

Potential for multi-vectorality

Sustained economic growth at a rate of three to four percent per year - this is a specific task set today in the Republic of Belarus to ensure stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term. To successfully address it, a number of conditions must be met, including ensuring efficient operation of each enterprise, equal and sustainable development of the country's regions; creating conditions to attract foreign and domestic investments; increasing exports, including to new markets. The presence of the export theme in this list of the most important conditions can be explained by the fact that export is the basis of the open Belarusian economy, as it provides for the flow of foreign currency into the country, profits for enterprises, and taxes to the budget of the Republic of Belarus. Given the fact that the year 2020 will be rather difficult for the Belarusian economy, the urgent task that comes to the fore today is to preserve as much as possible the working capacity of exporting enterprises, whose successful innovation example can become a good reference point for other economic entities in the current time of global economic instability. How to solve this problem? We are talking about this in the proposed study.



Boris Zalessky

Professional experience in journalism - over forty five years. Now he is an associate professor of the International Journalism Department of the Journalism Department of the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: modern international relations; international journalism, international economics.



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Chronicle of International Cooperation

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Eurasian Economic Union: international cooperation orientation

In early October 2019, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held in Yerevan, where the leaders of five member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC) discussed issues of economic cooperation, financial policy, energy, as well as the main directions of international activities and development of cooperation with third countries. Noting the serious intensification of interaction of this integration association with such international formats as the Commonwealth of Independent States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, A. Lukashenko pointed out that "to expand the international agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union, special attention should be paid to the countries of the "far arc" where our goods and services are still little recognizable¹.

Let us remind that by the time of the session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Yerevan the EAEC already had a free trade zone with **Vietnam**. The agreement on its establishment was signed by the parties back in May 2015, and in October 2016 the document came into force. In order to adapt the national economies of the EAEC countries to the free trade regime with Vietnam, transitional periods of five to ten years have been established for certain goods, during which there will be a gradual reduction of import customs duties. And only as of 2017 did the Eurasian Economic Union "zero import customs duty rates for Vietnam in relation to 43% of the total number of tariff lines of the Common Customs Tariff (CCT EE). Within 10 years, the duty-free import of goods into the common union market for Vietnamese exporters will be expanded to cover 90% of the CCT EAES tariff lines"².

And in June 2019, the parties began to discuss the possibility of expanding trade and economic cooperation, as the agreement on free trade zone has quickly proved its effectiveness. "Already in the first full year of the agreement - 2017 - the growth of

¹ Participation in the session of the Higher Eurasian Economic Council [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/uchastie-v-zasedanii-vysshego-evrazijskogo-ekonomicheskogo-soveta-22132/.

² EAEC Free Trade Area Vietnam [Electron resource]. - -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.economy.gov.by/ru/zst-vietnam-ru/>.

trade turnover was 36% (5.6 billion dollars). At the same time, exports of Union countries to Vietnam increased by 40% (from 1.6 to 2.3 billion USD), and imports of goods from Vietnam - by 35% (from 2.7 to 3.7 billion USD)³. In 2018, the current trend continued. Perhaps for this reason as well, the Vietnamese economy grew by more than seven per cent in 2018, a record level since 2008, with trade surpluses exceeding seven billion dollars and attracted foreign investment of 19 billion dollars. At the same time, as noted by Vietnamese researchers, "not only Russia benefits from the agreement: more and more joint ventures in Vietnam are launched by Belarus"⁴. In particular, a project to produce trucks of the Minsk Automobile Plant is being implemented in the province of Heungyeon within the joint venture "MAZ Asia. And in the same province, work is underway to create a joint venture to produce dairy products from Belarusian raw materials. That's why at the June (2019) negotiations with the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Vietnamese side stated that it would like to achieve maximum improvement of relations with the EEA and consider all opportunities for increasing cooperation, including in the areas of financial and tourism services.

Apparently, a positive example of the development of relations between the EAEC and Vietnam was not the least in the fact that on October 1, 2019 in Yerevan in the framework of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council an agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union and **Singapore** was signed. This document provides for duty-free access of Singapore to all goods from the EAEC countries - Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. This integration association has also undertaken similar commitments on duty-free access for Singaporean goods. In addition, the signed agreement fixed the obligations of the parties to comply with: international standards in licensing procedures; prohibitions and quantitative restrictions; technical regulation of sanitary and phytosanitary norms; transfers and payments for the supply of products; fees

³ EAEC and Vietnam discussed the possibilities of expanding trade and economic cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/13-06-2019-4.aspx>.

⁴ Nguyen, K.T. Benefits from Vietnam free trade zone and EAEC / K.T. Nguyen // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://eurasian-studies.org/archives/11237>.

associated with border procedures; application of anti-dumping, compensation and special protective measures. It also formulates "a significant contribution to improving quality and promoting cooperation in areas such as e-commerce, ecology, anticompetitive practices, transparency in public procurement, and protection of intellectual property rights, which is particularly relevant in discussions on technology transfer"⁵. Interestingly, the work on the agreement lasted more than two years. In signing the agreement, the Singaporean side emphasized the prospects of the Eurasian market - "it is a large market at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. It has great potential for economic growth, especially in logistics and digital areas. All these are Singapore's areas of interest"⁶, so the creation of a free trade zone "will contribute to the development of industry in the EAEC member countries, investment, networking between people and business"⁷.

In the second half of October 2019, a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council was held in Moscow, where government leaders of all five member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC) focused their attention on the development of sectoral areas of cooperation, as well as on strengthening the position of the organization in the international arena, emphasizing that "a special place in the development of Eurasian integration is occupied by international cooperation"⁸. And, indeed, it was only in October 2019 that this Eurasian integration structure took a number of concrete steps to develop interaction with states located both in Europe and Asia.

In particular, at the same meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council the Agreement on Free Trade Zone between the EAEC and **Serbia** was signed, which, in

⁵ Brewer, E. In EEC gave details of agreement on free trade zone with Singapore / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-cek-rasskazali-podrobnosti-soglasheniya-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-singapuirom-364247-2019/>.

⁶ Singapore's Prime Minister notes great growth potential in the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/premjer-ministr-singapura-otmechaet-bolshoj-potentsial-rosta-v-evrazijskom-ekonomicheskom-sojuze-364128-2019/>.

⁷ The EAEC and Singapore signed an agreement on the establishment of a free trade area [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/eaec-i-singapur-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sozdanii-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-364131-2019/>.

⁸ Meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9076>.

the opinion of the parties, should give new impulses to the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between its participants. It should be recalled that before this document Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan already had bilateral agreements on free trade with Serbia. Nevertheless, the new agreements with the Serbian side, firstly, "open a fundamentally new market for Armenia and Kyrgyzstan - with immediate duty-free access to the overwhelming volume of goods of export profile, and, secondly, create new export opportunities for manufacturers of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia⁹. At the same time, the parties to the agreement receive economic benefits not only in the short term in the form of immediate savings in customs duties on existing exports, but also in the medium term in terms of realizing export opportunities with the expansion of the free trade regime. In addition, the document guarantees stability, predictability and transparency of trade relations, as well as fulfillment of obligations to comply with international standards in terms of licensing procedures, bans and quantitative restrictions, technical regulation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the application of anti-dumping, compensation and special protective measures, protection of intellectual property rights.

Another example of growing international cooperation of the EAEC concerns **Iran**, with which a temporary agreement leading to the establishment of a free trade zone was signed as early as 17 May 2018 and entered into force on 27 October 2019. This document "provides for a limited commodity coverage, but includes virtually all of the main products that account for 55% of total EAEC exports - agricultural and industrial product groups. <...> Preferential import coverage accounts for 49% of Iran's total exports to the EEEEC" . More specifically, the list of goods for which EAEC exporters, including Belarus, received preferences includes meat and fat and oil products, certain types of confectionery products and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics. It is also important that the parties will now have to ensure the most-favoured-nation treatment and national treatment for all goods traded between the EAEC and Iran. And all charges related to

⁹ EAEC and Serbia signed a free trade agreement [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/caes-i-serbija-podpisali-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-367118-2019/>.

the import of goods should no longer exceed the cost of services rendered for customs clearance. And unjustified tariff restrictions on trade should no longer apply to goods listed in the agreement. In addition, while welcoming any cooperation with the EAEC in the banking, financial and investment fields, the Iranian side has proposed to establish a working group for the development of joint economic projects, the potential of which could be very extensive. For example, "Iranian ports in the Caspian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, railways and roads in the country's territory and a secure environment make it possible for neighbouring countries to transit goods through Iran"¹⁰.

Finally, on the day of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting - October 25, 2019 - the Agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEC and **China** signed on May 17, 2018 came into force. It should be noted immediately that this document is not a free trade agreement, as its provisions do not provide for the reduction or elimination of import customs duties. The purpose of the agreement is different: "to increase the transparency of regulatory systems, to simplify trade procedures, and to develop cooperative ties"¹¹. In particular, the instrument establishes a much higher level of transparency in the systems of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical regulation of parties. In the area of customs procedures, the agreement includes an agreement to release goods without undue delay, with the designation of fast-track clearance of perishable goods. It also sets out significant guarantees for Belarusian, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Armenian exporters regarding the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. For Belarus, which is currently at the stage of accession to the World Trade Organization, this document is

¹⁰ Tehran proposes to establish a working group on economic projects in Iran and the EAEC [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/tegeran-predlagaet-sozdat-rabochuju-gruppu-po-ekonomicheskim-proektam-irana-i-eaes-364137-2019/>.

¹¹ The heads of government of the EAEC countries adopted a joint statement with China on the occasion of the entry into force of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEC and China [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9074>.

also important from the point of view of the fact that it establishes in its relations with China "legal guarantees of the key principles of the WTO"¹².

According to the development strategies of the EAEC Member States, the priorities of cooperation with China are industry and agro-industrial complex. With this in mind, the parties have identified three most important areas of cooperation: 1) creation of a single digital space; 2) localization of technologies; 3) effective interaction in science, technology and innovation. In order for all these directions to be successfully implemented, the EAEC is now creating an industrialization map, which "will indicate those areas in which it will be most expedient to attract foreign investment and technology"¹³. At the same time, the creation of common digital platforms and solutions will make it possible to eliminate barriers to the movement of goods, services, capital and data. And among the key competencies on the basis of which this industry of the future will be formed are electric transport, additive manufacturing and unmanned technologies.

As for the second area of cooperation between the EAEC and China, an important strategic task is to ensure the transition from the localization of production to the localization of competencies, at which the starting point should be the forecasting of the unique competitive advantages of the EAEC in the world arena, which can be realized by creating technology parks, clusters and technological platforms. It should be noted that the first steps in this direction have already been taken. For instance, Belarus and China have already implemented a project to create the Great Stone Industrial Park, which in 2019 received the status of a territorial special economic zone, which gave the residents of the industrial park the maximum possible customs advantages in this integration association in the post-Soviet space and where the volume of investments under the projects exceeds one billion dollars.

¹² Agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEC and China entered into force [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/soglashenie-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskomsotrudnichestve-caes-i-kitaja-vstupilo-v-silu-367082-2019/>.

¹³ Brewer, E. EEC has defined three main directions of EEEC industrial cooperation with China / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-opredelila-tri-osnovnyh-napravlenija-promyshlennogo-sotrudnichestva-caes-s-kitaem-365900-2019/>.

In Russia, in August 2019 in Naberezhnye Chelny, at the service of the Chinese side, an industrial park "Hayer" was opened, as well as a "smart factory" for the production of washing machines, which will also produce refrigeration, freezing and kitchen equipment, TV sets using "smart" technology. In Kazakhstan, under a contract with China's China National Chemical Engineering Company, Kazakhstan Petrochemical Industries is building an integrated gas chemical complex to produce half a million tons of polypropylene per year, and will also establish production of polyamide materials from grain using Chinese technology. Speaking about strengthening of scientific and technical cooperation, it is necessary to underline the interest of EAES in cooperation with China in agricultural sector, in the field of introduction of advanced agrarian technologies and innovations, as well as in energy efficiency and productivity of processing industries.

Another important aspect of the topic under consideration is that from January 1, 2020, the Republic of Belarus will take over the presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union, while from February 1, the same year the Belarusian representative will head the Eurasian Economic Commission. The Belarusian side intends to use these formats of activity "to give a new impetus to the integration processes and the formation of common policies by the participating countries"¹⁴. In particular, in order to ensure that producers from the EAEC countries receive the most favorable conditions for exporting their products to foreign markets, while consumers - safe, quality and inexpensive goods, it is planned within the Union "to accelerate the signing of an agreement on the procedure and conditions for removal of technical barriers to mutual trade with third countries, which will establish an effective mechanism to ensure barrier-free movement of goods in the EAEC and third countries"¹⁵. In fact, a new cycle of forming a list of priority countries with which this integration association

¹⁴ Grishkevich, A. Belarus as a chairman in the EAEC will seek to create a full-scale economic union - the Foreign Ministry / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-kak-predsedatel-v-caes-budet-dobivatsja-sozdanija-polnoformatnogo-ekonomicheskogo-sojuza-mid-366038-2019/>.

¹⁵ Brewer, E. EEC proposes to speed up the signing of an agreement on the procedure of eliminating technical barriers with third countries / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-predlagaet-uskorit-podpisanie-soglashenija-o-porjadke-ustraneniya-tehbarjerov-s-tretjimi-stranami-364105-2019/>.

will conclude agreements on free trade zone has already started in autumn 2019. In particular, procedures in this regard are being finalized with Israel, "early next [2020] negotiations with India. There is also a list of 12 states with which we would like to work in a 2-3 year interval. This list may be supplemented by other countries"¹⁶.

