

Vectors of positive dynamics

One of the priority objectives for the development of the Belarusian economy set in the Program of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2025 is commodity and country export diversification, which should ensure the growth of Belarusian supplies in 2025 to 50 billion dollars, as well as the promotion of goods and services to new markets. The same programme for an efficient and environmentally friendly agriculture sets the objective of raising the competitiveness of agricultural production and increasing export potential to reach \$7 billion worth of exports of food products and agricultural raw materials in 2025. Fulfilling these tasks is impossible without the innovative development of the entire Belarusian economy relying on effective international cooperation. In this respect, a draft State Programme for Innovative Development for 2021-2025 has been drawn up that envisages the implementation of some 80 innovation projects to create high-tech production facilities. How are all these tasks already being implemented in practice today? This is described in the materials of the proposed study.



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Vectors of positive dynamics

*International cooperation
amidst rising protectionism
protectionism*

Boris Zalesskij

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**International cooperation amidst rising
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Eurasian Economic Union: the goal is to become a significant center of development

The Strategic Framework for the Development of Eurasian Integration until 2025 sets out the task of actively developing trade and economic relations of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with third countries and integration associations in order to turn this international organization into one of the most significant development centers of the world. One of the vectors for its solution is to "identify new partners for free trade agreements, conduct joint research with them to study the feasibility of concluding free trade agreements, and negotiate agreements with them"¹. In 2021, the EAEU is actively working to successfully complete the task.

Thus, one of the Union's promising partners may soon become the Sub-System of Economic Integration in Central America, which was formed back in October 1993. Its members are such countries of the region as 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 organizations, aimed at intensifying trade and economic cooperation between the parties in areas such as mutual trade, technical regulation and standardization, industry and agro-industry, macroeconomics, to share experiences, develop recommendations, and develop a common approach to the economic development of the region. The EAEU believes that "Central American countries have great potential for increasing cooperation. The signing of the memorandum is the first step to intensify trade and investment cooperation and, in the long term, to integrate into global value chains <...>.

¹ Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - - M., 2020. - - C. 52.

Since 2015 the mutual trade turnover has grown by 22.6%"². In order to implement the provisions of the memorandum, the parties will soon form a joint working group.

Another country of 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 indicate 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 - \$197.1 million and imports - \$17.6 million. In 2018, a record level of trade turnover between the EAEU and Cuba was recorded since 2010 - \$417.5 million"³.

In Asia, among the states interested in developing full-scale cooperation with the EAEU is Iran, with which an interim agreement leading to the formation 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 zone agreement with Iran by October 2022. Already in February 2021, participants in these negotiations focused their attention on transport and logistics projects that could "have a positive impact both on the growth of trade turnover between the EEU countries and Iran, and on increasing the level of transport connectivity of the entire large Eurasian region"⁴.

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

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

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

In 2021, the EAEU intends to establish cooperation between business circles and significantly strengthen trade and economic ties with such South Asian country as Bangladesh. A memorandum on cooperation with Bangladesh was signed in 2019. The fact that the Bangladeshi economy "has shown significant growth over the past ten years, the average GDP growth is 8% per year, and even during the pandemic, the growth was 5.6%" shows a sufficiently high potential for the development of partnerships⁵. And now it is important to determine in which areas the parties have a mutual interest, where trade turnover can be diversified.

The EAEU is also expected to step up its activities in the entire 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 joint projects and joint events, including those involving the business community. The memorandum, signed in 2018, provides for cooperation between the EAEU and the CIS "in the areas of customs regulation, traceability and marking of goods with identification means, state procurement, consumer protection, digital economy, tax policy and administration, foreign trade, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, as well as sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary quarantine measures⁶.

5 Possibilities of intensifying trade and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and the EAEU were discussed in the EEC [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx>

6 EEC and CIS Executive Committee signed a cooperation plan for 2021-2022 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-02-2021-07.aspx>

Belarus-Kazakhstan: partnership priority - agriculture

The results of 2020 show that in the relationship between Belarus and Kazakhstan, the key areas of cooperation were the interaction of agro-industrial complexes, the implementation of joint projects in the field of agriculture and their further development in the field of agricultural engineering. This is largely due to the fact that even in the context of restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus infection, the agro-industrial complex of both countries maintained growth trends in 2020. This is evidenced by the data of the Eurasian Economic Commission that "the production of agricultural products in the territory of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2020 grew by 2.3% and amounted to 114.3 billion US dollars. Kazakhstan (by 5.6%) and Belarus (by 4.9%) recorded the highest production growth among the EAEU countries⁷.

Positive trends in the growth of interaction between the two countries in the agro-industrial complex were also recorded at the second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Kazakh working group on the development of promising areas of 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, given the fact that "in 2020, trade turnover of agricultural products and food between Belarus and Kazakhstan increased 1.2 times against 2019 and reached \$ 307.2 million. Export was amounted to \$ 289.9 million (more than 20% growth)⁸. The parties noted the serious potential for further stable growth of trade turnover and consolidation of positive trends in mutual trade.

⁷ On the meeting of the Ambassador of Belarus with the Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - - 2021. - - - URL: <http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c66dcb28873a0b75.html>

⁸ _Export of Belarusian agricultural products to Kazakhstan in 2020 increased by more than 20% [Electronic resource]. - - - 2021. - - - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktov-v-kazahstan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-na-20-430100-2021>

From 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 machinery, retraining of personnel for the agro-industrial complex. Kazakhstan is particularly interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries, as well as in 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"⁹.

In particular, the parties are pinning great hopes in 2021 on the continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian Gomselmash OJSC and Kazakhstan's largest company for the production of agricultural machinery, AgromashHolding KZ, which in 2020 increased its output by 1.7 times. The joint assembly of grain harvesters by these enterprises on Kazakh soil began back in 2007. "In 2019, the organization produced 429 harvesters and tractors, and in 2020 - 730 units of equipment"¹⁰. Including the first harvester ESSIL KZS-790, which has already passed tests in the Karaganda region and showed good results. The new machine has increased engine power and cleaning area, and the threshing is combined: drum and rotor. In 2021 it is planned 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 of Kazakhstan. Recall also that back in the summer of 2020, more than 70 machine sets of the model KZS-10 MAX were sent from Gomel to Kazakhstan. "The innovations introduced on this model of harvester, relating mainly to more comfortable work of machine operators, liked the agrarians of

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

10 "Gomselmash and AgromashHolding KZ will expand the range of agricultural equipment in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-i-agromashholding-kz-rasshirjat-linejku-agrotehniki-v-2021-godu-424825-2021/>

Kazakhstan. This prompted them to order another 30 such harvesters."¹¹ . And in the second half of December 2020, this additional batch of 30 sets of machines was sent to the Kazakh partners.

Among the events that should have a positive impact on the development of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in agriculture in 2021, let us mention a few more. First, an interesting result can be given by the idea, which in November 2020 was discussed at the meeting of the Belarus-Kazakhstan Business Council, which was attended by representatives of more than 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 holding exhibitions, "Belarus and Kazakhstan are considering the possibility of holding an agricultural exhibition Belagro in Kazakhstan ¹². This could be another concrete step towards enhancing bilateral cooperation and increasing mutual trade turnover. Secondly, 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 provide assistance to Kazakh companies in selling their products on the Belarusian market. As a follow-up to this proposal, in January 2021, the FTUB agreed to intensify cooperation in electronic trade with the "Astana" Universal Commodity Exchange, which "will create a single database with commercial offers of Belarusian and Kazakh companies and will facilitate the growth of mutual trade¹³.

11 "Gomselmash additionally shipped 30 KZS-10 MAX machine sets to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-dopolnitelno-otguzil-v-kazahstan-30-mashinokomplektov-kzs-10-max-421382-2020/>

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

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

Belarus - Uzbekistan: from legal agreements - to concrete projects

The eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was held in early March 2021 in Tashkent. It discussed issues related to the development of trade and economic, investment and cooperation ties, the strengthening of relations in the scientific, educational and socio-humanitarian spheres, interregional cooperation, information technology, and tourism. Recall that diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by another 17 percent and exceeded 280 million dollars with the share of supplies from Belarus - more than 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, blood serums"¹⁴. Noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission nevertheless focused their attention on those issues, the solution of which would help to bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of the urgent priorities was to expand the legal framework of the Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation, which had totaled more than 70 agreements by March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the agreement on cooperation, which defines the main directions of interaction for the next five years, was signed in Tashkent by the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan. The document deals with the close partnership of the parties in the development and implementation of programs to create national and working standards. "Another direction is

¹⁴ Belarus aims to further develop bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736>

participation in the development of interstate documents on the uniformity of measurements to solve the problems of harmonization of national legislation and the development of common principles of activity in this area"¹⁵ . In addition, the program of cooperation for 2021-2023 was adopted by the State Committee for Standardization of Belarus and the Agency "Uzstandart", which planned to conduct comparisons of state standards, calibration of measurement standards and working instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programs. All of 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 perspective aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union currently has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for removing technical barriers in mutual trade with third countries in a high degree of readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart "is working on the possibility and makes a proactive proposal that the first pilot project on this agreement after its entry into force will be implemented with Uzbekistan"¹⁶

Ten more documents on cooperation were signed in early March 2021 by the higher education institutions of the two countries. They added to the already very extensive legal base of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already had about two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint faculties and Belarusian-Uzbek educational programs, including dual degree programs, have been successfully operating today. A joint Belarusian-Uzbek interindustry institute of applied technical qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The creation of an Uzbek-Belarusian university of materials science is under consideration. The following figures are

15_Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>

16_Gosstandart of Belarus and Uzstandart Agency signed a cooperation program 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/>

quite eloquent: "In the 2020-2021 academic year, educational institutions of Belarus will admit about 2,000 Uzbek students. The export of educational services to Uzbekistan last year [2020] amounted to \$1.7 million, an increase of almost 14% compared to the previous year¹⁷. We must 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.

Another important result of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek business council in Tashkent, which gathered 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 technologies¹⁸. The potential for implementation of these projects is very eloquently demonstrated by the example of Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought more than 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 sold more than 1 thousand engines to the primary and secondary markets of Uzbekistan"¹⁹. So, there are serious prospects for the development of economic relations between the two countries.

17_Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vuzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-431140-2021>

18 More than 170 representatives of business of Belarus and Uzbekistan took part in the meeting of the Business Council [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-soveta-431374-2021>

19 MMZ plans to sign contracts for more than \$4 million during the intergovernmental commission in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mMZ-vo-vremja-mezhpravkomissii-v-uzbekistane-planiruet-podpisat-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-4-mln-431277-2021/>

Belarus - Uzbekistan: the goal is to expand the line of of joint educational programs

In March 2021, the eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental Belarusian-Uzbekistan commission on bilateral cooperation was held in Tashkent, where much attention was paid to the promising development of cooperation between higher education institutions of the two countries, which signed ten documents on cooperation at once. These agreements "added to the already very extensive legal base of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already numbered about two hundred direct agreements"²⁰ [1, p. 12]. A number of national universities have demonstrated a 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 engaged in the implementation of major plans to expand its presence in the Uzbek educational market and is planning to seriously expand the range of joint educational programs here.

In particular, the agreement signed in April 2021 on cultural and scientific cooperation between BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, 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 Geographic Information

²⁰ Zalessky, B.L. From legal agreements to concrete projects / B.L. Zalessky // *Materialy XVIII Mezinárodní vědecko-praktická konference "Dny vedy - 2021"*. Volume 3: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - - C. 12.

