts were signed to supply Belarusian products to Georgia.

For example, Minsk Tractor Works showed "agricultural machinery assembled in Georgia: Belarus 322.1, Belarus 321, Belarus 311, Belarus 320.4 and Belarus 622 tractors for mountainous terrain, orchards and vineyards"³³². Another Minsk-based company, Belkommunmash, demonstrated its innovative transport mode - electric bus, which after a six-minute charge at special charging stations can provide movement along a route of up to 25 kilometres in length. Belarus' largest manufacturer of finishing materials and tiles Keramin brought more than twenty modern collections to the Georgian capital for a demonstration. Minsk is also home to the Republican Scientific and Practical Center of Cardiology, which showed in Tbilisi innovative developments in heart transplantation - a unique operation, which is conducted by Belarusian surgeons since 2009. In 10 years, the centre has performed more than 300 operations for patients of all age categories.

Among the Palese-branded harvesters and tillage equipment presented by Gomselmash, a small-sized potato combine digger-loader KMP-1.5, which was successfully tested on Georgian fields in September 2018, attracted attention. Other Gomel Region companies taking part in the exhibition included the Gomel Chemical Plant and the Mozyr Oil Refinery. Innovative comprehensive solutions for automation of railway tracks to make train travel comfortable and safe were the basis of the exposition of the Brest Electrotechnical Plant. Mogilev

³³¹ Georgia's prime minister familiarised himself with Belarusian products at an exhibition in Tbilisi [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/premjerhttps://belta.by/economics/view/premjer- ministr-gruzii-oznakomilsja-s-belorusskoj-produktsiej-na-vystavke-v-tbilisi-340835-2019/>

³³² The best brands of Belarus will be presented at a large-scale exhibition in Tbilisi [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/luchshie-brendy- belarusi-budut-predstavleny-na-masshtabnoj-vystavke-v-tbilisibelarusi-budut-predstavleny-na-masshtabnoj-vystavke-v-tbilisi-340191-2019/>

Region was represented at the exhibition by Strommashina Plant and Mogilev Metallurgical Plant, Vitebsk Region by Polotsk-Steklovolokno and Naftan, and Minsk Region by Mining Wax Plant from Svisloch.

In order to participate in the global infrastructure development programme Georgia 2020, the Belneftekhim Group, which brings together the largest Belarusian petrochemical companies, exhibited in Tbilisi rubber tyres, fast-drying paint for all surfaces, and road marking paint. Belarusian foodstuffs, whose high quality and natural ingredients are already well known in Georgia, were traditionally well represented at the exhibition. The meat, dairy and confectionary products, as well as alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks from producers such as Kommunarka, Krynica, Minsk Kristall, Spartak,

Zdravushka-Milk, Pinsk and Oshmyansk are most likely to have been displayed at the exhibition.

meat processing plants, will soon be present in much larger quantities in Georgian shops.

Finally, this exhibition Made in Belarus is also interesting because it is the first time in the practice of such events that the Belarusian side has used a new logo, which is a "flower of linen, painted in the colours of the national flag and inscribed in a pentagonal figure, resembling a state quality mark. The flower petals are shown as people holding hands, which reflects the idea of national unity and common work to strengthen Belarus' independence, identity and well-being"³³³.

³³³ Georgia's prime minister familiarised himself with Belarusian products at an exhibition in Tbilisi [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/premjerhttps://belta.by/economics/view/premjer-ministr-gruzii-oznakomilsja-s-belorusskoj-produktsiej-na-vystavke-v-tbilisi-ministr-gruzi-oznakomilsja-s-belorusskoj-produktsiej-na-vystavke-v-tbilisi-340835-2019/>

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