Indonesia, one of the key economies in the Asia-Pacific region, is also among the countries with which the EAEC is going to conclude a free trade agreement. In October 2019, the Eurasian Economic Commission signed a memorandum of cooperation with the government of this country. It is expected that this document will contribute to the construction of an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic cooperation. On its basis, the parties have already established a working group, the first meeting of which will be held in the first quarter of 2020 in Moscow, focusing on "issues of supranational competence of ECE, such as trade facilitation, customs and technical regulation, development of financial markets"¹⁷. It should also be noted that in the form of memorandums, the Eurasian Economic Commission is already working with the governments of such countries as Peru, Mongolia, Cambodia, Morocco, Jordan, Faroe Islands, Cuba, Thailand, Bangladesh and Moldova, and with the Greek government in the form of a declaration.

The same list also includes a South American country such as **Chile**, with which the Eurasian Five has significantly expanded its engagement in recent years. In particular, in 2018, trade turnover between the parties increased by almost a third - to 1.2 billion dollars. "At the same time, exports of the EEAS countries to Chile increased by 54.8%, while imports - by 28.7%"¹⁸. A free trade agreement between the EEA and Chile could open up a lot of opportunities for Belarus, as currently the Belarusian-Chilean trade turnover is only about \$10 million, 90% of which comes from this South

¹⁶ Belarus counts on export growth thanks to the agreements of the EAEC and FTA with third countries [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-rost-eksporta-blagodarja-soglashenijam-eaes-o-zst-s-tretjimi-stranami-365828-2019/>.

¹⁷ Brewery, E. ECE and Indonesia signed a memorandum of cooperation / E. Brewery // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/ee-k-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandum-ot-sotrudnichestve-366253-2019/>.

¹⁸ Brewery, E. Chili is interested in creation of a free trade zone with EEU / E. Brewery // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chili-projavljaet-interes-k-sozdaniju-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-eaes-365298-2019/>.

American country. The reason for this phenomenon lies in "some problems with the duties, which are still much higher for Belarusian goods than for other foreign products entering Chile¹⁹.

Another country with which negotiations for a free trade area have already entered an active phase is **Egypt**. This African state will be the first one to have a joint industrial infrastructure with the EEA, the creation of which for the countries of the integration association "will be a window for promoting our industrial products in Africa and the Middle East²⁰. To all appearances, the African vector of cooperation between the EAEC will be significantly complemented by the memorandum of understanding signed on 24 October 2019 between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the African Union Commission, according to which "the parties intend to cooperate in infrastructure and agriculture, trade, investment and business development, regional economic integration and other areas of mutual interest²¹. In accordance with this document, a cooperation plan will be developed focusing on activities for the business community of the parties. In the language of figures, the prospects for this interaction look very impressive. After all, the African Union is an international intergovernmental organization that unites 55 states of the "black" continent with a population of about one billion people. Since 2010, the turnover of the EAEC with them has increased almost 2.7 times, reaching 21.7 billion dollars by 2018. At the same time, only five African countries - Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia - account for more than 80 percent of exports of the Eurasian "five". So the reserves for the development of partnerships are indeed considerable.

¹⁹ Grishkevich, A. Chili is interested in long-term cooperation with Belarus - Benites / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/chili-zainteresovana-v-dolgosrochnom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusju-benites-365275-2019/>.

²⁰ Brewer, E. East-European Union countries intend to establish joint industrial infrastructure in Egypt (in Russian) / E. Brewery // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/strany-eaes-namereny-sozdat-sovmestnuju-promyshlennuju-infrastrukturu-v-egipte-364924-2019/>.

²¹ ECE and the African Union Commission have signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/24-10-2019-5.aspx>.

Belarus: Sustainable development goals and media

In August 2019, the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus established a working group to promote global sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Belarus, which included specialists of the agency in the field of interaction with the mass media and representatives of television and print media. The aim of this group is to raise awareness of the implementation of the SDG in our country among the Belarusian society.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "Transforming our world: an agenda for sustainable development until 2030", which sets out 17 sustainable development goals aimed, inter alia, at eradicating poverty and hunger, combating inequality and injustice and addressing climate change. This event required all states of the planet, including the Republic of Belarus, to take up the task of creating mechanisms to achieve the SDG.

One and a half years later - in May 2017 - the institutional framework for managing the implementation of the plans was established in our country: firstly, the post of national coordinator for achieving the sustainable development goals was established; secondly, a national architecture for managing the implementation of the SDG was built, which includes the Sustainable Development Council, parliamentary, regional and partner groups for sustainable development, ensuring effective interaction between the public sector and public organizations. After the Council began its work, the Council for Sustainable Development assigned each of the 17 SDGs to the state authorities of Belarus, whose competence includes addressing relevant issues. As a result, "all involved government agencies are part of four sectoral blocks: economy, environment, social sphere and monitoring"²².

Following the recommendation of the United Nations to conduct a three-level global, regional and national analysis of progress in achieving sustainable development goals, Belarus already in 2017 presented its voluntary report at the international level on progress in implementing Agenda 2030, then participated in the presentation of the

²² Shchetkina, M. Sustainable development depends on each of us / M. Shchetkina // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ustojchivoe-razvitie-zavisit-ot-kazhdogo-iz-nas-6646/>.

Eurasian Economic Union report on sustainable development at the United Nations headquarters, and in 2018 it itself organized a regional forum of national focal points on building partnerships between countries and organizations in the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As a result, Belarus was ranked 23rd in the index of global sustainable development goals for 2018, which was calculated for 156 countries on the basis of a hundred indicators related to the implementation of the CSD, with "an assessment above the average for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region"²³.

One of the conditions for successful implementation of sustainable development goals in Belarus is national legislation. In 2018, the Belarusian parliament adopted a number of laws aimed at achieving the SDG. These include specially protected natural areas and the production and circulation of organic products. In 2019, draft laws related to health care and the rights of the disabled were considered. It is also assumed that it is the Goals of sustainable development will become an integral part of the country's social and economic development in order to reach the gross domestic product of one hundred billion dollars by 2025 and "to join the group of countries with average per capita income at purchasing power parity above the world average"²⁴.

Another important condition for successful achievement of the SDGs is to synchronize the work of regional groups, as "sustainable development of a country as a whole is possible only if all its regions are sustainable"²⁵. That is why territorial development plans should be proposed not only by republican government bodies, but first and foremost by representatives of local government bodies, taking into account the needs and interests of citizens. That is why a comprehensive plan for the development of more than 30 Belarusian regions lagging behind in terms of social and economic development, developed in August 2019 by the Ministry of Economy of the

²³ Belarus ranked 23rd among 156 countries in achieving the CSD in 2018 [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/belarus-zanjala-23-e-mesto-sredi-156-stran-v-dostizheniit-sur-za-2018-god-333890-2019/>.

²⁴ Belarus sees Agenda-2030 as a basis for a new global policy - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-povestku-2030-kak-osnovu-dlja-novoj-globalnoj-politiki-mjasnikovich-333892-2019/>.

²⁵ Meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8943>.

Republic of Belarus jointly with regional executive committees, is extremely important in this context. The implementation of this plan would make it possible to raise these territories to the national average. Suffice it to say that "today a package of 280 projects has been formed. Approximately 54 projects will be created from scratch, about 80 projects are investments in existing industries and 140 projects are related to infrastructure (about 30% - industrial infrastructure, the rest - social facilities)"²⁶. In addition to these 280 projects, there are 224 other investment proposals. It is also important that part of the projects from this comprehensive plan will be financed by "foreign investors, as well as international financial organizations, which direct funds primarily to infrastructure development, such as construction of water deferrization plants or conversion of boiler houses to local fuels, development of alternative energy sources. World Bank funds will be used to repair schools and hospitals"²⁷.

In January 2019, the first National Sustainable Development Forum was held in Minsk, where over four hundred participants considered the national experience of Belarus in achieving the CSD, the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the country until 2030, as well as the specifics of preparing the National Sustainable Development Strategy for the period until 2035. It highlighted the positive experience of Brest and Mogilev regions in this regard. And today it is a question of overcoming the diversity of the movement to organize this work in other regions of Belarus.

At the same first National Sustainable Development Forum, it was noted that the country's media have an important role to play in implementing the main provisions of Agenda 2030 into national policy documents, sectoral and regional programmes, and that "much remains to be done to ensure a broad public understanding of the SDGs and

²⁶ It is proposed to include 280 projects [Electronic resource] in the development plan of the lagging regions of Belarus. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-plan-razvitija-otstajuschih-regionov-belarusi-predlagaetsja-vkljuchit-280-proektov-359816-2019/>.

²⁷ Shchetkina: the work of regional groups to achieve the CSD in Belarus should be synchronized [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/schetkina-rabotu-regionalnyh-grupp-podostizheniju-tsur-v-belarusi-nuzhno-sinhronizirovat-333887-2019/>.

the role of each individual in achieving them"²⁸. That is why, in August 2019, the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus established a working group in the national architecture for managing the SSD, composed of journalists deeply immersed in the topic, to carry out information work on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. But already today it is obvious that the efforts of one working group in implementing such a large-scale media project will not be enough. That is why in the same August 2019, the ministry of information, with the support of the national coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "supporting the functioning of the architecture for managing the process of achieving the sustainable development goals of the Republic of Belarus", announced a national competition "from global goals to local actions" in order to involve the Belarusian society in the process of achieving the goals of the SDG and activate the work of journalists.

Until December 1, 2019, the contest accepted essays, interviews, articles, TV and radio programs, publication and broadcast cycles in seven categories, including such areas as: 1) environmental; 2) social topics, including gender equality and youth issues; 3) economic; 4) topics related to vulnerable segments of the population, including people with disabilities, and implementation of the principle of "Leaving no one behind"; 5) interagency cooperation to achieve the SDG; 6) projects aimed at achieving the SDG and implemented by businesses, including impact investment projects; 7) public initiatives aimed at achieving the sustainable development goals.

The results of the contest showed that it became a good check of the level of competence, first of all, of Belarusian journalists and one more opportunity for them to reveal their creative potential. Thanks to this format of creative rivalry, the Belarusian press has had a very comprehensive discussion of the main directions and goals of sustainable development, the possibilities of their implementation and realization. It was not only the leading journalists who took part in the discussion. The competition also attracted a wide audience of readers, TV and radio listeners,

²⁸ The media will form a separate group in work on achieving the SDG in Belarus - Shchetkina [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/smi-sostavjat-otdelnyju-gruppu-v-rabote-nad-dostizheniem-tsur-v-belarusi-schetkina-333874-2019/>.

confirming once again the conclusion that "the mass media is not just one of the main channels in informing the public about the SSD. In this context, they play a crucial role - educating citizens about the possibilities to make balanced and responsible decisions about themselves, their families, as well as to influence the authorities' decisions on the implementation of the SSD"²⁹.

An important detail: in 2020 the Republic of Belarus should significantly strengthen its efforts to achieve sustainable development goals, primarily at the regional level. At the same time, the regional mass media should again have a strong say in addressing this issue, since, according to M. Shchetkina, National Coordinator for the Implementation of the SDG, "without informing the population and involving them in the work of achieving the SDG, practically nothing can be done"³⁰. This means that the range of publications on this topic in regional media should be very broad, covering almost all 17 sustainable development goals and taking into account the country's socio-economic development priorities until 2030. It is worth recalling here that the work of the mass media is very closely related to Goal 16, which implies the promotion of a peaceful, open society and partnership.

As for other SDGs, in the present-day conditions the Republic of Belarus acquires the Goal No. 5: "Decent work and economic growth", which sets the task to develop the economy of the Belarusian regions at an accelerated pace. A characteristic detail in this regard is that "the traditional economy has almost exhausted its growth reserves, and further development is only possible with the creation of new industries, including the attraction of foreign investors"³¹. In other words, as First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus D. Krutoy said, "one of the most important tasks will be to attract investments, improve the relevant legislation and review the entire investment

²⁹ Teams of "7 Days" and "Belaruskaya Dumki" editors won the competition for the coverage of the CSD [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/kollektivny-redaktsij-7-dnej-i-belaruskaj-dumki-pobedili-v-konkurse-po-osvescheniju-tsur-373180-2019/>.

³⁰ In 2020, Belarus will strengthen its efforts to achieve the CSD at the regional level [Electronic Resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-v-2020-godu-usiljat-rabotu-po-dostizheniju-tsur-na-regionalnom-urovne-373167-2019/>.

³¹ Sergei Rumas: Belarus is developing an action plan to create conditions for economic development [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9175>.

agenda³². In this case, the focus will be on regional policy. In particular, the Belarusian government is already actively engaged in three large pilot projects: Orsha district of Vitebsk region, working with territories lagging behind in terms of socio-economic development, as well as 11 major cities.

In addition to the fact that in 2019 the country implemented the most important investment projects in such areas as automotive, metallurgical and construction industries, pulp and paper, woodworking and light industry, oil refining, petrochemical and energy complexes. In total, as of mid-December 2019, "out of 34 particularly important investment projects, 22 have already been put into operation".³³ 12 of which have reached their design capacity. But it is not only these big projects that should be in the sphere of special attention of regional mass media.