Systems, Geography and Natural Resources, Foreign Philology, Journalism and Taekwondo and Sports Activities. Until recently, the cooperation between the two universities consisted of joint training of Uzbek students in medical and biological sciences and medical ecology at the Sakharov International State Ecological Institute of BSU. Signed in April, the document concerns not only cooperation on student and professor-teacher exchange, preparation of theses, dissertations, and publications, joint research and events, exchange of literature and periodicals, but also expands the scope of inter-university relations in new areas, among which "the parties have identified an increase in joint educational programs in the humanities and the sciences, the organization of joint summer schools, and interaction" [2 [2]. 2] In addition, the Uzbek side was interested in the BSU experience in organizing a system of continuous education of lawyers, which is implemented through a law college and faculty, as well as the Institute for retraining and advanced training of judges, prosecutors, courts and institutions of justice. It is also quite possible that Belarusian ²¹scientists with relevant experience will participate in the development of a satellite for the Uzbek university.

The topic of expanding the range of educational programs 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 conducted 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 specialties. In particular, in April 2021, "an initiative to jointly train students in computer linguistics"²² [3] was supported, as well as the implementation of youth startup projects.

21_BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan reach a new level of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-natsionalnyj-universitet-uzbekistana-vyhodjat-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-436206-2021/>

22_BSU plans to expand joint educational programs with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-planiruet-rasshirit-s-uzbekistanom-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-435893-2021/>

A specific result of the implementation of the road map, signed in April 2021 BSU with the Tashkent State University of the Uzbek language and literature named after Alisher Navoi, will open in December 2021 in Minsk Cabinet of Uzbek language and literature, whose activities "will be aimed at strengthening educational and cultural relations between the two countries, creating conditions for the study of language, history, ethnic characteristics of Uzbekistan"²³ [4].

An agreement on cooperation between BSU and the Tashkent State Law University has been in effect since 2020. This year, this interaction will be expanded through the joint training of Uzbek students at the College of Law of the Belarusian university with the prospect of further admission to the Faculty of Law of BSU, as well as the opening of joint programs with the Department of International Relations BSU. Here it is worth noting that the Uzbek partners were very "interested in the BSU experience of participation in international rankings, according to which the Belarusian university is close to the top one percent of universities in the world"²⁴ [5]. In April 2021 the parties agreed to create a working group for the rapid development of documents on the implementation of the proposed initiatives, as well as the organization in September of a joint educational program for training legal personnel. Finally, in cooperation with the University of Journalism and Mass Communication of Uzbekistan they are now discussing the possibility of internships for Uzbek teachers at BSU, training them there under programs of professional development and inviting employees of the Belarusian university to give lectures in Tashkent.

23_Uzbek Language and Culture Cabinet to be opened at BSU [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbeksokogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bgu-435914-2021/>
24_BSU will expand cooperation with Uzbekistan in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-436565-2021/>

Belarus - Tajikistan:

In line with the positive dynamics of cooperation

The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, established back in 1999, plays a key role in the development of effective bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan. The scope of its interests "covers such priority areas as: the supply of machine-building products on the basis of new leasing schemes; cooperation in agriculture and energy; participation in joint economic projects; and the creation of a network of joint production enterprises in both countries²⁵.

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, investments and information technology. At the same time, an exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, a business forum, Belarus-Tajikistan-Afghanistan, and the TajBelAgro forum were organized in the capital of Tajikistan. 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 and in 2020 it amounted to \$111.7 million²⁶. At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Tajik market increased more than six times over the same period and reached almost \$110 million last year, while the surplus amounted to \$107.5 million due to the supply of cars, sugar, tractors and tractor trucks, flour, meat and fish products, paper and cardboard stationery, wood and chipboard from Belarus.

25 Zalesky, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. A view from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 211.

26 Belarus and Tajikistan need to more actively implement projects in agriculture - Krupko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-proekty-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 "Agrotehservis" JSC in the Tajik city of Gissar, where in the future 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 to expand the assembly production through the development of tractor semi-trailers PST-9 at Gissar were signed by "UKH Bobruiskagromash" and "Agrotekhservis". "In addition, the companies signed a contract for the supply of the first batch of machine sets, which shipment is planned for the second quarter of 2021"²⁷. Let us remind that with the help of Belarus "also operates a training center for training specialists for effective operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment operating in the fields of Tajikistan"²⁸ implementation of the contract for the delivery of one hundred Belarusian trolleybuses with autonomous running to Dushanbe is in its final stage.

Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in agriculture also developed quite dynamically in 2020. Suffice it to say that the volume of mutual trade in agricultural products and foodstuffs between the two former Soviet republics reached nearly ten million dollars. An important detail is that "the Belarusian export of food to this country grew by 1.4 times and totaled \$9.5 million <...>. In January 2021, Tajikistan exported \$775 thousand worth of Belarusian agricultural products and foodstuffs (a seven-fold increase compared to the same

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

28 <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkoooperatsiju-436006-2021/> Belarus and Tajikistan discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation and industrial cooperation. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkoooperatsiju-436006-2021/>

period last year)²⁹. 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 possibilities 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 processing plant products and Kamvol's flax-containing fabrics to the Tajik market"³⁰.

The exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, which was held in Dushanbe, was also designed to promote exports from Belarus to Tajikistan and demonstrated products of 40 domestic companies from key industries: Agrofood - agriculture and food products; TechMach - mechanical engineering and technology; Wood - woodworking industry and furniture products; Health - health care and pharmaceuticals; FMCG - consumer goods. Export opportunities of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex and the prospects of bilateral cooperation in crop and livestock Tajik partners were also able to learn at the agricultural forum "TajBelAgro", where they talked not only about contracts for mutual supplies of agricultural products and machinery, but also to explore options for cooperation. Finally, during the business forum "Tajikistan-Belarus-Afghanistan", which was attended by more than two hundred companies from the three countries, eight documents were signed on the development of partnerships in the fields of industry, education, supply of food and drinks ".³¹This demonstrates the growing dynamics of partnership in this trilateral format as well.

29_The export of Belarusian agricultural products to Tajikistan in 2020 increased by 1.4 times [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-v-14-raza-434869-2021/>

30_"Bellegprom is working on the possibility of supplying flax to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnosti-postavok-lna-v-tadzhikistan-435980-2021/>

31_Belarus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed eight documents on partnership development at a business forum [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-tadzhikistan-i-afganistan-podpisali-na-biznes-forume-8-dokumentov-o-razvitii-partnerstva-435998-2021/>

Belarus-Russia: export orientation

The results of the first two months of this year show that trade and economic ties between Belarus and Russia continue to develop along a steady growth trajectory. Thus, "the turnover of Belarusian-Russian foreign trade in goods and services in January-February 2021 amounted to \$5.3 billion, having increased by 11.9% compared with the same period in 2020. Exports of goods and services to Russia amounted to \$2.3 billion (an increase of 2%)"³² [1].

The Minsk Motor Plant (MMZ), which doubled its export deliveries to Russia in the first quarter of 2021, should be mentioned among the Belarusian companies that feel confident in the Russian market. 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 Plant will continue to develop the distribution network in Russia in two areas: engines and spare parts, as well as special machinery, in order not to lose the momentum of exports. Exports are planned to increase by 11%"³³ [2]. The plant sees one more reserve to increase supplies to the Russian market in 2021 in organizing a permanent exhibition of an extended range of engines and special equipment at the trading and exhibition sites of LLC "Trading House "Minsk Motor Plant" in Noginsk and its partners in every federal district of Russia. Cooperating today with 59 Russian companies, Minsk motor builders are now working to establish cooperative relations with ten more partners.

Belarusian Gomselmash, which has a distribution network of 60 entities in this country, including 34 dealerships, two joint ventures and one trading house

32 Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals on deepening the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high readiness [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: [http://www.government.by/ru/content/980733https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raza-uvelichil-postavki-v-rossiju-437469-2021/Minsk Motor Plant doubled its deliveries to Russia in Q1](http://www.government.by/ru/content/980733https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raza-uvelichil-postavki-v-rossiju-437469-2021/Minsk%20Motor%20Plant%20doubled%20its%20deliveries%20to%20Russia%20in%20Q1) [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://wwwhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raza-uvelichil-postavki-v-rossiju-437469-2021/>

in Siberia, also announced large-scale plans to increase supplies of its equipment to Russia in 2021. Over the 13 years of its existence, the company has sold over 3,200 units of self-propelled grain and forage harvesters in the Russian market. In 2020 the sales of Gomselmash equipment in Russia increased by 163 percent. 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 dealer center in Primorsky Krai - LLC AgroSupport". [3]. All of these facts give good reason for the Belarusian company to set a truly ambitious task for itself in 2021 - to triple the volume of its supplies to Russia.³⁴

The Belarusian Steel Works (BSW) has been actively cooperating with Russian companies this year, and 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 exports of BMZ to Russia exceeded 58 thousand tons, which is 8% more than during the same period in 2020. In monetary terms, exports to the Russian Federation exceeded \$43 million, which is a third more than during the same period last year. [4]. This was due to ³⁵an increase in sales of rebar, structural rolled steel, steel wire, and steel cord.

Another clear example of such a plan is the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ). In March 2021 alone, it supplied foreign markets with more than 93% of the total volume of produced machinery and spare parts with an export growth rate of 142%. An important detail: "The share of the most capacious of the company's traditional markets - Russian - in the total March shipment was 89.1% (growth rate - 308.1%)"³⁶ [5]. In particular, according to the long-term

34 "Gomselmash plans to triple supplies of machinery to Russian regions in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-planiruet-utroit-postavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godu-436585-2021/>

35 BMZ increases export deliveries [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlichivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/>

36 BELAZ increased production, sales, and export volumes in Q1 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v-i-kvartale-uvlichil-objemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-i-eksporta-produktsii-437188-2021/>

agreement on strategic partnership with the mining company Kuzbassrazrezugol JSC, BELAZ is to supply 29 mine dump trucks until the end of April 2021. Three of them, with a capacity of 220 tons, were shipped to one of Kuzbassrazrezugol's production branch offices - the Kedrovsky coal mine - at the end of January this year. It should be noted that the arrival of the rest of the machines will substantially enlarge the technological fleet of more than half a thousand vehicles, dominated by the Belarusian equipment at the coal mines. "Also at the enterprises of Kemerovo Oblast's flagship coal mining company BELAZ machines serve the mining and transportation operations, special equipment of the Belarusian manufacturer is used (irrigation machines, tractors, loaders, bulldozers)"³⁷ [6]. The presence of BELAZ on the Russian market is also secured by the cooperation agreement signed with the St. Petersburg Mining University in April 2021, the implementation of which should help ensure that "in September [2021] modern and specialized classrooms equipped with exclusive equipment will start working in one of the major Russian universities in mining engineering" ³⁸[7]. In this case, we are talking about the opening of the university's Innovation Center of BELAZ competence, which will be modeled 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 raise not only the training of university students, but also improve the skills of specialists and managers of enterprises that operate machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer.