Thus, at the regional level, the Vitebsk Oblast demonstrates positive dynamics in attracting foreign investments, particularly Latvian ones. For three quarters of 2019 their volume from the Latvian investors has grown here at once in three and a half times, having exceeded two million dollars. On the territory of Vitebsk region there are already 90 organizations registered in the sphere of trade, woodworking, rendering of motor transport services, clothing services, production of plastic products. The fact that "33 cooperation agreements have been concluded between the districts and cities of Vitebsk region and Latvian municipalities" certainly plays a significant role in strengthening these positive trends³⁴.

Even stronger indicators are characteristic in this context for the Brest region, whose economy is planned to attract at least \$90 million of foreign direct investment on a net basis in 2020. Half of them is planned to be directed to the free economic zone "Brest". As for the specific cities of the region, the "task for Brest - about \$ 15 million

³² Sergei Rumas introduced the team of the First Deputy Prime Minister [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9155>.

³³ Sergey Rumas: 22 out of 34 particularly important investment objects were put into operation. [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9174>.

³⁴ Shcherbitsky, A. The volume of Latvian investments in Vitebsk region for 9 months has grown in 3.5 times / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/objem-latvijskih-investitsij-v-vitebskuju-oblast-za-9-mesjatsev-vyros-v-35-raza-371103-2019/>.

of foreign direct investment, Baranovichi and Pinsk - over \$6 million³⁵. At the same time, a little less than half of these funds will be spent on the purchase of machinery, equipment, vehicles, so that at the expense of modernization and technical re-equipment of existing enterprises, creation of new production facilities to open about six and a half thousand new jobs.

At the level of specific business entities, an interesting experience of work with foreign investments is demonstrated by an enterprise with almost 60-year history - OJSC "Gorynsky Agrokombinat", located in the working settlement of Rechitsa, Stolinsky district, Brest region, which only in August 2019 left the sanitation procedure by concluding a settlement agreement with creditors. Having actively worked with foreign investors, the staff of the joint stock company received from the Polish partner about 800 thousand dollars to complete the production of green peas. Modernization of existing production facilities allowed to expand the range of products. In particular, here "started the production of a new type of products - boiled sterilized vegetables in vacuum packaging. This is an absolutely natural product without the addition of preservatives, even such harmless as sugar and salt. The shelf life of such ready vegetables is six months, and the color, quality and taste of the product are preserved³⁶. If we take into account that the work on the introduction of new technology in production at the agro-industrial complex is almost completed and even allowed to conclude a contract with a Russian company for the supply of a new product line to the trading network, then this experience of attracting foreign investment can be considered doubly successful. And it can be the subject of a detailed study not only in the Brest regional press, but also in the media of other Belarusian regions.

All of the above facts eloquently illustrate the conclusion that the implementation of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including CSD No. 5, related to the topic of attracting foreign investment and its effective use in Belarusian

³⁵ Foreign direct investment in the Brest region's economy in 2020 will amount to at least \$90 million [-Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/prjamye-inostranye-investitsii-v-ekonomiku-brebstskoj-oblasti-v-2020-godu-sostavjat-ne-menee-90-mln-374236-2019/>.

³⁶ . Polish investor has invested Br1.6 million [Electronic resource] in production of Goryna Agrokombinat. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/polskij-investor-vlozhit-v-proizvodstvo-gorynskogo-agrokombinata-br16-mln-373083-2019/>.

regions, should be firmly anchored in the front pages of regional, district and city newspapers and should reflect to the fullest extent possible the experience already accumulated in this regard by specific business entities. It is also important to intensify the work of mass media in this direction because "media not only fix our idea of reality, but also actually model reality itself, the scenario and the dynamics of events³⁷...". At the same time, the task of media is to reflect reality, with all its problems, complexities and contradictions, "in the future to influence the situation for the better"³⁸.

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³⁷ Kuntsevich, A. Responsibility to society distinguishes a journalist from other subjects of information creation (in Russian) / A. Kuntsevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/otvetstvennost-pered-obschestvom-otlichaet-zhurnalista-ot-drugih-subjektov-sozdaniya-informatsii-7110/>.

³⁸ Karliukevich, A. The main task of mass media is to reflect reality with all problems and difficulties (in Russian) / A. Karliukevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://news.21.by/other-news/2019/12/11/1940593.html>.

Belarus: global information security and regional press

The global digitalization that we are all witnessing today is rapidly changing the world around us, invading also the media and information sphere. At the same time, new technologies not only influence the nature of creative work of modern journalists, but also actualize a number of challenges and threats to which the journalistic community should respond. At the international scientific-practical conference "Security and Sustainable Development: Theory and Practice in Digital Transformation" held in Minsk in December 2019, it was noted that "the leading players of the information field are now hurryingly building defense lines. At the same time, while a few years ago the information field was dominated by the themes of freedom of trade and human rights, now the issue of security is dominant"³⁹. The obvious militarization of the information space in a number of countries, which has a destructive impact on other participants in the media and information sphere, cannot but be alarming.

Taking into account all these challenges and threats, a number of initiatives were put forward in the Republic of Belarus in 2019 aimed at resolving issues of global information security. In particular, in March the Concept of Information Security of the country was approved, which refers to information sovereignty as a new approach to ensuring information security and information neutrality as a form of State and responsible behaviour and self-limitation of the use of destructive technologies to the detriment of other States. More precisely, information sovereignty in Belarus will be achieved by establishing a system of legal regulation of relations in the information sphere, ensuring safe sustainable development, social justice and consent. Within the framework of this approach, the development of national mass media and telecommunications should be ensured, which bring up and stimulate in society "a critical attitude towards manifestations of disrespect for national foundations, traditions and violations of morals and law in the information sphere, intolerance to

³⁹ The offensive potential in the information sphere is already formed in some states - Makarov [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nastupatelnyj-potentsial-v-informatsionnoj-sfere-uzhe-sformirovan-v-nekotoryh-gosudarstvah-makarov-371838-2019/>.

disinformation, information manipulation and other implicit information and psychological influences⁴⁰.

In international relations, the information sovereignty of the Belarusian state should be ensured based on the principle of information neutrality. The essence of it is that defending its own national interests in the information sphere with the use of all available forces and means, the Belarusian side aims at conducting a peaceful foreign information policy, respect for universally recognized and generally accepted rights of any state in this sphere, exclusion of the initiative "to interfere in the information sphere of other countries, aimed at discrediting or challenging their political, economic, social and spiritual standards and priorities, as well as at harming the information sphere. 41In this context, the provision contained in the Concept of Information Security of the Republic of Belarus, that in order to ensure the policy of information neutrality, it is necessary to increase the degree of Belarus' presence in the world information space and expand international information exchange, seems important for representatives of the journalistic community.

In other words, existing security threats point to the need to expand interstate cooperation and increase mutual trust in the information sphere. Proceeding from the urgency of this problem, in September 2019 at the high-level international conference in Minsk "Combating terrorism with the help of innovative approaches and the use of new emerging technologies" the Belarusian side proposed to form a "digital neighborhood belt" aimed at defusing tension in the information sphere. According to the President of Belarus A. Lukashenko believes that "the key elements of such agreements could be the ideas of digital sovereignty and neutrality, which would primarily guarantee non-interference of countries in each other's information resources⁴². The Belarusian side sees the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral

⁴⁰ Information security concept of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/uploads/documents/2019/1post.pdf>.

⁴¹ It's the same place.

⁴² Participation in the international conference on combating terrorism [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/uchastie-v-mezhdunarodnoj-konferentsii-po-borbe-s-terrorizmom-21910/.

agreements on ensuring information security as a mechanism to implement this initiative.

Speaking in September 2019 from the high rostrum of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly about the need to expand interstate digital cooperation and increase mutual trust in the information sphere, the Belarusian side once again drew the attention of the entire international community to the need to implement the ideas of digital sovereignty and neutrality, as well as non-interference of countries in each other's information resources. It was particularly emphasized: "Digital sovereignty should guarantee the ability of a state to control its information field, prevent and block cyberattacks, provide reliable protection of critical infrastructure. Digital neutrality implies that countries will not take actions in cyberspace that harm the security of other states. Ultimately, such agreements can lay the foundation for international rules for responsible behaviour in virtual space"⁴³.

The launch of such a "wave of digital security" could undoubtedly increase the effectiveness of joint countermeasures against terrorist threats in virtual space. In this context, Belarus is ready to cooperate and strengthen ties with all countries of the world and, especially, with its neighbors, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, where there is an active search for a unifying agenda, new ideas shared by a wide range of states and organizations, and where, first of all, "it is necessary to agree that we in the media do not roll at least on each other and do not wage this information warfare against each other"⁴⁴. It should be noted that the Belarusian initiative to create a "digital neighborhood belt" in the post-Soviet space was supported primarily by Russia, as reported by the Foreign Minister of that country S. Lavrov in November 2019. According to him, this initiative "fully meets Russia's focus on the formation of as many digital neighborhoods as possible"⁴⁵. The Belarusian side also stated the need

⁴³ Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei at the general discussion at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (26 September 2019, New York) [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b698116bea64ee66.html.

⁴⁴ Participation in the session of the Council of CIS Heads of State [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/rabochij-vizit-v-turkmenistan-22184/.

⁴⁵ Lavrov: Moscow welcomes Minsk's proposal to ensure digital security [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://tass.ru/politika/7145127>.

to expand international cooperation and increase mutual trust in the information sphere at the summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in November 2019 in Bishkek, emphasizing that "information security should be firmly established among the priorities of the CSTO"⁴⁶. In addition, in December 2019, at the 26th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, official Minsk drew the attention of members of this international structure to the need to conclude international agreements in the field of cybersecurity, "similar to those on additional confidence- and security-building measures in the military and political sphere."⁴⁷ In order to better adapt to changing security conditions and thus enhance joint responses to contemporary challenges and threats, and to play an increasingly prominent role in global security. An important aspect of the implementation of this initiative is also the consistent development of partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the bilateral relations both at the level of individual states and their regions.

At the same time, "one of the security reserves not yet fully exploited is the resource of the analytical and expert communities, which have unique research potential"⁴⁸. It should be assumed that representatives of the international segment of Belarusian journalism could also contribute to the development of certain areas of analysis of security reserves in the information sphere. Especially as regards the fight against counterfeit information, methodology of responsible behaviour in the information-media sphere, ways of verification of information on the Internet.

We would like to remind you that the Concept of Information Security of the Republic of Belarus, already mentioned above, highlights "manipulation of mass consciousness, discrediting of ideals and values, blurring of national sovereignty,

⁴⁶ Summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/sammit-organizatsii-dogovora-o-kollektivnoj-bezopasnosti-22481/.

⁴⁷ Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei at the 26th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (Bratislava, December 5, 2019) [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/statements/e8f7cc1b86026dad.html/>

⁴⁸ Building a reliable security system only by state forces is impossible - Vakulchik [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/postroenie-nadezhnoj-sistemy-bezopasnosti-tolko-silami-gosudarstva-nevozmozhno-vakulchik-371768-2019/>.

instability of information infrastructure"⁴⁹ among modern challenges and threats, forming in the information sphere and posing danger for constitutional foundations and vital activity of the state. Proceeding from the fact that the information sphere has already acquired key importance for any state and every person, the task in Belarus is to expand the sphere of influence of domestic mass media and take "measures to increase the volume, diversity and quality of national broadcasting, as well as the trust of the population to official mass media"⁵⁰.

The fact is that back in the course of the "Big Talk with the President," which took place in early March 2019, the Belarusian head of state drew attention to the fact that "despite the powerful development of the media space, there is a shortage of content that would enjoy the absolute trust of the audience, one of the reasons is the so-called fake news. They instantly spread, capture the audience, excite thoughts"⁵¹. In this regard, the role of a deterrent in the fight against fairy news should be taken on today:

1) authoritative **mass media**;

2) professional **journalists** who consistently comply with the laws of ethics and moral norms in the media space and strive for maximum accuracy and objectivity in their work;

3) **representatives of the expert community**, who by virtue of their competence have yet to occupy a special place in the media.

The fact that traditional media should become a powerful unifying factor in the fight against fake information and unprofessional approaches to the coverage of current external and internal issues was stated in resolution XIII of the Belarusian International Media Forum "Partnership for the Future: a digital agenda for the media space", which was held in Minsk in September 2018. The resolution of the forum emphasized that

⁴⁹ Matveev, V. Information security concept of Belarus is planned to be approved soon / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/kontseptsiju-informatsionnoj-bezopasnosti-belarusi-planiruetsja-utverdit-v-blizhajshee-vremja-339646-2019/>.

⁵⁰ Meeting of the Security Council of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zasedanie-soveta-bezopasnosti-belarusi-20668/.

⁵¹ Meeting with representatives of public and expert community, Belarusian and foreign mass media "Big talk with the President" [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-predstaviteljami-obschestvennosti-i-ekspertnogo-soobschestva-belorusskix-i-zarubezhnyx-smi-20590/.

preserving the authority and position of traditional media - print and electronic - is extremely important, since it is these subjects of the information field that are able to fully "bear responsibility to society for the quality, completeness and reliability of the information provided, have the capacity to ensure a professional approach to the creation and dissemination of information products"⁵².

The real practice shows that trust to the media by a wide audience arises when the media competently analyze the events taking place in the society and promptly give comprehensive answers to urgent questions that appear in the readers, viewers and listeners. In other words, it is possible and necessary to minimize the threats of negative information impact in the form of fairy news by creating your own interesting, relevant and true content, so that "any fairy can be confidently answered and destroyed at the root"⁵³. It is clear that without close and constant interaction with representatives of the expert community media structures will hardly be able to fully solve such a large-scale problem.

To strengthen coordination between the media and expert communities in this area, it seems that it is time to start forming professional **media expert** pools in the most important areas of Belarusian foreign and domestic policy. Professionalism in the information sphere in this case should be understood as qualitative and interesting presentation of materials, skilful technical organization of the creative process, availability of expert opinions and analytics based on reliable data. We see something similar, for example, already in the course of implementation of global sustainable development goals in Belarus, where among the partner groups, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, in the national architecture of management of the CSD achievement, a media expert group has been created to conduct informational work in the media space on all 17 sustainable development goals.

⁵² The media need to unite against fake information and unprofessionalism - media forum resolution [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/smi-nuzhno-objedunitsja-v-borbe-s-fejkovoj-informatsiej-i-neprofessionalizmom-rezoljutsija-mediaforuma-317622-2018/>.

⁵³ Pavel Legky: the main tool in the fight against inaccurate information on the Internet is people's trust [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pavel-legkij-glavnyj-instrument-v-borbe-s-nedostovernoj-informatsiej-v-internete-doverie-ljudej-317648-2018/>.

Another interesting example in this direction is the Plan of Joint Action for 2019 on the coverage of the export potential of Belarus in the mass media, signed in March this year by the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to promote "the dissemination of objective information on the development of national exports, strengthening international contacts of Belarusian enterprises and the entry of their products into new markets"⁵⁴. The basic component of this media-expert interaction should be a series of seminars for journalists working on foreign economic issues in order not only to highlight the key problems of Belarusian export development, but also to promote the presence of relevant economic topics in the Belarusian mass media at all levels - from central to regional. It should be recalled that the National Programme of Support and Development of Exports of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 includes among its eight main tasks the requirement to **promote the export culture in the** form of consolidation in the mass consciousness of the importance of exports for the development of the country and society and raising its priority. In this regard, the adoption by the Ministry of Information and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of a plan of joint action to highlight the export potential of Belarus in the media sphere is a very important and necessary step.

In this context, the topic of interaction between media and expert communities at the regional level, including the implementation of the policy of international cooperation of the Belarusian regions, deserves a separate discussion. The point is that "regional media occupy their unique niche in which neither national nor international media can compete"⁵⁵. But at the same time, "despite the powerful development of the media space, there is still a lack of content that would enjoy the absolute trust of the

⁵⁴ The Ministry of Information and the BelCCI signed a plan of joint actions for media coverage of Belarusian exports [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/mininform-i-beltpp-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvii-po-osvescheniju-v-smi-belorusskogo-eksporta-339703-2019/>.

⁵⁵ Digitalization contributes to raising the level of regional media - Easy [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsifrovizatsija-sposobstvuet-povysheniju-urovnja-regionalnyh-smi-legkij-317725-2018/>.

audience"⁵⁶. And this is in the conditions when the thematic spectrum, in which the Belarusian regional press is to be built, has been expanding with exceptional speed in recent years. These are only the areas that emphasize the geography of international cooperation of the regions of Belarus that have emerged over the past years and that should be adequately reflected in the regional media in order to contribute to the effective solution of the problems arising here:

1) development of large-scale economic integration with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union countries and especially with the Russian Federation constituent entities within the Union State, as well as with the regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States;

2) expansion of comprehensive cooperation with the regions of the European Union and especially within the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as with the regions of the Neighbourhood Belt countries - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia;

(3) Deepening cooperation with regions of countries participating in the One Belt, One Way mega-project, and especially with provinces, autonomous regions and cities of the People's Republic of China;

4) further intensification of trade and economic relations with the regions of the "far arc" countries - South-East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America - and especially with those regions where there is considerable potential for mutually beneficial interregional cooperation.

The Republic of Belarus assumes that the role of traditional regional mass media will become increasingly important, since "successful development of any region depends on the information space as a whole, on the ability to quickly adapt to the rapidly growing market of communication technologies"⁵⁷. That is why here too, information strategies specific to international regional issues are already needed that

⁵⁶ The trust of the audience can be maintained by the district editions of Melnikov [Electronic Resource] with exceptional truthfulness. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/doverie-auditorii-rajonnye-izdanija-mogut-podderzivat-iskljuchitelnoj-pravdivostiju-melnikova-338797-2019/>.

⁵⁷ The role of local media in the socio-economic development of the regions will be discussed at a national meeting [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. -URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/rol-mestnyh-smi-v-sotsialno-ekonomicheskom-razvitii-regionov-obsudjat-na-respublikanskom-soveschanii-337842-2019/>.

can significantly expand the sphere of influence of a particular media outlet through the high quality of its media product.

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Belarus: export as a response to challenges global instability

Sustained economic growth at a rate of three to four percent per year - this is a specific task set today in the Republic of Belarus to ensure stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term. For its successful resolution, a number of conditions must be met - "to ensure efficient operation of each enterprise, equal and sustainable development of the country's regions; to create conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments; to increase exports, including to new markets"⁵⁸. The presence of the export theme in this list of the most important conditions can be explained by the fact that "export is the basis of the open Belarusian economy, as it provides for the receipt of foreign currency in the country, profits for enterprises, and taxes to the budget of the Republic of Belarus"⁵⁹. Among the Belarusian enterprises active in the current difficult conditions on foreign markets, we should mention, first of all, the world's largest manufacturer of quarry dump trucks and transport equipment for mining and construction industry, which occupies about a third of the world market of quarry dump trucks of particularly high load-carrying capacity, the **Belarusian Automobile Plant**, whose exports in 2020 are developing along several main vectors at once.

Vector one - **regions of Russia**. Thus, in April 2020, another batch of 180-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75180 was shipped to the **Murmansk region** to the Kirov branch of JSC "Apatit" in accordance with the agreement signed in September 2019. In February 2020, three 130-ton trucks have already arrived in this Russian region. In total, in the next three years, at least 50 mine dump trucks will go there, which will be involved in the development of apatite-nepheline deposits in Khibiny. It is expected that 180-ton dump trucks "will be later modified into intelligent and will acquire new

⁵⁸ Speech by Kochanova at the opening of the second session of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus of the seventh convocation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vystuplenie-kochanovoj-na-otkrytii-vtoroj-sessii-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-belarusi-385692-2020/>.

⁵⁹ Zalesky, B.L. Export Culture and Mass Consciousness / B.L. Zalesky // Zhurnalistyka-2016: mill, problems and prospects: materyalyalyaly 18th Mizhnar. sovuk-prakt. konf., prysveschanai 95-godzhu BDU, 10-11 years old. 2016, Minsk / Radkal.: S.V. Dubovik (ad. red.). - Edition. 18. - Minsk : AAT Paligrafkombinat Name I. Kolasa", 2016. - - C. 234.

technical characteristics. The additional equipment installed will allow them to be operated over a long distance. An experimental site for the operation of mining equipment in unmanned mode is planned to create in the Nyorpakhskoe quarry East mine⁶⁰.

In the same April 2020 six more dump trucks of the Belarusian manufacturer started to work in **Krasnoyarsk krai** at Achinsk alumina refinery, which is a part of JSC Rusal Achinsk. Renewal of the mining transportation equipment fleet at the Mazulsky mine will allow to increase labour productivity and reduce expenses for the technological process of raw material extraction. Typical detail: in 2020 Rusal, one of the world's largest aluminium producers, plans to purchase several dozens of Belarusian machines, as "this machine has high performance characteristics, it is more economical in terms of fuel and lubricants consumption. The driver's cabs have an improved view and control system, equipped with comfortable seats and climate systems⁶¹.

Another Russian region where the second 130-tonne mining dump truck BELAZ-75131 has been shipped since the beginning of 2020 this spring is the **Sverdlovsk Oblast**, where the Uralasbest mining and processing company already operates eleven 130-tonne Belarusian trucks, each of which transports up to 1,500 tons of rock per shift. How important it is for the Russian side, such figures say. BELAZ trucks operate "on the basis of the Bazhenov deposit, whose explored reserves will last more than 150 years. The deposit is being developed using the open pit method. The quarry is 8 km long, 2.5 km wide and 350 m deep"⁶².

Vector two - the countries of the **Eurasian Economic Union**. In particular, **Armenia**, where three 90-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75585 were sent in spring 2020.

⁶⁰ BELAZ supplied another batch of dump trucks to the Russian "Apatity" [Electronic Resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-ocherednuju-partiju-samosvalov-rossijskomu-apatitu-386828-2020/>.

⁶¹ Nemankova, Yu. BELAZ dump trucks started their work in Krasnoyarsk krai (in Russian) // [Electron resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/karjernye-samosvaly-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-krasnojarskom-krae-386202-2020/>.

⁶² Nemankova, Yu. Another 130-ton dump truck BELAZ will start working at Russian "Uralasbest" / Yu. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ocherednoj-130-tonnyj-samosval-belaz-nachnet-rabotuna-rossijskom-uralasbeste-385689-2020/>.

They replenished the machinery park of Sotq mine, a gold mine, the largest in Armenia on pure gold production, the reserves of which are estimated at more than 120 tons. It should be noted that 130-ton Belarusian machines are already working with high efficiency here. The new dump trucks were equipped with diesel engines with a capacity of up to 1200 horsepower. "To improve the reliability of the main bearing elements of the dump truck new high-strength steels were used, and in the most stressed places - cast elements"⁶³.

Vector three is the **far arc** countries, whose share in the export of the Belarusian Automobile Plant has increased almost one and a half times since the beginning of 2020 and amounted to 40%. Thus, in April, eight 130-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75131 began to work at a coal mine, located on the island of Kalimantan in **Indonesia**. All the wishes of the Indonesian partners and the climatic conditions of operation were taken into account. And these are such tropical options as "appropriate rubber, air conditioning, special cooling system"⁶⁴. The Belarusian Automobile Plant is actively working to increase its presence on the African continent in **Algeria**, where in spring 2020 it shipped another batch of five BELAZ-78221 frontal loaders. The company's plans include "participation in specialized exhibitions and direct negotiations with interested consumers of mining equipment in the region"⁶⁵.

Gomselmash66 holding is one of the Belarusian companies actively operating in foreign markets even in such difficult conditions as we see today. It is the manufacturer of grain and forage harvesters, cobblers and potato harvesters, mowers and other agricultural machinery that is already operating in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Chile, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, China, South

⁶³ Nemankova, Yu. BELAZ sent to Armenia mining dump trucks / Yu. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otpravil-v-armeniju-karjernye-samosvaly-385547-2020/>.

⁶⁴ Eight BELAZ dump trucks have started working in Indonesia [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vosem-karjernyh-samosvalov-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-indonezii-387074-2020/>.

⁶⁵ Nemankova, Yu. Party of BELAZ loaders is shipped to Algeria / Yu. Nemankova // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/partija-pogruzchikov-belaz-otguzhena-v-alzhir-385911-2020/>.

⁶⁶ "Gomselmash delivered more than 270 combines and machine sets [Electronic Resource] to foreign markets in the first quarter. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-v-i-kvartale-postavila-vneshnie-rynki-bolee-270-kombajnov-i-mashinokomplektov-388443-2020/>.

Korea, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. In the first quarter of 2020, the holding companies shipped more than 400 units of machinery to their customers. "At the same time, 278 self-propelled combines and machine sets were delivered outside Belarus. Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova are on the list of countries where the machines were shipped. <...> In total, shipments for the same period of 2019 increased by 373%" .

Minsk Tractor Works is another enterprise that is actively promoting its products on foreign markets. Thus, since the beginning of 2020, more than 250 tractors have been shipped to Pakistan alone. This is an eloquent indication that "even despite the crisis in many Asian countries and the restrictive measures imposed due to the difficult epidemiological situation, supplies remain at the planned level"⁶⁷. In total, since 1955, Minsk tractor manufacturers have shipped more than 120 thousand of their vehicles to this country of South Asia. The company does not forget about other export destinations as well. In particular, in the first quarter of this year, about five hundred vehicles and tractor kits were shipped to European markets. The following fact shows a lot: "Export of MTW OJSC products to African countries in the first quarter of 2020 increased by 70%"⁶⁸. For one of the countries of this continent - Sudan - in April this year was formed another "party of more than 100 tractors <...>. This is the second shipment in 2020"⁶⁹. These figures complement this picture very convincingly. "Since the beginning of the year, the company has increased deliveries to Russian regions by 20%. Exports of Belarusian agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia have also increased"⁷⁰. Supplies to Tajikistan, where more than a hundred tractors and tractor kits were shipped in the first three months of this year, have doubled. To a large extent, this trend is explained by the fact

⁶⁷ Since the beginning of the year, MTW has supplied more than 250 tractors to Pakistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-s-nachala-goda-postavit-v-pakistan-bolee-250-tractorov-388294-2020/>.

⁶⁸ Nemanikova, Yu. Export of MTZ products to African countries increased by 70% / Yu. Nemanikova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produksii-mtz-v-strany-afriki-vyros-na-70-386540-2020/>.

⁶⁹ Nemanikova, Yu. MTZ will deliver the second party of machinery to Sudan (in Russian) / Yu. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-vtoruju-partiju-tehniki-v-sudan-386164-2020/>.

⁷⁰ MTW has good export performance: supplies to Russia increased by 20%, and to Africa by 70% [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://ont.by/news/u-mtz-horoshie-pokazateli-po-eksportu-na-20-vyrosli-postavki-v-rossiyu-na-70-v-afriku>.

that "since January 2020, spare parts and components imported into Tajikistan for further assembly of agricultural machinery are not subject to VAT and customs duties"⁷¹. And only in the first quarter of this year, the products of Minsk Tractor Works were shipped to markets of more than thirty countries, including 22 foreign countries.