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

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

Belarus - Irkutsk region: the focus of attention is to restore mutual trade

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 increase the fleet of BELARUS-branded machines, which here is already close to ten thousand machines that are in demand in the Angara Region in agriculture and public utilities. As part of further expansion of this cooperation, the Belarusian side has also announced the possibility of "transferring forest and special machines for pilot operation in the region's organizations. This type of equipment has never been supplied to the region before. We are considering the possibility of buying equipment for volunteers involved in extinguishing forest fires"³⁹. In addition, the leadership of the Russian region and the Belarusian company have already raised the issue of establishing a specialized service and technical center here, which will make it possible to repair tractors from Belarus quickly and cheaply.

Recall that the agreement on cooperation between the Irkutsk region and Minsk Tractor Works was signed in September 2020. Then the Russian region proposed "to establish several service stations on the territory of the Irkutsk Region, so that it would be possible to repair the Belarusian equipment, including overhaul"⁴⁰. Especially since the region has territories of advanced socio-economic development with benefits, as well as a surplus of labor. In March 2021 MTZ representatives already visited the site proposed by the Irkutsk side for the organization of overhaul and repair of BELARUS machinery

39 Irkutsk region will buy more than 160 BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/irkutskaja-oblast-priobretet-bolee-160-traktorov-belarus-433486-2021/>

40 MTZ and the Irkutsk region signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-i-irkutskaja-oblast-zakljuchili-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-408690-2020/>

in order to specifically determine all components of the implementation of this joint mutually beneficial project.

It should be noted that the Agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Irkutsk Region was signed in December 2016. The then adopted Plan of measures for 2017-2019 to implement this agreement included not only the supply of Belarusian equipment, but also industrial cooperation, agriculture, construction, water resources. "All in all, this list includes more than a dozen promising areas of future joint activities."⁴¹ In November 2018, the parties have already agreed on the creation and development of joint ventures in different areas. "Especially in those areas, which the region is rich in. This is the timber processing complex, mechanical engineering, aircraft construction"⁴². In September 2020 the Belarusian party also announced its readiness to participate in tenders along with other manufacturers for the supply of cargo, timber, passenger, municipal, road-building equipment for the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects in Irkutsk region. Among the promising areas of cooperation she mentioned "cooperation in the timber industry, environmental protection and natural resources, recycling of municipal waste and provision of clean drinking water to the population"⁴³.

The intensification of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Irkutsk Region five years ago had a positive impact on the bilateral trade. Suffice it to say that in 2016-2019, the volume of trade turnover between the parties has more than quadrupled and showed a record level at the end of 2019 -

41 Zalessky, B.L. The Republic of Belarus - the Irkutsk region: the accents will be set by the road map / B.L. Zalessky // Scientific strategies of modern states: collection of materials of the international scientific and practical conference (Irkutsk, December 12, 2016) - Irkutsk, "Scientific partnership "Apex", 2016. -- C. 54.

42 Matveev, V. Belarus and the Irkutsk region have agreed on the creation and development of joint ventures in various fields / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-irkutskaja-oblast-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-i-razviti-i-sp-v-raznyh-sferah-325641-2018/>

43 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus is ready to participate in tenders for the supply of equipment to the Irkutsk region [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9587>

\$284 million. The basis of Belarusian exports to Priangarye at that time consisted of supplies of wires, fluorides, trucks, tires, car parts, rolling stock, paints, varnishes, elevators, 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 stores 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. They include "heavy-duty automobile, passenger, trailed and crane trucks and spare parts of Belarusian producers MAZ and MTZ, women's clothing - Belarusian knitwear, cosmetics, food products - cheese, dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables"⁴⁴.

But the decline in economic activity caused by the coronavirus epidemic led to the fact that in 2020, "in January-October, trade turnover decreased 2.1 times"⁴⁵. That is why in December 2020, at the meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region, the parties decided in 2021 to focus their efforts on restoring the volume of mutual trade. 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 equipment, public transport, electric cars, different types of vehicles on gas-motor fuel" may be of interest in this Russian region. As we can see, the parties have opportunities for the successful solution of the task. Let's hope that they will be used in full in the near future.

44 Priority Areas of Regional Cooperation as a Key Factor in Union Building: Informational-Integration Project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleskii. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. -- C. 168.

45_The volume of trade turnover between Belarus and the Irkutsk region doubled in five years [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/objem-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusju-i-irkutskoj-oblastju-za-pjat-let-udvoilsja-420587-2020/>

Belarus - Leningrad region: the key to successful cooperation - balance of mutual interests

In March 2021, the ninth meeting of the joint commission for the development of cooperation between the Leningrad Region and the Republic of Belarus was held, where the parties signed a new agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific, technical, and socio-cultural spheres. It should be reminded that the interaction of this Russian region with the Belarusian side began in 1997, when there were signed framework agreements on cooperation with the four regions in Belarus - Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk and Mogilev regions. "A year later, the agreements were signed by the governments of Leningrad Region and the Republic of Belarus. These documents became the basis for the establishment and development of mutually beneficial relations in the following years⁴⁶

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

At the end of 2019, the Leningrad region was 11th among Russian regions in terms of trade turnover with Belarus, which then amounted to about 600 million dollars. However, in 2020, for well-known reasons of epidemiological

⁴⁶ Regions of Russia to the Republic of Belarus: Information and Integration Project. B. Zalesskii, A. Kiselev, E. Korovkin. - Minsk: Theseus, 2009. - - C. 65.

nature, it decreased slightly: in the first half of the year - about 280 million dollars. That is why in September 2020, at a high level, the parties decided to "update the program of cooperation between Belarus and the Leningrad region and set clear and specific tasks"⁴⁷. Also in 2020, the Russian side increased its purchases of Belarusian forestry equipment and began purchasing 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 region. Piteravto" is planning to make a large purchase - up to 1.5 thousand combined buses. The first hundred buses will be purchased already in the first quarter of 2021"⁴⁸.

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 garbage recycling, taking into account the prospects for cooperation. The fact is that the Russian region is considering the possibility of partnership with the Belarusian side in terms of choosing technologies for the construction of enterprises for processing household waste, relying on the experience of Brest region in this matter. Suffice it to say that "under the federal project "Clean Water" in Leningrad region has already installed 13 water treatment plants made in Belarus, and now the installation of another 9 water treatment plants and 4 modular waste treatment facilities (sewage treatment plants). During the period of 2021-2022 it is planned to purchase 108 water treatment plants and 31 sewage treatment plants made in Belarus to the amount of 1.65 and 2.40 billion Russian rubles respectively"^{49,50}.

47 Roman Golovchenko: Leningrad region can enter the top 5 trade partners of Belarus among Russian regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9586>

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

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

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

A good addition to the planned expansion of cooperation between the region and the republic in the next three years could be the intensification of interaction between the parties at the municipal level. According to the data of the Committee for External Relations of the Leningrad Region, as of today the 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 Svetlogorsky (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. Sosnovoborsk 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 used. 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 take long to achieve.

Belarus: to ensure export growth trajectory

One of the priority tasks for the development of the Belarusian economy, set forth in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2025, is the commodity and country diversification of exports, which should ensure the growth of Belarusian supplies in 2025 to 50 billion dollars, as well as "promotion of goods and services to new markets"⁵¹. It is clear that the enterprises that have already created a certain foundation for the development of foreign sales markets can contribute to the fulfillment of this task. Of course, this includes, first of all, the flagships of the Belarusian industry.

For example, despite the coronavirus pandemic, Minsk Tractor Plant exported \$530 million worth of products in 2020. At the same time, it increased deliveries to non-CIS countries by 18.5 percent. And although the main importers of its equipment remained Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, "a total of 45 countries were supplied with products, including nine countries where it was not sold in 2019 (Burundi, Britain, Haiti, Guatemala, Guinea, Dominican Republic, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Spain) . Two million tons of steel products were shipped by the Belarusian Steel Works to 52 countries in 2020. And the share of the European Union countries in the total volume of exports exceeded 45 percent. The fact that "the volume of shipments to Spain, Slovenia and France increased twofold or more. Shipments to Austria, Ireland, Romania, Poland and Finland increased⁵² by more than 30 percent."⁵³ The greatest demand

51 Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2025. - Minsk, 2020. -- C. 46.

52 MTZ increased exports to non-CIS countries by 18.5% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-v-2020-godu-uvelichil-eksport-produktsii-v-dalnee-zarubezhje-na-185-427593-2021/>

53 BMZ increased exports of metal products to 13 EU countries [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bmz-narastil-eksport-metalloproduktii-v-13-stran-evrosojuza-426139-2021/>

in the markets of these countries was for wire rod, flatbed bronze and steel wire, as well as structural steel for the automotive industry. The Minsk Motor Plant (MMZ), on the other hand, increased its supplies to Russia by more than 12 percent in 2020, exceeding \$40 million. This is largely due to the fact that in the neighboring country MMZ "cooperates with 59 Russian industrial assembly companies and is also working on establishing partnerships with ten more"⁵⁴.

Enterprises of the Belarusian light industry concern Bellegprom, which last year sent about 60 percent of all its products to 52 countries of the world, started the new five-year planning period with a rather high export surplus exceeding \$170 million. Exports to Lithuania (128.7%), Germany (104.6%), Estonia (115.3%), Japan (296.2%), Uzbekistan (107.3%), Sweden (102.8%), Bulgaria (158.2%), Slovakia (176.2%), the Czech Republic (115.8%), Israel (129.4%), Denmark (360.3%), Australia (361.2%), Austria (261.4%) have increased⁵⁵.

The Bellesbumprom Concern's enterprises also increased their exports by five percent in 2020, which reached almost 610 million dollars to 70 countries, accounting for a record three quarters of the volume of all products manufactured by the Concern. It was largely possible due to an increase in the volume of export sales to non-CIS countries. In particular, supplies to Albania, Ireland, Iceland, Cyprus, Mexico were resumed, but the highest growth rate was noted in the USA, Canada, Austria, Great Britain, Switzerland, Finland, Turkey, India, Indonesia. Besides, "export to China grew by almost 1,3 times following the results of the year. Export to Russia grew by 5.2% and to Ukraine - by 7%"⁵⁶.

It is to be assumed that in 2021 these and other Belarusian enterprises will try not to slow down their rates. At least the results of January this year show

54_MMZ in 2020 increased the volume of deliveries to Russia by more than 12% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mmz-v-2020-godu-narastil-objemy-postavok-v-rossiju-bolee-chem-na-12-425977-2021/>

55 "Bellegprom supplied products to 52 countries in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-v-2020-godu-postavil-produktsiju-v-52-strany-mira-427383-2021/>

56 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports by 5% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2020-godu-uvlechili-eksport-produktsii-na-5-427809-2021/>

that business entities in our country have taken the task of exporting quite responsibly, increasing supplies of goods and services to foreign countries by 13.5% - to more than three billion dollars. At the same time "the export of goods increased by 19.4% to \$2.36 billion <...>. The balance was positive at \$100.2 million (in January 2020, it was negative at \$61.2 million"⁵⁷ .

The companies of the Bellesbumprom Concern should be mentioned among those who have already made a significant contribution to the achievement of this indicator; in January they managed to increase export supplies of their products by another 18 percent, up to 55.5 million dollars. It happened at the expense of growth in exports of wood slabs, furniture, cellulose, plywood, paper and cardboard. All in all, almost 50 commodity positions were exported to the markets of 48 countries. An important detail: more than half of the export volume - almost 30 million dollars - was accounted for by non-CIS countries. In addition, "shipments to the European Union increased by 15.5%, to China - by 35.9%. Deliveries to the CIS markets grew by 10.6%"⁵⁸ . Among the countries leaders in this list were Russia, Poland and China. In general, the concern Bellesbumprom plans "to continue increasing exports by at least 6.5% compared to 2020"⁵⁹ . This should be facilitated both by the modernization of existing production facilities and the emergence of new ones. In particular, in this regard, this year it is planned to put into operation a plant for the production of laminated cardboard on the basis of the Dobrush paper factory "Hero of Labor" and a new production facility for the production of wood fuel - pellets - in Vitebsk.