In the first quarter of 2020, **Minsk Automobile Plant** also increased its deliveries to non-CIS countries almost two and a half times. An important component in achieving this indicator was the fact that at the beginning of this year, the enterprise, together with Borisov-based Pojsnab LLC, signed a contract for the supply of 73 units of fire and rescue equipment to the Mongolian Emergency Situations Agency. And MAZ has already "started to execute the contract for the supply of chassis and is assembling passenger vehicles for export to Mongolia. The joint project will be implemented during this year"⁷².

In spring 2020, the **Amkodor-DOMZ** unitary enterprise located in Dzerzhinsk, Minsk region, seriously updated its export plans by shipping the first batch of its products to the Russian region - the Republic of Karelia in April. There, these seven bridge cranes with lifting capacity from 3.2 to 16 tons will be used to implement an investment project to which the Karelian government attaches great importance - "to create on the area of the former Omega Tractor Plant high-tech import-substituting production of full cycle production of forestry equipment: harvesters and forwarders of medium and heavy class"⁷³. Characteristic detail: the bridge cranes sent to Karelia are new generation equipment, which is controlled from the floor by radio signal, which provides high safety standards for staff. It is also important that this spring a second batch of equipment is planned to be sent to Karelia from Belarusian Dzerzhinsk.

⁷¹ MTW increased export of products to Tajikistan by 2 times [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-uvelichil-eksport-produktsii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2-raza-387386-2020/>.

⁷² Nemankova, Yu. MAZ in the first quarter increased export to non-CIS countries almost 2.4 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-v-i-kvartale-uvelichil-eksport-v-dalnee-zarubezhje-pochti-v-24-raza-387079-2020/>.

⁷³ "Amkodor-Honey in Karelia got the first batch of bridge cranes [Electronic Resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-onego-v-karelii-poluchil-pervuju-partiju-mostovykh-kranov-388008-2020/>.

Another Belarusian company, which has significantly strengthened its position on the Russian market in the first quarter of 2020, is **SZAO BELGI**. Here for the first three months of the current year 5059 cars have been assembled, and 5230 cars in total have been sold. Thus "deliveries to the Russian market have increased in 2,5 times, for the first quarter there were exported 2705 cars"⁷⁴. In 2020 the company plans to sell 28 thousand cars in total, 18 thousand of which will be sent to Russia.

Belarusian producers of agricultural products and foodstuffs also continue to increase their supplies abroad. In the first quarter of 2020, their exports to 83 countries increased by almost 10 per cent to almost \$1.5 billion. An important detail: the increase in supplies was observed in almost all directions. In particular, "exports to Russia increased by 4.4 per cent, to the CIS countries excluding Russia - by 24.7 per cent, Asia and Oceania - 2.2 times, America and the Caribbean - 52.4 per cent, the EU - 54.3 per cent. The Chinese direction showed a 2.4-fold increase"⁷⁵. At the same time, supplies of Belarusian meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, potatoes to foreign markets increased particularly intensively in the first three months of 2020. These positive trends were in many ways a continuation of the strong export performance of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex in 2019.

At that time, supplies of agricultural products and foodstuffs to 104 countries exceeded in monetary terms the figure of five and a half billion dollars, amounting to almost one sixth of Belarus' commodity exports in 2019. The achievement of this level was facilitated by a number of positive trends. Firstly, "supplies of milk and dairy products, rapeseed butter, ready-made or canned fish, canned fruits and vegetables, soybean oil, poultry meat, eggs, chocolate and other ready-made products containing cocoa and potatoes have increased"⁷⁶. Secondly, the geographical diversification of

⁷⁴ "BELGI" in the first quarter increased export to Russia 2.5 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-v-i-kvartale-uvlechil-eksport-v-rossiju-v-25-raza-386430-2020/>.

⁷⁵ Exports of Belarusian agricultural products in the first quarter grew by 9.8% [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-beloruskoj-selhozproduksii-v-i-kvartale-vyros-na-98-389760-2020/>.

⁷⁶ Exports of Belarusian agricultural products in 2019 exceeded \$5.5 billion [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-beloruskoj-selhozproduksii-v-2019-godu-prevysil-55-mlrd-378531-2020/>.

Belarusian exports has expanded. New markets included countries on almost all continents: in Asia - Afghanistan; in Africa - Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan, Uganda; in the Americas and the Caribbean - Belize, Cuba, Uruguay; in Europe - Luxembourg, Finland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The diversity of supply from Belarus to these new countries could be seen in the following examples. For example, shipments of whey and skimmed milk powder to Afghanistan, malt to Angola and Burkina Faso, skimmed milk powder to Benin, Mozambique and Niger, canned milk and milk powder to Cuba, alcoholic beverages to Uruguay, fur and fur raw materials to Finland, sugar and potatoes to Albania, and potatoes to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly, Belarusian exports of agricultural products and foodstuffs to the market of Belarus' strategic partners - Russia and China - increased in 2019. In particular, its volume grew by three percent to \$4.3 billion to Russia. It should be noted that "the main driver of growth in supplies to Russia has become dairy products. Revenues from its exports have increased by 23%. Supplies of eggs, flax fiber, gelatin, seeds and rapeseed oil have also increased⁷⁷.

As for China, supplies there from Belarus have increased by almost 60% and amounted to \$131.5 million. This made it possible to increase the share of Belarusian exports to the Chinese market to 68 per cent in the structure of all exports to Asia and Oceania. At the same time, "the volume of shipments of processed meat products with high added value (beef and poultry) increased by \$53.3 million and reached 44.1% in the total structure of food exports to China"⁷⁸. And this, along with the increased supplies of rapeseed oil, flax fiber, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, mineral water, skimmed milk powder and whey powder to the Celestial Empire.

⁷⁷ Nemankova, Yu. Belarus plans to supply over 3 million tons of dairy and 316 thousand tons of meat to Russia in 2020 / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavit-bolee-3-mln-t-molochki-i-316-tys-t-mjasa-v-rossiju-v-2020-godu-378543-2020>.

⁷⁸ The first container train with meat products is planned to be sent to China this year [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-kontejnornyj-poezd-s-mjasnoj-produktsiej-planirujut-otpravit-v-kitaj-v-etom-godu-378553-2020>.

Even more strenuous plans to develop exports of agricultural products and foodstuffs were adopted in Belarus for 2020 - "to increase supplies by 4.2% compared to 2019 and reach an amount exceeding \$5.7 billion"⁷⁹. At the same time, hopes were pinned not only on dairy products, but also on plant and meat products. In particular, 3.6 million tons of dairy and 316 thousand tons of meat products will be shipped to Russia alone. Interesting prospects are also opening up for China, where in January 2020 another 14 new producers of meat products from Belarus were accredited. Among them there are 11 new beef producers - Pinsk, Brest, Zhlobin, Gomel, Grodno, Vitebsk, Slonim, Volkovyssk, meat processing plants, enterprises "Brest Traditions", "Vakhavyak Plus", "Miron", as well as three producers of chicken meat - "Belorusneft-Osobino" and two sites of poultry factory "Dawn". The range of products available for export to the Chinese market, "including chicken legs, wing tips and by-products," has been expanded for another five companies⁸⁰.

All these facts testify to the main thing: whoever does not give up in the most difficult conditions wins in the end, contributing to overcoming the consequences of the adverse epidemiological situation in the world.

⁷⁹ Belarus plans to increase food exports by 4.2% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-uvelichit-eksport-prodovolstvija-na-42-v-2020-godu-378535-2020>.

⁸⁰ Another 14 producers are accredited to supply Belarusian meat products to China [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dlja-postavok-belorusskoj-mjasnoj-produktsii-v-kitaj-akkreditovany-esche-14-proizvoditelej-375197-2020/>.

Belarus: free and special economic zones as growth points in regions

The Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Free Economic Zones", adopted on December 7, 1998, defines the attraction of "investments into the creation and development of export-oriented and import-substituting industries based on new and high technologies" as one of the main objectives of creating a FEZ⁸¹. More than 20 years of experience in the activity of the FEZs created in the country shows that this model of economic relations in the regions has shown many positive trends over this period, and in the future it may become an even more effective instrument of social and economic development of the Belarusian state.

FEZ "Minsk", established in Belarus in 1998, is moving quite successfully towards this goal. At the beginning of February 2020, it had already united 116 resident enterprises on its territory, 57 of them with foreign investments. During its more than 20-year history, the capital's FEZ has attracted more than two billion dollars in investments, including from investors from more than 20 countries. Occupying an area of about three thousand hectares, it now includes 23 plots in Minsk and the capital region, including such cities as Molodechno, Zhodino, Fanipol, Borisov, where enterprises of mechanical engineering and metalworking, chemical and petrochemical, forestry and construction industries are successfully operating. A kind of business card of FEZ "Minsk" are such well-known manufacturers not only in Belarus, but also abroad: "Stadler-Minsk" - trains and trams; "Alutech" group of companies - components for protective shutters, gate systems; "Adaani" - X-ray equipment; "BELGIUM" - cars and light vehicles; "SN AE Europe Industries Bisov" - bimetallic band and end saws.

The facts show that this industrial center on the business map of Belarus continues to develop very actively. Suffice it to say that in 2019 the administration of FEZ "Minsk" registered 17 new resident companies. One of them in December 2019 was Belagromash, which intends to create the production of specialized steel railway

⁸¹ Law of the Republic of Belarus On Free Economic Zones [Electronic resource]. - – 1998. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=H19800213>

containers in the territory of Molodechno Steel Works. Innovative properties of these containers will increase the speed of loading and unloading of goods due to the fact that new containers can be lifted from one mode of transport to another - from a railway platform to a road one and vice versa. This project is also attracted by the fact that "the main customer of containers is a foreign company, so the new production will be as export-oriented as possible. At least 130 jobs will be created"⁸².

On the eve of 2020, BelMetr Limited Liability Company became a FEZ resident. Its plans include the implementation in Zhodino of an investment project for the production of vandal-proof water meters with improved characteristics. Among them are: antimagnetic protection; an antifraud device against external influence on the lid; high sensitivity of the meter; elimination of misting of the upper part of the case. And let "production at the initial stage will be carried out on leased areas, in the future it is planned to build a new production building"⁸³.

The number of residents of FEZ "Minsk" began to grow quite intensively in 2020. In mid-January, the company JLLC "Techno-Express" - one of the leading Belarusian manufacturers in the field of life support systems for passenger cars - was registered here. In FEZ, the company plans to implement an investment project for the production of electrical equipment for passenger cars of locomotive traction. In particular, it concerns the production of air conditioner converters - "devices designed to power asynchronous motors of air conditioning installation on railway passenger coaches as part of electrical equipment and life support systems"⁸⁴. This project has both import-substituting and export-oriented potential, since the main consumer of the above products will be not only the Belarusian Railway, but also interested companies in the near abroad.

⁸² Production of freight containers will be set up in Molodechno [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-gruzovyh-kontejnerov-naladjat-v-molodechno-372673-2019/>.

⁸³ An investment project for the production of water meters will be implemented in Zhodino [Electron Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/investitsionnyj-proekt-po-proizvodstvu-schetchikov-vody-budet-realizovan-v-zhodino-374581-2019/>.

⁸⁴ The first resident in 2020 was registered in FEZ "Minsk". [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyj-v-2020-godu-rezident-zaregistrirovan-v-sez-minsk-376013-2020/>.

A week later, the second resident of Bel-Dozer LLC appeared in the FEZ in 2020. His plans include the construction of a 85plant in Fanipol to produce a wide range of special equipment for earth-moving, construction and transportation works. Here they intend to "produce excavator loaders - multifunctional machines for construction and repair work, as well as graders - productive special equipment, which is actively used in the construction and maintenance of roads and airfields. <...> The volume of investments in the project implementation will exceed 1 million Euro" .

Another new resident of FEZ "Minsk," LLC "Emfil Ail," registered here in early February 2020, will be accommodated in Fanipole. The distinctive feature of his investment project will be a pronounced export orientation of products. The fact is that "the company plans to establish production of dedusting, as well as chemically active filter elements for air purification, on the basis of which production of innovative high-tech equipment will be organized.⁸⁶which will be designed, developed and manufactured exclusively to order.

Finally, a very recent example. In May FEZ "Minsk" registered its seventh in 2020 resident - LLC "Zaslavskiye Paints", which intends to organize in Zhodzina the production of special paints for road markings. "The cost of the investment project is estimated at \$10 million"⁸⁷. As we can see, with the arrival of 2020 in FEZ "Minsk" does not slow down the growth rate, contributing to socio-economic development of not only the capital region, but the country as a whole.

Free Economic Zone "Brest" was the first to be established in the Republic of Belarus. It took place in 1996. And today it is a multi-profile economic area, where industrial, technological and logistic activities can develop. Besides, a part of it is adjacent to automobile and railway checkpoints across the state border and can be used

⁸⁵ The new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will build a plant in Fanipol to produce special equipment [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-poastroit-v-fanipole-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-spetstechniki-376899-2020/>.

⁸⁶ The new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will produce non-standard equipment for air purification [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-budet-vypuskat-nestandardnoe-oborudovanie-dlja-ochistki-vozduha-378734-2020>.