57 Belarus increased exports of goods and services by 13.3% to \$3.057 billion in January [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-janvare-uvlichila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-135-do-3057-mlrd-432023-2021/>

58 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom in January increased exports by 18% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-janvare-uvlichili-eksport-produktsii-na-18-432143-2021/>

59 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom plan to increase exports by at least 6.5% in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-planirujut-uvlichit-eksport-ne-menee-chem-na-65-429310-2021/>

Belarus: new residents, new projects

One of the obvious trends of the first quarter of 2021 was the active arrival of new residents to Belarusian special and free economic zones with their export-oriented innovation and investment projects. Thus, 65 companies with the focus areas of "medicine, fintech, e-commerce, gaming, transportation, industry and agriculture" were registered in March 2021. ⁶⁰were registered in March 2021 as residents of the special economic zone - High-Tech Park (HTP). As a result, at the beginning of March, the HTP already had 1,021 companies, showing an enviable rate of growth in production (+43%), exports (+25%) and foreign direct investment (+26%). At the same time, "the main consumers of IT products and services of HTP residents are the United States and EU countries - they account for about 90% of all exports⁶¹.

Among the new HTP residents is the company Integration Distribution Projects, which intends to develop software and equipment for fare payment through biometric terminals in the Minsk metro, as well as to create a border guard workstation with a facial recognition system for border crossing. Another HTP resident, Badrobot, will develop a software and hardware complex consisting of an independently designed smart construction printer, embedded software and a CAD/CAM application to control the construction printer. AMIS-ITI plans to develop custom software for the areas of industrial safety, renewable energy, medicine, electric power, transport, oil and gas industry, and the product area will be represented by its own mobile application of medical profile for doctors and medical staff. RINGL Software Development plans to create a universal platform for comfortable everyday communication and

60_The number of HTP residents exceeded 1 thousand [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-pvt-prevysilo-1-tys-431144-2021/>

61_Absolute all-time record - HTP exports in 2020 exceed \$2.7 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/absolutnyj-rekord-za-vsju-istoriju-eksport-pvt-v-2020-godu-prevysil-27-mlrd-432318-2021/>

business communications with advanced features in security, social interaction and e-commerce.

In addition, residents with foreign capital have also joined the HTP, including two development centers of foreign corporations. In particular, Altoros Bel, as the development center of the American corporation Altoros, plans to create and support software in the areas of decentralized finance and COVID-19 distribution restrictions, and Deriv BAY represents the Deriv transnational group of companies and will work on various platforms in the sphere of online commerce.

If we talk about the special economic zone (SEZ) - the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where 68 business entities operate today, it is planned to attract about 17 new residents in 2021, the work with which on their registration is already underway. As a rule, these "projects are very good, some of them are really <...> systemic. For example, the project to create a multimodal railway terminal with the participation of Germany, China, Belarus and Switzerland, the construction of which will begin this year.

The Belarusian free economic zones (FEZs) are also adding new participants, "the number of residents in which at the beginning of autumn 2020 exceeded 450 business entities"⁶². Here are just a few examples. Already in January 2021 the resident of FEZ "Mogilev" became LLC "Empire Green" - a manufacturer of premium pellets and industrial pellets, which are sold not only in the domestic market, but also in foreign countries. Entering the FEZ will allow the company to increase production of the sought-after products, which "is considered one of the most effective areas of utilization of small wood waste and bark due to the use of almost 100% of the incoming raw materials"⁶³.

62 Zalesky, B. Partnership in Focus. International interaction under uncertainty and volatility / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. -- C. 23.

63_New resident registered in FEZ "Mogilev" [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-zaregistrovan-v-sez-mogilev-423476-2021/>

And in March 2021, SodaStream LLC came to FEZ "Mogilev" with an investment project in the production of plastic products for packaging of goods, engaged in the production of special lids-siphons that can be used for all carbonated and low-alcohol beverages, as well as carbonated mineral and drinking water. The new resident is already supplying its products to Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova and Romania. The implementation of this project in the FEZ "will increase regional exports, as well as help create jobs for residents of Mogilev and the Mogilev region"⁶⁴

At the end of February 2021, a new resident was also registered in the capital FEZ "Minsk" - the company "Altovatt", which will implement an investment project to build and maintain a power plant for the needs of other residents of the FEZ. Erection of this installation will allow them to reduce the cost of their products by optimizing the cost of electricity in the daytime. It is interesting that "at the stage of design and construction the project will be managed by Pua Energy, which oversees the projects of Irish investors in the Republic of Belarus. That is, there will be Irish investments in the amount of about 4.5 million euros"⁶⁵.

64.The new resident of FEZ "Mogilev" will produce plastic products for packaging goods [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-mogilev-budet-proizvodit-plastikovye-izdelija-dlja-upakovki-tovarov-432388-2021/>

65_A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will build an installation to save electricity by other residents [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-postroit-ustanovku-dlja-ekonomii-elektroenergii-drugimi-rezidentami-430335-2021/>

Belarus: the goal is to create innovative cities and regions

In March 2021 the forum of the International Telecommunication Union "Smart sustainable cities: organizational and technical aspects of development" took place in the Belarusian capital; about 200 people took part in it and the representatives of Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, the experts of the Green Cities Projects, the United Nations Development Program, the specialists of the leading Belarusian companies shared their practical experience of building a smart sustainable city. Let us note, that the concept of a smart sustainable city is defined today as "an innovative city, using information and communication technologies and other tools to improve the living standards, efficiency of urban activities and services, as well as competitiveness, while meeting the needs of present and future generations in the economic, social, environmental, cultural aspects⁶⁶. At this stage, in terms of the implementation of this topic, particularly relevant are the issues of determining comprehensive approaches to the construction of such cities, the development of conceptual documents and how to evaluate the effectiveness of development. And in this regard, the choice of the venue for this forum of the International Telecommunication Union is far from accidental, as Belarus has a rather high level of infrastructure development. In particular, "fiber optic is brought here to almost every multi-storey building. A good level of 4G coverage. Therefore, it provides an excellent technical base for layering all sorts of electronic platforms and digital services on top of the existing infrastructure. All that remains here is to implement these digital services and teach all citizens to work with them⁶⁷

66_Belarus is gradually moving towards practical implementation of the smart city concept - Shulgan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-poetapno-perehodjat-k-prakticheskoi-realizatsii-kontseptsii-umnogo-goroda-shulgan-432843-2021/>

67_The digital society should be built with people with physical disabilities in mind - ITU [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsifrovoe-obschestvo-dolzno-stroitsja-s-uchetom-ljudej-s-fizicheskimi-ogranichenijami-mse-432906-2021/>

Indeed, back in 2019, Belarus developed a model concept for the development of smart cities and carried out its adaptation for Orsha and Orsha district with refinement of the roadmap for its implementation. In 2020, adaptation of the model concept was continued in such Belarusian potential centers of economic growth as Minsk, Baranovichi, Pinsk, Novopolotsk, Bobruisk and a number of other cities. For example, "in Polotsk, the project "My City" was implemented, where the mobile application offered the possibility of a single window of customer interaction with all organizations and infrastructure of this region⁶⁸.

Having completed in 2020 the laying of fiber-optic communication lines to all settlements with more than 100 households and provided them to more than half of households with at least 50 households, Belarus has already started implementing certain fragments of the smart sustainable city concept, having advanced in three main directions. Firstly, the subscriber base of the "smart house" project is already about 60 thousand. Secondly, the total number of installed video cameras is about 35 thousand and the total number of consumers - physical and legal persons - is close to 65 thousand. Thirdly, the mobility of communication between enterprises, infrastructure of any district and the population was ensured.

In February 2021, our country adopted the State Program "Digital Development of Belarus" for 2021-2025, which consists of six subprograms: 1) "Information and analytical and organizational and technical support for digital development"; 2) "Infrastructure for digital development"; 3) "Digital development of public administration"; 4) "Digital development of economic sectors"; 5) "Regional digital development"; 6) "Information security and digital trust". At the same time, the subprogram "Regional Digital Development" provides for "the

68 Karaim: today it is important to develop the methodology and structure of the smart city [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/karaim-na-segodnja-vazhna-razrabotka-metodologii-i-struktury-umnogo-goroda-432929-2021/>

implementation of activities, the results of which will have a systemic nature for the development of "smart city" technologies in all regions of the country⁶⁹

In particular, in this case we are talking about the creation of a regional state model digital platform "Smart City (Region)", designed for the digital transformation of regional management processes, solving socio-economic and community development tasks, organizing information interaction, including building feedback from citizens. The implementation of this digital platform is expected primarily in regional centers and cities with a population of over 80 thousand people. It is also planned to switch to the practical application of information modeling technologies of urban planning units and urban spaces or the creation of "digital twins" of cities, which will allow effective modeling of urban development and management of various spheres of city life. In addition, on the basis of the Smart City (Region) digital platform the typical services will be created, including housing and communal services, accounting and property management, construction and spatial planning, management of urban and transport infrastructure, health, education, public safety, environmental monitoring, organization of citizen participation in the city management, development of culture, tourism and services in general. It should be assumed that the international forum "Smart Sustainable Cities: Organizational and Technical Aspects of Development" held in Minsk became another important step to solving the urgent issues of innovative development of the Belarusian cities and regions, enriching them with the effective international experience.

69 State program "Digital Development of Belarus" for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. - – C. 19.

Belarus: From Improving Competitiveness - to increasing export potential

The Program of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2025 in the section "Efficient and environmentally safe agriculture" sets out the tasks to improve the competitiveness of agricultural production and increase export potential in order to eventually reach "the export of food products and agricultural raw materials in 2025 - 7 billion U.S. dollars"⁷⁰[1, p. 35]. At the same time, the government plans to rely on "all segments: both crop and livestock production"⁷¹ [2], as well as on the diversification of export supplies. It should be noted that the base level for solving the set task in Belarus by the results of 2020 is not bad. The export of agricultural products and foodstuffs increased here to almost six billion dollars, providing an increase of about 37 percent over the five-year period. At the same time, "the foreign trade surplus increased from \$155 million in 2016 to \$1.5 billion in 2020, while ensuring a decrease in 2019 imports by more than \$400 million"⁷² [3]. Several factors helped achieve these figures. First, the wide geography of supplies - 116 countries with the opening of 20 new markets. And "in general, the share of far-abroad countries in the total volume of Belarusian exports of agricultural products in 2020 increased to \$766 million and amounted to almost 14 percent"⁷³ [4, p. 15]. Second, active work in the traditional markets of the post-Soviet space, including Russia, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan.

70 Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2025. - Minsk, 2020. - - C. 35.

71 Production growth and export diversification - Alexander Subbotin outlined the tasks for the meat industry [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9783>

72 Food in 2020 accounted for one fifth of Belarusian exports of goods [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prodovolstviev-v-2020-godu-obespechilo-pjatuju-chast-belorusskogo-eksporta-430479-2021/>

73 Zalessky, B.L. Food Export: Tense, but Feasible Plans / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Veda a technologie: krok do budoucnosti - 2021". Volume 8: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - - C. 15.