⁸⁷ Paint and varnish plant will be built on the territory of FEZ "Minsk" in Zhodino [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zavod-po-proizvodstvu-lakokrasochnyh-materialov-postrojat-na-territorii-sez-minsk-v-zhodino-390518-2020>.

as a logistics component. Since the creation of the FEZ, the total volume of investments here has exceeded one and a half billion dollars. These investments are definitely paying off. During the three quarters of 2019, residents of FEZ "Brest" almost doubled their contributions to the budget - from Br20.9 million in 2018 to Br41 million now. Today, 73 enterprises from 20 countries are already operating on its territory. It is noteworthy that in 2018 they "exported goods worth \$700 million, the geography of exports includes 70 countries"⁸⁸. A year later - at the beginning of 2020 - "FEZ economic entities exported goods worth \$718 million, and the geography of exports includes 75 countries"⁸⁹.

Germany is the leader among foreign countries by the volume of investments in FEZ. German investors account for one third of all foreign investments made here. And companies with German capital show high economic efficiency. Among them are "Santa-Bremor", "Discom", "Salamander Window and Door Systems", whose products are well known both in Belarus and abroad. In particular, in April 2019 in the LEZ opened a new production of paint materials "Discom", in the construction of which was invested about two million euros. This company is part of the German DAW SE group, which was founded in Germany back in 1895. "Today, Discom employs over 250 specialists. Opening of the new factory has allowed to create about 20 additional workplaces for inhabitants of Brest"⁹⁰.

Italian entrepreneurs, who "have already invested 3 million euros in new projects and created 150 jobs, are very active in the Brest FEZ". In 2018, a new production facility of the Italian-Belarusian company Friesa Industrie was opened at the Airport site. It manufactures energy-saving devices for refrigeration equipment"⁹¹ and shows one of the highest export growth rates among BEZ enterprises. It should be reminded

⁸⁸ Residents of FEZ "Brest" have doubled their deductions to the budget [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-brest-vdvoe-uvelichili-otchislenija-v-bjudzhet-367876-2019/3>.

⁸⁹ History [Electronic resource]. --2020. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/history>

⁹⁰ Opening of new production "Discom" [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/otkryitie-novogo-proizvodstva-%C2%ABdiskom%C2%BB>.

⁹¹ The discussion of the Belarusian-Italian business forum continued in Brest [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/obsuzhdenie-voprosov-belorussko-italyanskogo-biznes-foruma-prodolzhilos-v-brete>.

that back in 2010 the Ministry of Economic Development of Italy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Brest Oblast Executive Committee signed a declaration on the establishment of an Italian industrial district on the territory of the FEZ with the total area of 26 hectares. A year later in Trieste a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of this industrial district was adopted, which provided for the creation of the most favorable conditions for attracting Italian investors and planned "the development of the Italian industrial zone in Brest as a transport and logistics center that provides transshipment and transit of goods between the European Union, the Customs Union, and in the future - and China"⁹². So the prospects for Italian business in FEZ Brest are simply huge.

Polish businessmen also show great interest in the LEZ. Today there are 11 enterprises with Polish capital, including Stomil Sanok BR. Investors from this European country "take the third place after Germany and Russia. The share of Polish investments in the total volume is 17 percent"⁹³. In particular, in March 2019 "English Windows" Ltd. was registered here with Polish investments. "It is planned to create at least 20 jobs in the new company"⁹⁴. It is quite possible that in 2020 the Agreement on cooperation between the administration of FEZ "Brest" and the Lower Silesian Agency for Economic Development signed in April 2017 will receive its further development in the form of concrete projects.

Interest in cooperation with FEZ "Brest" is also shown by Israeli entrepreneurs who have a good example to follow: the current resident of the Free Economic Zone is "a company with Israeli capital Fa-UN, which has established in FEZ the production of feed additives for agricultural production"⁹⁵. In September 2019, a delegation from the Israeli city of Ashdod, whose port is the largest in Israel, thoroughly studied the

⁹² Zaleskiy, B. International Relations and Media. View from Belarus / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. -- C. 147.

⁹³ Strengthening partnerships [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/2-ukreplyaya-partnerskie-svyazi>.

⁹⁴ New resident of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource] was registered. - - 2019. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/zaregistrirovan-novyyj-rezident-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB>.

⁹⁵ In FEZ "Brest" administration there was a meeting with delegation from Israel [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/v-administraczii-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB-proshla-vstrecha-s-delegaczij-iz-izrailya>.

experience of FEZ "Brest", as 60% of all goods imported into this Middle East country, including those from Santa Bremor, a FEZ resident, pass through it. It should be assumed that the dialogue that has begun between the parties on establishing cooperative ties between Brest and Ashdod enterprises will develop in the near future.

Swiss entrepreneurs have an interest in the LEZ. They are primarily attracted by the favorable location of Brest airport, which allows it to be used for private aviation flights. And further, it may be a question of locating here "production facilities with Swiss capital, related to mechanical engineering and food production"⁹⁶.

Export volume of resident enterprises of the **free economic zone "Grodnoinvest"** came close to one billion dollars in 2019, having increased by almost 10% compared to 2018. This allowed to increase the share of the FEZ in the total exports of industrial goods of the Grodno region to 42%. In general, the trade turnover of FEZ residents exceeded \$1.5 billion with a surplus of over \$380 million. There are two main vectors in the geography of these exports: post-Soviet - Russia, Ukraine; European - Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia. At the same time, the basis of supplies outside Belarus "was formed by companies from the sectors of woodworking and furniture production (30% of total exports), food production (27%), mechanical engineering and metalworking"⁹⁷. The chemical and textile industries, as well as manufacturers of transport vehicles and equipment, rubber and plastic products should be noted in the same line. The prospects for development in FEZs are seen in attracting new residents, who could further increase exports of goods and services through their activities.

We would like to remind you that FEZ "Grodnoinvest", created in 2002, today has 12 territories not only in Grodno, but also in such cities of Grodno region as Mosty, Novogrudok, Slonim, Shchuchin, Smorgon, Svisloch. By mid-January 2020, 75 companies with capital from 41 countries were operating in the FEZ. In 2019, four

⁹⁶ The administration of FEZ "Brest" discussed the proposals of the Swiss business community [Electronic resource]. - - 2018 . - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/v-administraczii-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB-obsudili-predlozheniya-delovyix-krugov-shvejczarii>.

⁹⁷ Exports of FEZ Grodnoinvest residents in 2019 came close to \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-priblizilsja-k-1mlrd-379958-2020>.

companies from belarus, austria and poland became residents of the sezes, where potential investors are offered land plots and production areas with engineering and transport infrastructure, tax, customs and other preferences that allow them to significantly reduce project costs and improve the competitiveness of their products, with a total volume of declared investments of more than 190 million dollars, including in fixed assets. – They intend to build highly efficient factories in Grodno and Svisloch, creating over 560 new jobs there. At the same time, "most of the output will be supplied to the European Union countries"⁹⁸.

The year 2020 started very productively in this context for the BMS. In particular, in February the company "EUEcoPAC" was registered as a resident here, which intends to invest more than one million dollars in the creation of production facilities for the production of disposable paper packaging and canteen products. This topic is undoubtedly very topical for Belarus, where measures are being taken at the legislative level to encourage companies to use environmentally friendly packaging, including paper. The new FEZ resident intends to produce paper Kraft bags with and without handle, lunchbox cardboard packaging, paper cocktail tubes and glasses for cold and hot drinks. These products are "expected to be sold primarily in foreign markets. The share of export shipments will exceed 85%. The main markets will be the European Union countries"⁹⁹. In addition, 25 new jobs will be created here.

In the same February 2020 the company "ZOV-MARKET" became a resident of FEZ, which on the basis of the unfinished construction object in Grodno will create a modern enterprise for the production of dry trimming board, bar, furniture blanks. It is characteristic that "70% of production will be exported to the European Union countries"¹⁰⁰. One of the new residents of FEZ may soon become a logistics company

⁹⁸ Four companies with \$190 million worth of investment projects [Electronic resource] became residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in 2019. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidentami-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-stali-4-kompanii-s-investproektami-na-190-mln-375887-2020/>.

⁹⁹ Production of paper packaging will be created by a new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-bumazhnoj-upakovki-sozdast-novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-379035-2020/>.

¹⁰⁰ LLC "ZOV-MARKET" is registered as a resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/ooo-zov-market-zaregistrirvano-v-kachestve-rezidenta-sez-grodnoinvest/>.

Berango from France, which is interested in implementing an investment project in FEZ Grodnoinvest "on the creation of a multimodal logistics terminal for processing and cleaning of containers and tanks"¹⁰¹. Negotiations on this particular issue were held with the administration of the FEZ in Grodno in February 2020.

Export-oriented products are being actively expanded, as are already existing FEZ residents. Thus, in February 2020 Terrazit Plus LLC demonstrated a new innovative control knob VPC ALPHA Grip of Constellation series within the framework of the innovative project Virpil Controls on creation of devices for virtual control of planes, helicopters, prototypes of spaceships. Importantly, this "product is in demand in the Western European market, almost all production is for export"¹⁰² and the project involves pilots, designers, designers and software developers.

In 2019, Belabedding LLP, which has been a Boxspringbett resident since 2006, started production of new products - continental beds. And now "more than 80% of the company's production is exported to Western Europe"¹⁰³. It is believed that the measures taken in the FEZ will bring even more significant results in terms of increasing exports of products of residents of the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" in 2020.

In June 2019 the **Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** regime for the multimodal logistics complex "**Bremino-Orsha**", located in the village of Bolbasovo, **Orsha** district, Vitebsk region, came into effect in the Republic of Belarus. This means that a second economic complex has appeared in Belarus, functioning in such a regime. The Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Veliki Kamen was the first in this list of special economic zones back in 2015. It should be noted that the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC) strictly restricts the possibility of creating such territorial

¹⁰¹ A French company is considering the possibility of creating a terminal in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kompanija-iz-frantsii-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-sozdaniya-terminala-v-sez-grodnoinvest-379266-2020/>.

¹⁰² The resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" LLC "Terrazit Plus" presented new innovative products [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-ooo-terrazit-plus-predstavil-novuyu-innovacionnyuyu-produkciyu/...>

¹⁰³ FEZ "Grodnoinvest" resident Belabedding IOO launched production of new products [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-iooo-belabedding-zapustila-vypusk-novoj-produkcii/>.

units in the member states of the integration association. In particular, only "three such zones can be established in Russia, two in Belarus, and one each in Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan"¹⁰⁴. It should be reminded that the term "special economic zone" refers to a territory that has "a special legal status in relation to the rest of the country and preferential economic conditions for entrepreneurs"¹⁰⁵. SEZs are created in order to attract direct foreign investments, create new jobs for highly qualified personnel, develop the export base, minimize costs due to the absence of export and import duties, bring production closer to the consumer, use cheaper labor and develop the territories.

The SEZ "Bremino-Orsha" intends to attract investors with a number of privileges and tax advantages. In particular, zero rates of taxes on profit (for 9 years), on real estate (for 20 years), on dividends (until January 1, 2033), as well as zero rates of offshore collection, export value added tax (VAT) in case of export of produced goods outside the EAEC, VAT on sales, renting or leasing by residents of real estate (until January 1, 2033), Finally, a special legal regime for 50 years to deal with industrial processing, wholesale trade, e-commerce, logistics and warehousing services, postal services, information and administrative services, research and development. To this end, the SEZ creates two sectors - industrial and logistics. The first sector will produce household appliances and electronics, pharmaceutical products and preparations, foodstuffs - coffee, tea, rice, as well as auto parts, perfumes and cosmetics, household chemicals, jewelry. Finished goods shops, showrooms, warehouses, a business centre and a parking lot will also appear here.

As for the logistics sector, it "will include road, rail and air terminals. The territory of the Special Economic Zone will have a departmental customs clearance point operating 24 hours a day, phytosanitary and veterinary services, a bank branch,

¹⁰⁴ The special economic zone "Bremino-Orsha" started to work in Bolbasovo. [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://news.21.by/other-news/2019/06/27/1827049.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Special Economic Zone (SEZ) [Electronic resource]. - -- 2018. - URL: https://www.audit-it.ru/terms/taxation/osobaya_ekonomicheskaya_zona.html.

an insurance agent and a customs brokerage office"¹⁰⁶. By December 2023 - the project completion date - investments in this multimodal industrial and logistics complex will amount to 200 million dollars. A total of 17 thousand square metres of office space is planned to be built here, 190 thousand square metres of warehouse space and 280 thousand square metres of production space. Plus 1.7 thousand parking spaces for trucks. On the railway terminal will be processed cargo flows between the countries of Europe and Asia, which allow to plan already today that "for 2018-2022 years the total transit flow through "Bremino-Orsha" will be 10 million tons, the output at full capacity - 12 million tons of cargoes per year is planned for 2026"¹⁰⁷.

It is important to note that the first steps in the implementation of this project have already been taken. Thus, back in February 2019, the first export train with Belarusian goods - over forty containers - departed from here to the Chinese city of Nanchang. Its journey time is ten days. "It would take 40 days to transport it by sea. The train would go once a month"¹⁰⁸. In the same February 2019, LLC "Bremino Group" opened in Bolbasovo the first phase of the complex "Bremino-Orsha," in the implementation of which was invested about \$ 20 million. Here the automobile logistics terminal with a parking lot for 212 trucks, which already provides transshipment of almost two million tons of cargoes per year, started to work. The administrative and household premises house customs, veterinary, and phytosanitary control services that work 24 hours a day, 24 hours a day. The established infrastructure already makes it possible to complete and process cargoes and receive the necessary services to ensure the process of logistics activities.