For example, Belarusian food exports to Russia in 2020 amounted to \$4.3 billion. And it's not just meat and dairy products, but also high-tech products. "These are seeds and planting material, breeding stock, plant protection products, veterinary drugs, feed additives, and modern agricultural equipment"⁷⁴ [5]. At the joint meeting of the board of agrarian departments of the two countries held in March 2021, the parties outlined further necessary measures to increase mutual trade and the main directions of integration of the Belarusian and Russian agricultural complexes in the Union State, which gives good reason to believe: interaction in agriculture of Belarus and Russia will only increase.

As for Uzbekistan, in 2020, the turnover of agricultural products and food products with this country in Central Asia exceeded \$87 million, increasing at once by 76 percent. An important detail is that "exports of Belarusian food products in 2020 more than doubled and reached \$73 million. supplies of Belarusian beef to Uzbekistan more than doubled, sugar - 3.5 times, dried milk - 2 times, fish and fish products - 1.5 times"⁷⁵ [6]. The parties also actively cooperated in other areas of the industry. Speaking about cattle breeding, it is necessary to remember about deliveries of about 400 heads of cattle of the Belarusian selection to Uzbekistan in 2020. In order to increase the volume of this cooperation, a joint selection and genetic center has been founded by the Belarusian Belplemzhivodobniya and Uzbek VostokMedGeruda to purchase and supply Belarusian pedigree cattle to Uzbekistan, as well as provide scientific and technological support. In the field of veterinary OJSC "BelVitunifarm" together with the Samarkand Institute of Veterinary Medicine and the Research Institute of Veterinary Medicine have decided to establish a joint venture for the

⁷⁴[https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/Russia accounted for more than 70% of Belarusian food exports in 2020 \[Electronic resource\]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/>](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/Russia%20accounted%20for%20more%20than%2070%20of%20Belarusian%20food%20exports%20in%2020%20[Electronic%20resource].%20-%202021.%20-%20URL:%20https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/economics/view/bolee-70-belorusskogo-eksporta-prodovolstvija-v-2020-godu-prihodilos-na-rossiju-432008-2021/)

⁷⁵ Belarusian food exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-uzbekistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-431838-2021/>

production of veterinary drugs and vaccines in the Uzbek territory. In the area of breeding, result of cooperation between Scientific and Research Center of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Research Institute of Vegetables, Melons and Potatoes of Uzbekistan has resulted in obtaining 45 varieties of vegetables and 6 varieties of melons produced in Belarus. There are results in seed breeding, where partnership relations are actively developed by "Belsemena" and the Center of Seed Breeding of Uzbekistan. In 2020, samples of seeds of peas, beans, carrots, onions and tomatoes of Uzbek selection were sent to Belarus for testing, and seeds of tomatoes, onions, beets, carrots radishes and beans of Belarusian selection were successfully grown in Uzbekistan. Finally, in the field of education, Tashkent State Agrarian University and Grodno State Agrarian University have established joint faculties in Tashkent and Andijan and started to accept students for bachelor's degrees in "Plant protection and quarantine" and "Technology of storage and processing of animal raw materials".

Last year, exports of Belarusian agricultural products to Azerbaijan also increased by more than 10 percent. More precisely, "in 2020, the turnover of agricultural products and food reached \$35 million and increased by 5.3 percent compared to 2019. Exports of goods - \$30.4 million (or 110.7%), imports \$4.6 million"⁷⁶ [7]. This was due to deliveries from Belarus of a wide range of dairy and meat products from such Belarusian exporting enterprises as Belovezhskie Cheese, Luninets Dairy Plant, Molochny Mir, Rogachev Dairy and Canning Plant, Kalinkovich Dairy Plant, Lida Dairy and Canning Plant, and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. Enterprises of Belarus will take part in the international food industry exhibition InterFood Azerbaijan in June 2021, thus opening up new opportunities for entering the consumer market of this South Caucasus country. So there are good prospects for increasing exports.

⁷⁶ Exports of Belarusian products to Azerbaijan in 2020 increased by 10.7% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-azerbajdzhan-v-2020-godu-vyros-na-107-433105-2021/>

Belarus: the project of the future is realized today

In the Republic of Belarus the draft of the state program of innovative development for 2021-2025 has been prepared, which envisages the implementation of about 80 innovative projects to create high-tech industries. Among the priorities should be the development of six "projects of the future", which are oriented to new production, technology and goods, corresponding to global trends and taking into account the development of markets. One of the most notable among them concerns national electric transport. The implementation of the prepared comprehensive program for the development of this industry in 2021-2025 will not only create a new machine-building sector in Belarus - electric vehicles, but will also have a large-scale multiplier effect on the innovative development of other industries, such as metallurgy, electrical engineering, robotics, information technology. In addition, "the development of samples of new equipment, the creation of 14 production facilities for freight, passenger and special electric vehicles, including the assembly production of electric cars at BELJI CJSC, as well as the basic components for it" is envisaged⁷⁷.

As a reminder, back in March 2020, Belarus adopted the decree "On Stimulating the Use of Electric Vehicles," which provided for "measures to stimulate demand for this eco-friendly vehicle in the country, as well as the creation of appropriate charging and service infrastructure in the regions"⁷⁸. In January 2021, the draft of a comprehensive program for the development of electric transport in 2021-2025, developed by the National Academy of Sciences in collaboration with other stakeholders, which provides to increase the share of

77 Shumilin, A. How Belarus plans to develop high-tech sector / A. Shumilin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kak-belarus-planiruet-razvivat-vysokotehnologichnyj-sektor-7711/>

78 Zalessky, B.L. The future is for electric cars / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science without borders - 2020", March 30 - April 7, 2020. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - - C. 76.

public electric transport in Belarus up to 30 percent by 2025, was considered at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, which voiced the main requirements of the Government to the content of the document: "The program must be really comprehensive - from scientific research and development to stimulating the use of electric vehicles. In other words, it should be "end-to-end" and touch upon virtually all spheres related to electric transport in one way or another"⁷⁹. This may be the reason why other topical high-level documents also talk about the development of electric transport in Belarus. In particular, the State Program "Energy Saving" for 2021-2025 stipulates the development of production of electric transport, components and charging infrastructure for it in the industrial sector in order to achieve the goals, while in the field of transport it provides for "development of electric cars, hybrid cars and charging network, electrification of urban passenger transport in order to replace the use of hydrocarbon fuel"⁸⁰.

As for the research component of this topic, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus as far back as January 2021 outlined its plans to create an experimental production of Belarusian electric cars. The fact is that domestic scientists are working on middle class models designed for a wide range of consumers. We are talking about producing several models at once: cargo, passenger car, minivan, even a sports car. It is also characteristic that "it is not Geely, it is a fundamentally different electric car with completely Belarusian stuffing. <...> Several battery models - lithium-ion, graphene and graphene-lead - are being developed for the Belarusian electric car," so that its range would be 500 kilometers⁸¹.

79 The share of public electric transport in Belarus wants to increase to 30% by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9713>

80 State Program "Engergo-Saving" for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. - - C. 15.

81 The National Academy of Sciences expects to create an experimental production of Belarusian electric cars [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-rasschityvaet-sozdat-eksperimentalnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-elektromobilej-425463-2021/>

In this regard, it should be noted that at the exhibition of achievements and the most significant results of scientific, technical and innovative activities "Days of Belarusian Science - 2021" held in Minsk in January 2021, it was already possible to see a mock sample of the electric car Academic Electro of the United Institute of Machine Building, designed for transportation in closed areas, that is, without going to public roads, and designed for two passengers. "The maximum speed of the electric car is 50 km/h. The frame-panel type of the body allows the production of small batches according to the customer's requirements⁸². Another peculiarity of this novelty is that the power part of its cabin contains no metal elements: it is made of fiberglass plastic. In addition, the United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences is already implementing a number of joint projects with several Belarusian companies. Thus, "an electric truck is being developed together with MAZ, which will be equipped with an electric propulsion system developed at the institute⁸³. And the result of the work with Minsk Tractor Plant will be an electric ice-pouring machine for ice rinks, the production of the first batch of which is scheduled for 2021. As for the production of electric cars on the basis of BELJI, five hundred to one thousand electric cars are to be delivered to Belarus in 2021, "in order to study the demand, understand the possibilities, and then do all the necessary work to prepare the production. We should expect electric cars closer to the second half of the year⁸⁴. In short, the measures taken in Belarus to create their own electric cars should yield results in the near future.

82 New drone and electric car - the National Academy of Sciences will present about 200 developments at the exhibition for the Science Day [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/novyy-bes-pilotnik-i-elektromobil-nan-predstavit-okolo-200-razrabotok-na-vystavke-ko-dnju-nauki-425608-2021/>

83 Electric Trucks, Electric Combines, and Electric Passenger Cars - What Belarusian Scientists are Working on [Electronic Resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/elektrogruzoviki-elektrokombajny-i-legkovye-elektromobili-nad-chem-rabotajut-belorusskie-uchenye-426333-2021/>

84 "BELJI will study demand for electric cars and prepare for production - Parkhomchik [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-izuchit-spros-na-elektromobili-i-budet-gotovitsja-k-proizvodstvu-parhomchik-423890-2021/>

Belarus: from the scientific support system - to the creation of a new machine-building industry

In April 2021 the Republic of Belarus approved the Complex program of electric transport development for 2021-2025, which should become one of the priorities among the six "future projects" of innovative development of the Belarusian economy with an orientation "to new productions, technologies and goods, corresponding to the world trends and taking into account the development of markets"⁸⁵ [1, p. 69]. The program is aimed at achieving such main objectives as: 1) creation of a new branch of mechanical engineering - production of electric transport; 2) provision of conditions for increasing the number of used vehicles on electric traction; 3) expansion of infrastructure of electric transport; 4) minimization of negative impacts on ecology. For this purpose the complex program assumes the solution of seven tasks: 1) creating a system of scientific support; 2) organizing the production of electric transport; 3) forming a set of institutional conditions for the development of electric transport; 4) creating the infrastructure of electric transport, including electric charging stations (EPS); 5) coordinating the actions of state bodies to develop electric transport and its infrastructure; 6) forming and implementing measures to stimulate the development of electric transport from scientific support, acquisition and operation to disposal and recycling; 7) minimizing eco

Two subprograms - "Production and technological base of electric transport" and "Creation of charging infrastructure for electric transport" - stipulate creating scientific reserves and production base to increase the number of electric-powered vehicles in use, as well as a developed network of electric filling stations, which will ensure the smooth movement of electric cars throughout Belarus. And among the activities planned by the comprehensive

85 Zalesky, B.L. Electric cars: the project of the future is realized today / B.L. Zalesky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Klyuchovi v voprosi v svremennata nauk - 2021, 17 - 25 April 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - - C. 69.

program, we note the creation of pilot experimental production of electric vehicles, as well as "exemption of road users of electric vehicles from charging for the use of parking lots that are in public ownership"⁸⁶ [2]. In addition, this type of transport is exempt from transport tax in the Republic of Belarus. More precisely, "owners of vehicles of category M1, M1G (electric cars and electric cars with increased mobility), driven solely by electric motor, will not pay transport tax. Such a benefit is provided until December 31, 2025". [3].⁸⁷

Of course, all these measures create good conditions for the growth in the number of electric cars, which by mid-March 2021 in our country already numbered more than two and a half thousand. At the same time, "the volume of electricity consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles in Belarus in 2020 almost doubled compared to 2019 - up to 7.7 million kWh. [4]. Every month, up to two hundred new users are now registered in the EHS network. And "there are an average of 250 charging sessions every day at the stations, and in ⁸⁸the last two months [January and February] their total number exceeded 15,000."⁸⁹ [5]. The comprehensive program contains serious measures to develop the EPS network. If now this network consists of 288 EHS, then by the end of 2021 there should be already 471 of them. At the second stage (2022-2025) they will be added to 466, and at the third stage (2026-2030) another 407.

Another important issue of this topic is that budget Chinese electric cars are especially popular among Belarusian consumers today, due to the fact that domestic models simply do not exist yet. The comprehensive program in this

86 On the Comprehensive Program of electric transport development up to 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2025. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/9804>

87 Tax Ministry: electric cars are exempt from transport tax until the end of 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mns-elektromobili-osvobozhdeny-ot-transportnogo-naloga-do-kontsa-2025-goda-434965-2021/>

88 Electricity consumption by electric vehicle charging stations in Belarus almost doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: https://atom.belta.by/ru/news_ru/view/elektropotreblenie-zarjadnymi-stantsijami-dlja-elektrotransporta-v-belarusi-v-2020-godu-vyroslo-pochti-11190/

89 The number of electric cars in Belarus exceeded 2.5 thousand [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-prevysilo-25-tys-431822-2021/>

regard states that "it is planned to master serial production of electric cars in BELJI CJSC and produce 1,000 electric cars based on the Geometry C model in 2021". ⁹⁰[6, p. 20], as well as to create experimental assembly production of single samples and small batches of electric cars of various modifications at the United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, based on the maximum use of components and assemblies of Belarusian production.

As for other types of electric-powered transport vehicles, a very extensive development program has been outlined. In particular, by the end of 2023, production of electric buses for passenger transportation at airports with Belarusian-made power plant components is to be mastered. The United Institute of Mechanical Engineering together with the Minsk Automobile Plant will create a sample electric truck with a payload capacity of about four and a half tons, and with Belkommunmash - up to ten tons. The fleet of the Belarusian electric vehicles must also include a domestic electric garbage truck. Finally, the Belarusian Automobile Plant "within the framework of the program intends to create a sample of battery-operated dump truck. The gross weight of such a vehicle will be 176 tons, payload capacity - 90 tons"⁹¹ [7].

As we can see, the expansion of electric vehicles in Belarus in the coming years should become one of the most promising areas of development, which will not only reduce the use of imported energy carriers, but will also improve the environmental situation, as well as ensure the use of capacity of the Belarusian energy system.

90 Comprehensive program of electric transport development for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. -- C. 20.

91 Electric dump truck, electric garbage truck and electric car of Belarusian production are planned to be created by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <http://doingbusiness.by/elektrosamosval-elektromusorovoz-i-elektromobil-belorusskogo-proizvodstva-planiruetsya-sozdat-do-2025-goda>

Gomel region: the Chinese vector of partnership

In April 2021, the Gomel Region and China's **Sichuan** Province signed an agreement to establish twinning relations, which provides for expanded cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres. As a reminder, the Belarusian and Chinese regions established friendly relations six years ago, when in May 2015 they signed an agreement on cooperation, which envisaged "organization of interaction on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in such areas as economy, agriculture, health and culture, education, sports and tourism," and also agreed to establish direct cooperation in the fields of economy, agriculture, health and culture, education, sports and tourism.⁹² Also they agreed to establish direct contacts and twinning arrangements between the cities of the region and the province. And already three years later - in August 2018 - the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations was accepted by the administrative centers of the regions - the cities of Gomel and Chengdu.

By that time, interregional cooperation of the Gomel region on the Chinese vector developed in three more directions - with the Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions (2016) and the Jiangsu province (2016). This allowed the region's enterprises to increase exports to China almost three and a half times, from \$3.9 million to \$13.5 million in 2018. The main export items then were dairy products, flax, wool, and lumber. The list of accredited enterprises for the supply of dairy products to the Chinese market already included "five Gomel producers: Milkavita, Rogachev Dairy Canning Plant, Turov and Kalinkovichi Dairy Plants, and Mozyr Dairy Products"⁹³.

92 Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 173.

93_Enterprises of Gomel region in 2018 increased exports of goods to China almost 3.5 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-v-2018-godu-uvelichili-eksport-tovarov-v-kitaj-pochti-v-35-raza-338253-2019/>

The next two years showed an even more impressive growth of export supplies from the Gomel region to China, convincingly demonstrating how much demand for these products is in the Chinese market. In particular, "in 2020, with an increase of 32%, \$91 million worth of goods were sent to this country⁹⁴. The basis of these supplies was already made up of wood pulp, timber, meat and dairy products, confectionery products. And it should be assumed that the current level of interaction with Chinese regions is far from exhausting its potential, as "Gomel producers are ready to meet the needs of the Chinese side in flax, confectionery products, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, carbon fibers, nonwoven carbon fiber, lumber and furniture"⁹⁵. In addition, there is considerable interest in expanding supplies of Gomselmash's corncob and forage harvesters to the Celestial Empire.

It should be noted that Gomel Region has great reserves for development in cooperation with almost every Chinese partner or twin region, agreements reached earlier with which need to be updated today. For example, in the same province of Sichuan, where more than 90 million people live, in its administrative center - Chengdu, back in November 2019 opened the Belarusian national pavilion, divided into seven zones, where they began to sell Belarusian goods, including food and drinks, agricultural products and handicrafts. At the same time, the Belarusian and Chinese sides said they were ready "to create a comprehensive bilateral platform for ties that would encompass such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investment and services" on the basis of the pavilion⁹⁶. Let's hope that the agreement signed in April 2021 to establish

94_Enterprises of the Gomel region increased exports to China by a third [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-tret-velichili-eksport-produktsii-v-kr-434841-2021/>

95_Gomel region and the Chinese province of Sichuan signed agreements on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-sichuan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

96_Mozgov E. The Belarusian National Pavilion was opened in Chengdu, China / E. Mozgov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/v-kitayskom-chendu-otkrylsya-beloruskiy-natsionalnyy-pavilon.html>

twinning relations between the Homiel Region and Sichuan Province will become another real tool to solve the task.

Interesting opportunities may open up in 2021 in cooperation between the Gomel region and the Chinese **Inner Mongolia** Autonomous Region. After all, in 2019, the regions already adopted a cooperation program for 2020. And backed up this document at the same time with an Agreement of Intent regarding the establishment of twinning relations between the administrative centers of the region and the autonomous region - the cities of Gomel and Hohhot, which provided for the development of cooperation in the economy, trade, science, technology, environment, culture, education, sports, tourism, and health. Additional opportunities for expanding this cooperation are offered by the fact that Inner Mongolia is an area rich in "natural resources: forests in the east, iron ore in the west, cattle breeding in the north and grain growing in the south"⁹⁷"mechanical engineering, in particular the production of agricultural machinery," as well as food industry and construction. ⁹⁸The Russian side also mentioned "mechanical engineering, in particular, production of agricultural machinery, as well as food industry and construction. The seriousness of Gomel enterprises' intentions to enter the Inner Mongolian market with their products is evidenced by their participation in the Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Hohhot in June 2019, where "investment potential of Gomel region, <...> Gomel meat and milk company, Spartak Production Association were presented with separate presentations. We must assume that all these intentions of the parties to cooperate today are already entering the phase of implementation of specific joint projects.

97 Signed agreement of intent [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo

98 The authorities of the Chinese city of Huh Hoto intend to develop relations with Gomel in industry [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vlasti-kitajskogo-goroda-huh-hoto-namereny-razvivat-otnoshenija-s-gomelem-v-promyshlennosti-366222-2019/>

Vitebsk region: emphasis on innovation

To create new points of economic growth in the Belarusian regions, including for the implementation of complex "projects of the future" in order to reach the level of innovative development of the leading countries in Eastern Europe - the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary - by 2025 is the task set in the Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2025. In this connection in Vitebsk region for the next five years five branches in which hi-tech enterprises will be created for the purpose of production of world standards were defined: 1) electric transport; 2) bioindustry; 3) pharmaceuticals; 4) robotics; 5) production of composite materials. And not just defined, but "there are already first steps in the implementation of these areas, and in 2021-2025 will be actively implemented innovative and investment projects in these areas"⁹⁹ .

As far as **electric transport and the electric industry** are concerned, great hopes are pinned here on Vityaz JSC. This company is the first Belarusian manufacturer of infrastructure for electric cars to create high-power models of chargers. We are talking about creating a prototype of an ultra-fast electric charging station for 200 kW. "The time to fully charge the battery of an electric vehicle capable of realizing the potential of such stations will be about 10 minutes"¹⁰⁰ . In 2021, these ultra-fast charging stations are planned to be delivered to the state operator for pilot operation. We would like to remind you that in 2020 Vityaz certified the system of design and production of electric charging stations for compliance with the requirements of international standard

99 Pushnyakova, A. Matskevich on the industry of Vitebsk region: emphasis is placed on the development of five high-tech industries / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/matskevich-o-promyshlennosti-vitebskoj-oblasti-aktsent-sdelan-na-razvitii-5-vysokotehnologichnyh-431976-2021/>

100 "Vityaz will create a prototype of an ultra-fast electric charging station for electric cars by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/vitjaz-do-kontsa-goda-sozdast-opytnej-obrazets-sverhbystroj-elektrozariadnoj-stantsii-dlja-413363-2020/>

STB ISO 9001-2015. And the first model of such station was installed on the parking lot near the enterprise back in 2017.

In terms of **bioindustry** development, we are talking about such "projects of the future" as the construction of a digitized plant for the production of innovative veterinary drugs of the "green line" series. This project is implemented in the free economic zone "Vitebsk. The enterprise, along with the traditional veterinary drugs, will expand the production of original drugs for the treatment of animals, which are developed together with the scientists of the Vitebsk State Academy of Veterinary Medicine. The plant is being erected in three stages. This year the production of non-sterile drugs is supposed to be transferred to the new site. "The third start-up complex implies organization of sterile production. It is the most expensive part of the project, which is planned to be completed by 2025. At least 80 jobs will be created at the enterprise"¹⁰¹ . At the same time, the implementation of the project will allow the Vitebsk company, established back in 1995, to significantly expand its export potential.

In **the pharmaceutical industry**, the five-year innovation plans are related to the work of the specialized cluster, which was created in Vitebsk in August 2015. To be absolutely precise, the medical-pharmaceutical cluster "Union of medical, pharmaceutical and scientific-educational organizations "Medicine and Pharmaceutics - Innovative Projects" today includes Vitebsk State Medical University, SOOO Nativita, OJSC "BelVitulifarm", "VitVar" LLC, "AconitPharma" JLLC, "Medelkombel" JLLC, "Pharmmarketing Group" LLC, CCUE "Vitebsk Regional Marketing Center", NP "Union of pharmaceutical and biomedical clusters" (Russia), RUP "Akadempharm", LLC "SIVital", Vitebsk State University named after P. Masherov. Masherov. Since 2018, expert councils with the participation of leading scientists, representatives of research centers and pharmaceutical industry enterprises began to be formed

¹⁰¹ Belkarolin company will launch pharmaceutical production according to GMP standards by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kompanija-belkarolin-k-2025-godu-zapustit-farmproizvodstvo-po-standartam-gmp-383600-2020/>

here to improve the interaction of science and practice. "This form of communication allows the participants of the pharmaceutical cluster to use the scientific potential not only of the Vitebsk region, but also of the country as a whole, and also makes it possible to reduce the time distance between the creation of a drug and its introduction into production." ¹⁰².