And in early December 2019, the Bremino Group Company signed with its Chinese partner Shaanxi Zhongqiao Silk Road Technology Development Co. Ltd., an agreement providing for the appearance of an international Silk Road Trade Camp in

¹⁰⁶ The special economic zone "Bremino-Orsha" started to work in Bolbasovo [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/osobaja-ekonomicheskaja-zona-bremino-orsha-nachala-rabotat-v-bolbasovo-352502-2019/>.

¹⁰⁷ In Belarus, a second special economic zone with preferential tax treatment [Electronic resource] started functioning. - -- 2019. - URL: https://interfax.by/news/biznes/novosti_kompaniy/1260614/.

¹⁰⁸ Zakrzhevskiy, G. "Bremino-Orsha": at the crossroads / G. Zakrzhevskiy // Transport bulletin. - -- 2019. - 14 February. P. 9.

the SEZ, which, located on 62 hectares, will be a large-scale trade and exhibition complex. It is expected that "there will be wholesale and small wholesale of consumer goods, delivery of goods and warehousing, trading operations from electronic platforms, as well as exhibitions of products from various Asian countries¹⁰⁹. The amount of investment in this project, which is implemented under the Chinese initiative "Belt and Way", will exceed 128 million Belarusian rubles.

All these examples illustrate one simple truth very eloquently: despite the difficult situation in the world economy due to the coronavirus pandemic, one should never stop looking for new ways of development. All the more so because the contours of tomorrow are already beginning to appear today in many ways. The functioning of free and special economic zones, the impact of which on the economic life of the country is becoming more and more noticeable and significant, can be rightly attributed to such contours in Belarus.

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¹⁰⁹ International trade town will appear in the special economic zone "Bremino-Orsha". [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mezhdunarodnyj-torgovyj-gorodok-pojavitsja-v-osoboj-ekonomicheskoy-zone-bremino-orsha-371406-2019/>.

Belarus - China: regional cooperation is the engine of development

In 2019, the Belarusian-Chinese relations of trust-based all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation continued to develop intensively, demonstrating impressive dynamics. Suffice it to say that "in January-June this year [2019] the volume of trade between China and Belarus reached \$2.053 billion, having increased by 22.3% compared to the same period last year, while Belarusian exports to China increased by 81.9%¹¹⁰.

Among the Belarusian regions, which have made a significant contribution to the achievement of such indicators, we should mention **Minsk region**, whose exports "to China in the first 9 months of this year [2019] have more than doubled - from \$178 million to \$367 million (growth rate - 206%)¹¹¹. The basis of these supplies were potash fertilizers, as well as meat and dairy products of such enterprises of the capital region, as JSC "Agrokombinat Dzerzhinsky", LLC "Veles-Mit", JSC "Smolevichi Broiler", KUP "Minoblmyasomolprom", JSC "Minsk Dairy Plant № 1", JSC "Slutsk Cheese Plant". Such positive export dynamics is largely explained by the fact that almost all milk processing and a number of meat processing enterprises of the Minsk Region already have permission to supply their products to the Chinese market. Therefore, in the first eight months of 2019, more than 17 million dollars worth of meat and dairy products were shipped to China. And, to all appearances, the scale of these supplies will only increase.

The volume of Chinese direct investments into the economy of the Minsk region also continues to grow in 2019. Their growth for the first nine months of this year has already amounted to almost ten percent, reaching the value of \$ 115 million. Most of them - more than \$90 million - have been raised through the development of production for the assembly of cars NWO 'BELGI'. But there are other interesting examples. In

¹¹⁰ Grishkevich, A. Development of China cannot do without support and help of Belarus - Cui Tsimin // A. Grishkevich [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/razvitie-kitaja-nemozhet-obojtis-bez-podderzhki-i-pomoschi-belarusi-tsuj-tsimin-367736-2019/>.

¹¹¹ Minsk Oblast more than doubled its exports to China in January-September [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-uvlechila-eksport-produktsii-v-kitaj-za-janvar-sentjabr-bole-chem-v-dva-raza-369062-2019/>.

particular, the first phase of the Belkali-Migao plant was opened in Salihorsk district, Minsk voblast, in November 2019. This is not only the first joint project of Belaruskali and the Chinese company Migao Corporation Limited, but also the first plant on Belarusian soil to produce potassium nitrate, the products of which are to be sold in the European Union, Turkey, Russia and China, as well as to enter the markets of North Africa and Latin America. Today this enterprise with a total staff of 150 people is already operating 24 hours a day. It is also important that "30 graduates of Soligorsk Mining and Chemical College, among others, have been employed in the new jobs. The annual capacity of the first stage of the new plant is 80 thousand tons of potassium nitrate and 62 thousand tons of granulated nitrogen-potassium fertilizers"¹¹². The second stage of the Belkali-Migao plant is to be completed and put into operation within the next year. This will make it possible to increase the annual capacity of the plant up to 160 thousand tons of potassium nitrate, which in addition to agriculture is also successfully used in the metallurgical industry, in the production of glass, pyrotechnics and explosives.

An important event for the development of the Chinese vector of international cooperation of the Minsk region was the participation of five enterprises of the Belarusian capital region in the second international exhibition of imported goods and services China International Import Expo in **Shanghai**, held in November 2019. One of the exhibitors, Slutskiy Cheese Factory OJSC, even managed to conclude a "\$2 million product supply contract with the Greenland Group Corporation". Another document was signed with Shanhai Pujia Food Technology Co¹¹³. And the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone", located in the Minsk region, in the same exhibition in Shanghai, registered two new residents - "Satellite Communications Eurasia" LLC (PRC), which will create a research center in the park to develop satellite

¹¹² "Belaruskali and Chinese Migao have launched an enterprise to produce potassium nitrate [Electron Resource]. -2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaruskalij-i-kitajskij-migao-zapustili-predprijatje-po-proizvodstvu-nitrata-kalija-368329-2019/>.

¹¹³ Minsk Region and Guangdong Province of China signed a road map for cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-guandun-podpisali-dorozhnuju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-368717-2019/>.

communication and control systems, as well as "Flex-n-roll Pro" LLC (Belarus, USA) with a project in the field of industrial printing¹¹⁴.

Another important factor that contributes to the successful promotion of Minsk Oblast enterprises in the Chinese market is the development of effective interregional cooperation with partners in China, including, first of all, 115**Guangdong** Province, with which in November 2019 the Belarusian capital region signed a road map of cooperation for 2020-2021. According to the parties, this document will make it possible to form a common market on the principles of transparency and mutual benefit, as well as strengthen trade and economic ties. Direct cooperation between the regions is among the main objectives. In particular, we are already talking about creating a joint milk processing enterprise in the Chinese province. And the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" may implement a project related to medical equipment. The point is that a Chinese enterprise from Guangdong Province, which is interested in this project, "has already been certified on the European market and is interested in placing production in the Great Stone. <...> This will be a large-scale and significant project not only for the Minsk region, but also for the country" .

Among other Chinese regions, which have significantly increased their interaction with Belarusian partners recently, we should also mention **Sichuan** province. In November 2019, the Belarusian National E-Commerce Pavilion was registered at the international railway port of its administrative center - a city with 20 million residents of Chengdu - and its construction and installation works are scheduled to be completed in early 2020. Here, in seven zones on an area of almost one and a half thousand square meters, Belarusian companies of various directions will be able to present their export potential, including food and beverages, agricultural products and products of auxiliary crafts, for which premises for negotiations and business forums will also be equipped. The placement of this pavilion in a free trade zone with good

¹¹⁴ The Research and Development Centre for Satellite Communication Systems will be established in the Great Stone [Electronic Resource]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nauchno-issledovatel'skij-tsentr-sputnikovyh-sistem-kommunikatsii-sozdatut-v-velikom-kamne-368325-2019/>.

¹¹⁵ Minsk Oblast more than doubled its exports to China in January-September [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-uvelichila-eksport-produktsii-v-kitaj-za-janvar-sentjabr-bole-chem-v-dva-raza-369062-2019/>.

logistics is very promising, as there is a railway port and two large wholesale markets, each of which employs more than seven thousand Chinese wholesale operators. It is also interesting that the pavilion will be presented in the form of the Mir Castle and decorated with the Belarusian national symbols. It is also important that "on the basis of the Belarusian National Pavilion, China and Belarus are ready to create an integrated bilateral platform of relations, which will include such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investment and services"¹¹⁶.

Exporters from the **Gomel region** are going to actively use the potential of the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu. They will mainly be producers of food products - "meat and dairy <...>, alcoholic, as well as confectionery, which has already established itself in foreign markets". There are several reasons for this. Thus, back in May 2015, Gomel Province and Sichuan Province signed a cooperation agreement, which provided for the organization of cooperation on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in areas such as the economy, agriculture, health and culture, education, sports and tourism. In addition, "direct contacts and twinning between the cities of the two regions will be established to promote cooperation in the above areas"¹¹⁷.

Indeed, three years later - in August 2018 - the twinning agreement was signed by the administrative centers of the region and province - Gomel and Chengdu, stating their intention to develop cooperation in trade, education, culture, tourism, with special emphasis on the great prospects for fruitful cooperation in the economic sphere. The fact is that Chengdu is called the window that opens the way for international cooperation between the Western part of China and European countries. A kind of business card of this Chinese city has already become a "freight train of international importance "Chengdu - Europe", connecting China, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus"¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁶ The ceremony of awarding the plate of the Belarusian National Pavilion [Electronic resource] took place in Chengdu, China. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-kitajskom-chendu-sostojalas-tseremonija-vruchenija-tablichki-belorusskogo-natsionalnogo-paviljona-368575-2019/>.

¹¹⁷ Sidorchik, V. Gomel region and Chinese Sichuan province will cooperate (in Russian) / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://news.tut.by/society/447548.html>.

¹¹⁸ Gomel and Chinese Chengdu became twin cities [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-chendu-stali-gorodami-pobratimami-315608-2018/>.

In addition to the economy, the parties see education and healthcare among the promising areas of partnership development, as evidenced by the documents signed in August 2018 - Memorandum on Strategic Partnership between Chengdu Health Investment Corporation and Gomel Regional Clinical Hospital for People with Disabilities of the Patriotic War and the Agreement on Establishment of Cooperation between Wuhu High School and Gomel Gymnasium No. 71.

Among the Gomel enterprises, whose products will be presented in the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu, we should first of all mention Milkavita, which has shipped to the Chinese market its products seven times (!) more than in the same period in 2018. "Every month the enterprise delivers to China about 500 tons of products - dried dairy products and liquid products with long shelf life. The main volume of exports to China is dry whey - about 80%"¹¹⁹. By exhibiting their products in the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu, Gomel exporters hope to significantly expand their presence in Sichuan Province. This would also allow Milkavita to increase its supplies to China by 2019 to the planned three million dollars.

It should be noted that Gomel region is also developing partnership and twinning relations with other Chinese regions. Thus, in June 2019 "the Gomel region and the Chinese Autonomous Region of **Inner Mongolia** signed a cooperation program for 2020"¹²⁰. Partnerships and twinning arrangements have also been established with several Chinese cities in Gomel. In particular, in 2015 the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation was signed with Harbin - the administrative center of **Heilongjiang** Province. At the same time, the parties agreed that "establishment of joint ventures in such spheres as mechanical engineering, electronics, processing of agricultural products <...> in due course should become a priority of economic cooperation between Gomel and Harbin" . But the longest relationship between Gomel and the city of

¹¹⁹ Gomel enterprise "Milkavita" has increased its exports to China 7 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskoe-predpriyatie-milkavita-narastilo-eksport-v-kitaj-v-7-raz-358197-2019/>.

¹²⁰ Grishkevich, A. Gomel region and Chinese autonomous region Inner Mongolia signed the cooperation program / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-kitajskij-avtonomnyj-rajon-vnutrennjaja-mongolija-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-4-2019/>.

Huayan, in **Jiangsu** Province, has been since 1997. Thanks to these ties, the already mentioned above Mlekovita took part in the International Food Industry Exhibition in this Chinese city in May 2019, and in June 2019 at a meeting between the leadership of Gomel and Huayan it was stated that the parties have "great potential for further development of cooperation in various areas, <...> that special interest is caused by food produced in Gomel. All this diversity of ties with Chinese partners allowed Gomel to exceed the volume of mutual trade with China in 2018 at the level of forty million dollars, and for the four months of 2019 to come close to the turnover of 17 million dollars.

Quite a powerful development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic activity in 2019 received in **Vitebsk region**, as evidenced by the figures. Suffice it to say that over the first eight months of this year, the trade turnover of this Belarusian region "with the provinces of China amounted to \$69.6 million, exports - \$13.5 million, which is 2.1 times higher than in the same period in 2018¹²¹. One of the effective partners of Vitebsk region in China is **Shandong** province, which is one of the three leading Chinese regions. It should be reminded that the first Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the parties back in 2006. The cities of Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao began to cooperate under the agreements reached then.