The direction of **robotics** in the Vitebsk region is being developed, first of all, by Belwest LLC, where robotic software and hardware complexes developed in the company's own scientific laboratory are gradually being introduced. The fact is that the share of manual labor in the footwear industry is very high. "For some types of shoes the total number of operations performed is close to 250, of which only two are automated. Each product can go through up to 185 pairs of workers' hands"¹⁰³. That's why the company has set a course for full or partial automation of many of these processes. And they have already created samples of innovative equipment that have no analogues in the world.

As for **the production of composite materials**, even in 2018 specific steps in this direction were made on the Vitebsk region. In particular, they created Polotsk composite cluster, which already includes 11 enterprises. Today they not only produce composite materials, but also conduct scientific research on the development of high-tech production of composites. "Among the cluster projects are such as "Composite armature", "Basalt-plastic and fiberglass macro-fiber for concrete", "Human capital" ¹⁰⁴.

102_Vitebsk State University entered the medical-pharmaceutical cluster [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskij-gosuniversitet-voshel-v-sostav-mediko-farmatsevticheskogo-klastera-303786-2018/>

103 Sumaneyev Y. Director of Belwest about competition, robots in the light industry and bonuses for non-smokers / Y. Sumaneyev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/direktor-belvesta-o-konkurentisii-robotah-v-legpromeh-i-bonusah-dlja-nekurjaschih-6889/>

104_Innovative-industrial composite cluster Polotsk [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://clusterland.by/2019/11/16/innovaczionno-promyshlennyj-kompozitnyj-klaster-v-g-poloczki/>

Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk": Innovation, investment, infrastructure

The Free Economic Zone (FEZ) "Vitebsk" is one of the real tools of economic development of the Vitebsk region in an innovative way. Today 56 investment projects are being implemented here in 16 sectors with the participation of investors from 15 countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Great Britain, the United States of America, Israel, Cyprus and Estonia. In 2020, they exported their products for more than 550 million dollars, which amounted to almost one third of the volume of deliveries to foreign markets of the entire Vitebsk region. This made it possible to obtain a positive balance of foreign trade: goods - more than 177 million dollars, services - more than 13 million dollars. "At the same time FEZ "Vitebsk" is the only free economic zone in the field of services with the excess of exports over imports. The total amount of services rendered to foreign partners was \$24.4 million¹⁰⁵.

These high indicators would not have been possible without the reliance on an active investment policy, which is characteristic of this FEZ. Suffice it to say that in 2020, the inflow of foreign direct investment here increased by another 16 percent and exceeded 30 million dollars. Thanks to this, 235 new jobs were created here, more than one and a half times the level declared in the business plans. The important detail: last year six new economic entities registered in the free economic zone as residents with the total volume of declared investments - more than 35 million dollars, which will allow to create here at least 100 more jobs. Five of them are companies with foreign capital. "Businessmen from Russia, Canada, Ireland and Azerbaijan intend to realize projects on organization of production of food cans, protection means and special purpose production, match straws, to build photovoltaic stations for

¹⁰⁵ Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" in 2020 increased production by 17% [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-2020-godu-uvelichili-objem-proizvodstva-produktsii-na-17-429730-2021>

energy supply of residents' activity as well as to establish production of plastic lubricants of wide operation temperature range"¹⁰⁶.

Three more enterprises received the status of FEZ resident in two incomplete months of 2021. The first of them in the beginning of January was LLC "STS-Beton" with an investment project on development of building materials production. The new resident specializing in the production of cement and concrete, plans to expand the range and master the production of new products for the construction industry after purchasing new equipment. "This will allow to increase volume indicators, as well as to enter new markets, including exporting products." ¹⁰⁷.

In the middle of January the FEZ registered Hidropress LLC with a project to develop the production of special hydraulic presses. The company operating in Polotsk and specializing in the development and production of special hydraulic presses for enterprises of general engineering, railroad, military-industrial complex, plans to update the machine park, replenish it with new machines, which will give the opportunity to master the production of new types of products of its own design. "Among the novelties will be the equipment for the production of pipeline fittings for oil and gas industry, as well as a large hydroforming press, which is in demand for the production of shells for the rocket and space industry. Besides, production of the equipment for utilization of 200-liter barrels from fuel and lubricants in field conditions will develop further¹⁰⁸. It is commonly known that the environmental problem related to the 200-liter barrels is typical of the Arctic zone. That is why its solution will allow the new FEZ resident to almost completely export its products.

106_Vityaz JSC is recognized as the best resident of FEZ Vitebsk by the results of 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/oaovitjazpriznanoluchshimrezidentomsezvitebskpoitogam2020goda4295412021/>

107_The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of construction materials [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyjrezidentsezvitebskbudetrazvivatproizvodstvostroitelnyhmaterialov4229192021/>

108_The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of special hydraulic press equipment [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyjrezidentsezvitebskbudetrazvivatproizvodstvo-spetsialnogo-gidropressovogo-oborudovanija4242312021/>

In mid-February, a private enterprise "New Century Spring" appeared in the FEZ with a project to modernize import-substituting production of components for agricultural machinery. The new resident is an associate member of the Russian association Rosspetsmash, which unites manufacturers of agricultural, construction and road machinery, trailers and semi-trailers. The investment project to be implemented in the free economic zone will make it possible to increase the total output 1.5 times, expand the assortment of manufactured teeth springs, tensile and compression springs for machine building enterprises, as well as create additional opportunities for diversifying exports and increasing supplies to foreign markets. And this despite the fact that today this company already exports more than half of its production to partners from Russia.

In addition, "as promising for registration in the FEZ "Vitebsk" are considered two more investment projects to create a wood processing park and organization of the enterprise for the production of bio-coal, which investors from China and Sweden are interested in implementing"¹⁰⁹. For these and other promising projects to be successful, the FEZ is taking active steps to develop additional energy, water supply and construction of railroad access roads on the territory of the Zhurzhevo sector on the outskirts of Vitebsk, where "development of the engineering and transport infrastructure of the site will allow to attract at least \$165 million in foreign investment and organize around 1,000 jobs for projects already implemented or being worked out for registration this year"¹¹⁰. It should be assumed that the fulfillment of all these plans will mean that FEZ "Vitebsk" will reach a qualitatively new level of innovative development.

109 The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of components for agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-budet-razvivat-proizvodstvo-komplektujuschih-dlja-selhoz mashin-429288-2021/>

110 About Br40 mln is planned to be invested in the construction of infrastructure facilities of FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-br40-mln-planiruetsja-investirovat-v-stroitelstvo-objektov-infrastruktury-sez-vitebsk-429858-2021>

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: opportunities for the European vector of trade

The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) plans to seriously expand cooperation with European business circles in 2021 because of the enormous and yet unrealized potential of this partnership vector. This can be judged on the basis of trading in January 2021, which resulted in an immediate 27 percent increase in the export of lumber through the BUBS, exceeding \$ 30 million. At the same time, "the main markets were Germany, Latvia and Lithuania. Companies from these countries purchased Belarusian lumber products for a total of \$24.4 million¹¹¹. Representatives of such European countries as Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Estonia were also among the largest buyers of this type of products, with which wooden billets for export were in the highest demand. Suffice it to say that during the first exchange trading on the BUTB in 2021 over one and a half million wooden utility poles worth more than one million euros were sold to the United Kingdom alone, which immediately exceeded the amount of exports to this country in 2020. An important detail: previously these products were supplied to the British market in much smaller quantities and mainly through intermediaries in the Baltic States. The results of this January trading session clearly confirmed the high export potential of timber products made in our country, as well as the trend observed last year, when "the amount of exchange transactions for exports of rounded and debarked wood products in 2020 amounted to 4.2 million euros. The main markets were Germany, Latvia Lithuania and Poland"¹¹².

111_In January lumber exports through the BUTB increased by 27% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-janvare-eksport-pilomaterialov-cherez-butb-vyros-na-27-429846-2021/>

112_A British company bought more than 1 million euros worth of wood products through the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/britanskaja-kompanija-kupila-cherez-butb-produktsiju-derevoobrabotki-bolee-chem-na-1-mln-evro-424714-2021/>

Planning to expand the geography of sales of the same wood products in the European vector in 2021, the BUTB is already working on the possibility of exporting Belarusian lumber, for example, to France. Thus, in February 2021 they outlined the prospects of using the mechanism of exchange trading with the French importer of timber - Bois Import SA. The fact is that this company has been buying lumber, including Belarusian lumber, from the Baltic countries for a long time. However, the coronavirus pandemic made adjustments to this arrangement, forcing to look for alternative markets. So Belarus came to the attention of French buyers, where about half of all manufactured lumber - about two million cubic meters - is already sold for export through the mechanism of exchange trading. It is clear that this opens up a lot of opportunities for importers from France. Especially since the French company was also invited "not to limit itself to lumber, but to consider buying other wood products as well, including wood pellets. Six new pellet plants were built and put into operation in Belarus in 2020. Six more are planned for construction this year [2021]¹¹³. As a result, the annual volume of exports from Belarus could reach about 250 thousand tons of pellets.

The fact that the possibility of sales of Belarusian fuel pellets or pellets through BUTB in 2021 to European countries may seriously increase can be judged by the interest of European businessmen in the online conference Nordic Pellets Conference 2021, organized by the Swedish bioenergy association Svebio in late January 2021. The event brought together leading bioenergy experts and biofuel producers from Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They were brought to this conference by the fact that today in the European Union there is a steady growth in demand for pellets. This, in turn, contributes not only to the increase of own production capacity of European producers, but also imports of such products from other

113 BUTB is working on the possibility of exporting Belarusian lumber to France [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnost-eksporta-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-vo-frantsiju-430040-2021/economics/view/butb-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnost-eksporta-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-vo-frantsiju-430040-2021>

countries, including Belarus. At the same time, BUTB is confident that "given the low capacity of the domestic market, almost the entire volume of pellets produced in Belarus can be supplied abroad, which will make our country one of the largest exporters in the region"¹¹⁴. After all, the use of the BUTB platform by European companies will allow them to buy any required volume of products directly from Belarusian producers, both under one-time and annual contracts. The demand for this type of e-commerce is confirmed by the statistics for 2020, when \$260 million worth of lumber alone was sold, and companies from 30 countries were the buyers. Another type of product in demand in European countries, vegetable oils and feed additives, whose exports rose 2.3 times to \$26 million in the first 10 months of 2020, accounting for more than 40 percent of agricultural exports through BUTB. "Increased demand for Belarusian vegetable oils in the Baltic States contributed to the growth of export supplies: oilseeds products worth \$14.7 million were sold there, with Lithuania being the leader in purchases with \$6.2 million in transactions."¹¹⁵ At the same time in just a month and a half beet pulp and molasses were sold through the BUTB for almost two million dollars, the main buyers of which were again the countries of the European Union. Finally, in January 2021, the export of rapeseed oil through the BUOTB grew almost tenfold, "reaching \$8.4 million"¹¹⁶. And here the leaders in terms of the amount of transactions are Latvia, Estonia and Switzerland. The very dynamics of growth in sales in the European direction suggests that the opportunities to expand Belarusian exports in this foreign track are far from exhausted.

114 BUTB is ready to promote exports of fuel pellets to Northern Europe [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-sodejstvovat-eksportu-toplivnyh-granul-v-severnuju-evropu-426052-2021/.economics/view/butb-gotova-sodejstvovat-eksportu-toplivnyh-granul-v-severnuju-evropu-426052-2021/>

115_Vegetable oils and feed additives accounted for more than 40% of agricultural exports through the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rastitelnye-masla-i-kormovye-dobavki-obespechili-bolee-40-eksporta-selhozproduksii-cherez-butb-415013-2020/>

116_Rapeseed oil export through the BUTB in January increased almost 10 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rapsovo-go-masla-cherez-butb-v-janvare-vyros-pochti-v-10-raz-426697-2021/>

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Vector of partnership - the countries of the "far arc"

Increasing the share of companies from the "far arc" countries - Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America - in the exchange commodity turnover is one of the priority development objectives of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) in 2021. This can be explained by the significant potential that exists in the interaction with these partners, and the successful implementation of which promises considerable benefits to both Belarusian exporters and foreign importers. First of all, the People's Republic of China should be mentioned among the countries of the "far arc", the development of business contacts with representatives of which is particularly intense at the BUTB today. Suffice it to say that "at the end of the first two months [of 2021], China outperformed almost all of the major markets that Belarus is currently trading with in terms of the volume of exchange transactions"¹¹⁷.

In this context, it is quite significant that at the beginning of March 2021 the 5,000th foreign company accredited for participation in trading on the BUOTB was the Chinese trading and manufacturing company Wenzhou Ruijun Steel Co. Ltd, which in addition became the 36th company from China on the exchange. The enterprise is going to use this exchange platform to supply Belarus with rolled steel and other ferrous metal products. At the initial stage it will be sales of pipes, and then, depending on the dynamics of sales and market conditions, the range of products will be gradually expanded. Probably, approximately as it happens at the BUTB with woodworking products.

We would like to remind you that special trading sessions on selling lumber for export with delivery in containers to the destination on the Chinese market have been held at BUTB since December 2020. "As a result, the volume

117_The 5,000th non-resident company accredited on the BUTB [Electronic Resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-5-tysjachnaja-kompanija-nerезident-431246-2021/>

of supplies of domestic lumber products to China has increased significantly and in January-February amounted to almost \$5 million in monetary terms. This is largely contributed by the fact that almost every month two or three new Chinese companies are added to the bidding for timber products on the BUTB. This has a positive effect on forming a highly competitive environment here and allows timber processors from Belarus to sell lumber on more favorable terms. In particular, during the first exchange trade of timber products for the Chinese market in January 2021 over 11 thousand cubic meters of sawn timber was sold for about two and a half million dollars. Due to the price increase during the trading session, the exporters from Belarus received additional proceeds of more than \$90 thousand. And "the entire volume of the lumber for sale was purchased with delivery to Qingdao - the largest seaport in Shandong province. This increases the attractiveness of Belarusian goods for Chinese buyers, while domestic exporters get an opportunity to expand the geography of sales and increase revenues¹¹⁸¹¹⁹

It is also important in terms of development of the Chinese vector on the BUTB is the fact that in 2021 there started export deals on such perspective for Chinese buyers items as rapeseed oil, milk powder and sugar. As for rapeseed oil, immediately after the start of its delivery to the Chinese market through the exchange platform, according to the results of the first two trading sessions, the deals were made to the total amount of about one and a half million dollars. This allowed China to take the second place in terms of the amount of transactions with these products, displacing the leaders of the year 2020 - Latvia, Estonia and Switzerland. At the same time there were prerequisites for a further significant increase in other export indicators. "First of all it is the growth of the number of

118_Belarusian lumber worth \$2.6 million sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-na-26-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-431434-2021/>

119_Belarusian lumber worth \$2.4 million sold to China in exchange trades [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-na-24-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-na-birzhevyyh-torgah-425850-2021/>

companies from China accredited at the exchange.¹²⁰, which contributes to an increase in the level of competition during the bidding.

In January 2021 the first batch of dried milk was also sold to the Chinese market through the BUTB. "Two lots with the volume of 300 and 100 tons were put up for trading. The total amount of transactions made at the end of the trading session amounted to \$ 940 thousand"¹²¹. This happened after world food prices began to rise in the second half of 2020, which greatly increased the attractiveness of Belarusian dairy products not only in China, but also in other countries of the "far arc. This is evidenced, in particular, by the return of one of the world's largest agro-traders, the Singaporean company Olam International, to the BUTB at the end of 2020. And it shows that the prospects for the export of dairy products from Belarus to the Asian continent through the mechanism of exchange trade are very significant today.

Egypt is another "far-abroad" country, whose representatives are beginning to work actively on the BUTB. In early March 2021, Egyptian company Sama Al-Jazeera for Import and Export made its first deal to export Belarusian products to that North African country by purchasing a trial batch of Belarusian lumber. The company's strategic goal is "to become the largest importer of Belarusian timber products to Egypt and other North African countries in the future. The first step in this direction has already been taken"¹²². Its next step in cooperation with the BUTB may become the role of a stockbroker on this electronic trading platform. And then the market of almost the entire African continent may give new colors to Belarusian producers-exporters. With the help of such an export mechanism as the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange.

120_Rapeseed oil exports through BUTB in January increased almost 10-fold [Electronic resource] - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rapsovogo-masla-cherez-butb-v-janvare-vyros-pochti-v-10-raz-426697-2021/>

121 A shipment of milk powder sold to China for the first time through the exchange [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/partiju-suhogo-moloka-vpervye-prodali-v-kitaj-cherez-birzhu-424904-2021/>

122_The first deal with a company from Egypt was made on the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-s-kompaniej-iz-egipta-sovershili-na-butb-431073-2021>

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: the priority of interaction - Russian regions

The dynamics of growing interest on the part of Russian business in electronic trading held at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) indicates that in 2021 Russia may become a leader at BUCE not only in the number of accredited companies, but also in the volume of exchange commodity turnover. Let's remind, that "as of December 1, 2020, 2482 residents of Russia used BUTB services"¹²³. And the amount of exchange transactions carried out by them in January and February 2021, "almost three times exceeded the same period in 2020 and amounted to \$ 12 million"¹²⁴. This allowed Russia to enter the third place in the list of the largest export markets of the BUTB. Lithuania (\$32 million) and Latvia (\$18 million) retained the first two places. In the first quarter of 2021 the sum of all transactions made by Russian exchange traders was close to \$38 million.

This growth in exports of Belarusian goods to the Russian market was the result of comprehensive measures taken at the Belarusian Exchange to attract business entities from Russia to the exchange platform in Belarus. Among the main ones are:

- 1) Simplification of the accreditation procedure at the BUTB;
- 2) regular webinars and online presentations for the Russian business community;
- 3) Spot visits to leading industrial, woodworking and agricultural enterprises in different regions of Russia.

As a result, 30 new Russian companies interested in buying Belarusian meat and dairy products, rapeseed oil, and construction materials, as well as in

123 Zalessky, B. With the Eye on the Future. Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - - C. 97.

124_Russia is one of the three largest export markets for BTBs [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossija-voshla-v-trojku-krupnejshih-eksportnyh-rynkov-butb-432830-2021/>

making transit deals to sell their goods to third countries were accredited at the BUTB in the first two months of 2021. It should be noted that so far the determining role in the increase in the exchange commodity turnover is played by the close cooperation of the BUTB with the Russian border regions of Smolensk, Bryansk, and Pskov.

In particular, the mention of **Bryansk Region** in this list is explained by the fact that Belarus accounts for about half of the foreign trade turnover of this Russian region, which by itself is evidence of a sufficiently high level of trade and economic cooperation. Nevertheless, during the working meeting at the Belarusian Trade and Business Bureau with the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk Region 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 accent this year is planned "on the agrarian sector and realization of industrial goods as the most perspective spheres for the development of cooperation"¹²⁵. For this purpose the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk region will use its entire network of business contacts in order to inform the Bryansk region business representatives about the advantages of the electronic trading mechanism at the BUTB.

The planned cooperation of the Belarusian Steel Exchange with **the Chelyabinsk** region looks very promising. At the webinar on the exchange trade with Belarus held in the middle of March 2021 several large producers and sellers from this Russian region announced their plans to increase sales of metal products on the trading floor of the BUBS. "Interest in a more active application of the exchange mechanism, in particular, was expressed by representatives of Chelyabinsk Forge-and-Press Plant, Liteiny Zavod LLC and Trade House MKK LLC. First of all, we are talking about an increase in supplies of ferrous rolled metal products, which are in stable high demand among Belarusian industrial

¹²⁵ BUTB and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk region agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-brjanskoj-oblasti-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-431815-2021/>

enterprises¹²⁶. We should note in passing that about 800 companies trade in ferrous metals and their products at the BUTB almost every day, and the amount of transactions in a single trading session can reach up to two million euros. It is clear that the arrival here of the largest Russian metal producers from the Chelyabinsk Region - the undisputed leader in the field of ferrous metallurgy among other Russian regions - will only open new opportunities and prospects for all participants of these trading sessions.

At the end of March 2021, with the assistance of the **Volgograd Region** Export Support Center, a meeting with business representatives of this Russian region was held at the BUTB. As a result several enterprises of Volgograd region "expressed their interest in selling their products in the industrial and consumer goods section of the BUTB. In particular it is planned to work out the issue of presenting at the auction the products for the construction industry, packaging materials and food products"¹²⁷. And at the beginning of April 2021 the prospects of increasing exchange trade in Belarus were discussed with representatives of business circles of **Kursk** region in the framework of an online conference. Here, as a result of the discussion, a number of enterprises of the Russian region expressed their readiness to exhibit their products on the platform of industrial and consumer goods BUTB. So, "the question of selling equipment for the food industry, high-tech rubber products, packaging materials made of paper and corrugated cardboard is being considered"¹²⁸. The BUOTB also expects real results from the agreement, made in March 2021, on the

126_Enterprises of the Chelyabinsk region are interested in selling metal products at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-cheljabinskij-oblasti-zainteresovany-v-realizatsii-metalloprodukcii-na-butb-433059-2021/>
127<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-volgogradskoj-oblastju-434981-2021/>BUTB plans to establish closer cooperation with Volgograd Oblast [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-volgogradskoj-oblastju-434981-2021/>

128_Enterprises of Kursk region plan to work in the Belarusian market through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-kurskoj-oblasti-planirujut-rabotat-na-belorusskom-rynke-cherez-butb-435331-2021/>

intensification of cooperation with **the St. Petersburg** international commodity and raw materials exchange. The exchange was set up in 2008 and is now the largest commodity exchange in Russia "specializing in oil, oil products, gas, timber and mineral fertilizers trading"¹²⁹. It should be assumed that the actualization of cooperation with such a serious partner can give no less serious results.

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129_BUTB and St. Petersburg Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange agreed to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-sankt-peterburgskaja-tovarno-syrjevaja-birzha-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-434334-2021/>

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