In particular, Vitsebsk and Jinan established twinning relations in April 2009. Heavy and light industry, machine tools, logistics, information technologies, as well as the production of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals were then named as promising areas of cooperation between the two cities. The fact is that more than seven million people live in this Chinese city. And there is a steady demand for quality goods, which certainly opens interesting opportunities for Vitebsk manufacturers. In September 2017, the parties specified their cooperation intentions in the protocol for the implementation of the agreement on the development of brotherly cooperation for 2017-2020. In particular, in the field of education, the Chinese side proposed two projects: "scholarships for students annually allocated to the twin cities of Jinan, as

¹²¹ Bogacheva, O.V. In Vitebsk region together with China will produce peat products / O.Bogacheva // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-vitebskoj-oblasti-sovmestno-s-kitaem-budut-vypuskat-torfoproductsiju-366630-2019/>.

well as summer schools for secondary school students, where children learn about Chinese culture and lifestyle"¹²². And in terms of making better use of the tourism potential of the two cities, it was proposed to create a joint tourism product that would be in demand and popular among Chinese citizens in particular.

As for the cities of Novopolotsk and Weihai, the twinning relationship between them was established in 2006, "but so far they have not had much activity"¹²³. However, already in October 2019, on the margins of the Twin Regions Forum held in Shandong Province, China, representatives of the two cities were able to note for themselves those areas in which the twinning relationship could be successfully developed. First of all, they spoke about ecology and logistics in the framework of the "One belt, one path" project. Secondly, given the fact that the city of Weihai is famous for its production of the most modern medical equipment, Novopolotsk sees great prospects for cooperation in this area as well. In turn, Weihai is very interested in cooperation with the Belarusian city in higher and secondary special education. Therefore, one can hope that the appearance of specific twinning projects here is not far off.

Finally, the Chinese city of Qingdao and the Orsha district of Vitebsk region signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations in September 2018. At the same time, "representatives of Chinese business expressed interest in opening a trading facility in Qingdao for Belarusian meat, dairy and bakery products. as¹²⁴well as to cooperation in the construction of the Bremino-Orsha multimodal industrial and

¹²² Antonov, S. Vitebsk and Jinan have defined the main directions of cooperation for the period up to 2020 (in Russian) / S. Antonov // [Electron Resmurs]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://vitvesti.by/politics/vitebsk-itczinan.html>.

¹²³ Demidov, D. Shandun - Novopolotsk: the horizons of cooperation. What mutual interests were defined by forum of twin regions in China? / D. Demidov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.novaya.by/2019/10/22/shandun-novopolock-gorizonty-sotrudnichestva-kakie-vzaimnye-interesy-opredelil-forum-regionov-pobratimov-v-kitae/>.

¹²⁴ Visit of Qingdao delegation (PRC) to Orsha district, Vitebsk region [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://cci-vitebsk.by/ru/content/%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%82-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BE-%D0%BA%D0%BD%D1%80-%D0%B2-%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%88%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BE%D0%BD-%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B1%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B9-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8>.

logistics complex. In addition, in July 2019, it became known about the intention of the Qingdao Municipal Department of Education to take part in the construction of a school in Orsha for 1020 pupils. "Such a school may become an experimental site for testing jointly developed programs of optional classes in Chinese language, literature, theater and art in general"¹²⁵.

Returning to interregional cooperation between Vitebsk Oblast and Shandong Province in general, it should be noted that in October 2019, these regions have already signed an Agreement on Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation, which identified as priorities for the development of partnerships "development of an effective mechanism of cooperation in trade and investment, the development of cooperation in industry, transport logistics, creation of joint companies in petrochemistry, water treatment, electronics"¹²⁶. All these areas will be concretely translated into a road map for cooperation, which will be developed in the near future. One of the real projects to be included in this program of cooperation between the Belarusian and Chinese regions will be a joint venture to produce peat products to be established in Vitebsk Oblast. Its participants will be "a Chinese company of agricultural orientation, interested in supplying peat products in large volumes, and UE "Vitebskoblgaz," which includes a branch on peat extraction and processing in Dokshitsy district"¹²⁷.

Summing up, it should be noted that "the Year of Belarus' regions in China is planned to be held in 2020"¹²⁸. These plans mean that in the near future the two countries intend to further develop interregional cooperation and strengthen trade and economic, scientific and technological, production and operational, cultural and tourist ties, expanding the number of participants in this interaction.

¹²⁵ They're planning to build a new school in Orsha. Not a simple one, but with Chinese investment [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://gorod216.by/new/2723>.

¹²⁶ Bogacheva, O. Vitebsk region and Shandong province signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblasti-provintsija-shandong-podpisali-soglashenie-o-druzhbe-i-sotrudnichestve-366479-2019/>.

¹²⁷ Bogacheva, O.V. In Vitebsk region together with China will produce peat products / O. Bogacheva // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-vitebskoj-oblasti-sovmestno-s-kitaem-budut-vypuskat-torfoproduktsiju-366630-2019/>.

¹²⁸ Belarus and China are interested in promoting interregional cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-zainteresovany-v-aktivizatsii-mezhregionalnogo-sotrudnichestva-369121-2019/>.

The Great Stone Industrial Park: project that will shape the future

In May 2020, it was five years since the leaders of the two countries - A. Lukashenko and S. S. - visited the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". Jinping. This event became in the history of the park a kind of starting point for its rapid development. And, indeed, in such a short period of time roads were laid here, water, electricity, heating and gas were supplied, more than 60 thousand square meters of standard production buildings were erected, the first office building, a residential building and a research center were built, about 60 investment projects were attracted, the declared volume of investments of which exceeded one billion dollars. All this makes it possible to agree with the conclusion that "over five years, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park has become a good testing ground for bilateral cooperation, has promoted mutual understanding between China and Belarus and ties between their enterprises, has facilitated cultural exchange. That is why the "Great Stone" as an integrated strategic platform for trade and economic cooperation between China and Belarus has attracted the attention of potential partners from both our two countries and from other states, and became a model of cooperation on the "Belt and Ways"¹²⁹.

It should be noted that such a high praise for the "Great Stone" is voiced not only in Belarus or China. In November 2019, the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones (FEMOSA) held a summit in Monaco, the main theme of which was to strengthen cooperation and transform the successful experience of free economic zones (FEZs) into working tools. More than 400 representatives of BEZs from the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Asia and Africa, as well as Chambers of Commerce and Industry, public authorities and potential foreign investors took part in this large-scale event. FEMOSA is a non-governmental and non-profit organization supported by the United Nations, which was founded in 1999 in Geneva to support and promote free

¹²⁹ Zheng, H. "Great stone" symbolizes firm friendship between Belarus and China / H. Zheng // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikij-kamen-simvoliziruuet-tverduju-druzhu-belarusi-i-knr-hu-chzhen-7289/>.

and special economic zones around the world, and especially - in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to assist BMS residents in entering the international market and attract foreign investment. The functions of FEMOSA include developing norms, rules and guidelines for the development of FEZs, providing them with technical, legal and economic assistance, training specialists. Statistics says that "today there are 3500 free zones in 130 countries, which account for more than 70 million jobs"¹³⁰. But, "despite the benefits and preferences offered to them in all countries, only 300-400 are effective. All this is due to technological backwardness, which prevents the BMS from becoming part of the global economy"¹³¹.

The Republic of Belarus has been very actively involved in the activities of Themis. The summit in Monaco was truly significant for the Belarusian side, as it was there that the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" was awarded the FEMOZA Awards 2019, winning the nomination "The fastest growing industrial park". The peculiarity of this category is that "the key in determining the winner was the prospects of the "Great Stone" for global investment and the rapid pace of its development"¹³². Indeed, today in the "Great Stone," the Belarusian side has created substantial benefits for residents - both in terms of tax and land acquisition, as well as a favorable regime in which the registration of enterprises takes place as soon as possible on a "one-stop-shop" principle. As a result, "today this park shows amazing growth, with investors from all over the world coming to us"¹³³.

¹³⁰ Barcelona will be the Free Zone Capital in 2019 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: https://ru.wikinews.org/wiki/%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0_%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82_%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%B9_%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D1%8B%D1%85_%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BD_%D0%B2_2019_%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%83.

¹³¹ Grigoryeva, V. President of the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones (Femoza) Juan Torrents Tolosa visited Gomel [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/vse-sezy-y-gosti-k-nam.html>.

¹³² "The Great Stone is recognized as the fastest growing industrial park in the world [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-priznan-samym-bystrorastuschim-industrialnym-parkom-v-mire-369159-2019/>.

¹³³ Megalgoths in the "Great Stone" and IT records - Rumas told about the opportunities to invest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/megalgoty-v-velikom-kamne-i-rekordy-it-rumas-rasskazal-o-vozmozhnostjah-investirovat-v-belarus-370269-2019/>.

The facts show that the "Great Stone" has already become an international platform for the creation of high-tech enterprises. At the beginning of November 2019, 57 residents were registered here. And there are all grounds to believe that their number "by the end of 2020 can grow to 80"¹³⁴. The project on creation of manufacture of solar batteries is already realized here. In July 2019, the construction of the Belarusian-Chinese plant for the production of mechanical transmissions with an investment of \$17 million began in the industrial park. In October 2019, a plant for the production of engines, LLC "MAZ-Veichai," where they produce "small-knot assembly of motors of Euro-5 and Euro-6 standards for trucks, special vehicles and buses. The production capacity at single-shift operation will be 10 thousand engines per year"¹³⁵. But even more impressive plans are being adopted here for the near future.

At the end of October 2019 in Beijing the 12th meeting of the working group on the issues of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" was held, during which the participants focused their attention on such areas of development of this special economic zone as improvement of the legal environment of the park; establishment of additional comfortable conditions for attracting investments into the creation of competitive industries; creation of sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure; digital construction; development of the park as a smart city. Among the tasks for the development of the industrial park in 2020 were highlighted "priority of export orientation, attraction of anchor investors with high-tech projects, expansion of international activities"¹³⁶. At the same time, we intend to continue to be guided by four basic principles of development: "First, it is globalization, because the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Secondly, industrialization. The main task is to attract international clusters of industry. Thirdly, it is digitalization, which should give great advantages to the development of the park. <...> Fourth,

¹³⁴ The number of Great Stone residents may increase to 80 by the end of 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-k-kontsu-2020-goda-mozhet-uvlechitsja-do-80-365696-2019/>.

¹³⁵ Opening of the engine plant "Maz-Veichai" in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9051>.

¹³⁶ The Great Stone Industrial Park will be presented at the Chinese International Import Exhibition [Electronic Resource] in November. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-v-nojabre-predstavjat-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-367476-2019/>.

ecologization. Environmental protection and compliance with environmental requirements is the key to sustainable development"¹³⁷.

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

Speaking about the trends observed today in the industrial park, there are several main ones. One of them is the development of the "Great Stone" as a smart city with an innovative industry and high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020 an agreement on the development of 5G technology in the industrial park was signed by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus, NWAO "Industrial Park Development Company" and the administration of the "Great Stone". It was noted that one of the most promising areas of 5G technology development here is unmanned transport. As a result, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park should become "the first in Belarus model base for the introduction of 5G technology"¹³⁸.

It should be noted that the priority directions of the Great Stone development remain engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, new materials, logistics. At the same time, the emphasis is placed on innovative activity of residents. And about 20 projects are already yielding results. Among them is the commercial and logistics company "China Merchants," which has

¹³⁷ Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for the Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoy-platfornoj-dlja-belorusko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>.

¹³⁸ Nemankova, Yu. Pilot project on 5G development is realized in "Great stone" / Yu. Nemankova // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyj-proekt-po-razvitiyu-5g-realizujut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>.

received a certificate for the operation of Belarus' only public bonded customs warehouse. In November 2019, the production building of Hess Great Stone, a subsidiary of Garrosserie Hess AG, a Swiss company, for the production of electric passenger transport, was opened at Great Stone. "This type of transport will be characterized by the absence of carbon dioxide emissions and quiet operation. The rooftop batteries will be recharged at the final stop in a few minutes¹³⁹. This resident of the industrial park plans to reach the full production cycle in 2021, when up to fifty bus bodies will already be produced here.

The following fact also speaks of a lot in terms of innovative activity of park residents: in March 2020 the manufacturer of medical products of wide assortment of "Assomedika" Ltd., registered in "The Great Stone" as a resident in 2017, "has mastered new production of breathing masks and bacterial-virus filters of single application for adults, children and newborns¹⁴⁰" - products providing maximum protection of breath from microbes and viruses, which can be used within 12-24 hours.

Thinking in an industrial park and about the future. This is evidenced by the fact of registration of the Chinese company Sinomach as a resident of the "Great Stone" in March 2020 with a project to create a zone for scientific and technological cooperation and innovation development, within which it is planned to build a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and auxiliary infrastructure. In the first phase, it intends to "implement four research projects related to such developments as optical devices, automotive sensors, semiconductor devices and new materials. The company also plans to implement the second phase of the project¹⁴¹.

In terms of expanding the international activities of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park, one of the most effective tools could be such a form of attracting new residents as creating sub-parks in the park, which means "the arrival of not one investor, but a

¹³⁹ Alexander Turchin: Belarusian-Swiss cooperation has serious potential [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9136>.

¹⁴⁰ Production of breathing masks was opened in the industrial park "Great Stone" [Electron resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnyh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-383799-2020/>.

¹⁴¹ The new resident with Chinese capital is registered in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>.

pool of landmark companies under the leadership of a separate management company. This opens up wide prospects for large corporations"¹⁴². It should be added that this proposal is addressed by the park's administration not only to Chinese provinces, "but also to investors from Europe, in particular Switzerland, and Japan"¹⁴³. The main condition for future residents, which must be met, is the creation of high-tech enterprises in the industrial park. And the space and opportunities for building technological clusters and sub-parks on a national basis will be enough for everyone here.

It should be noted that the subpark format is already used in practice in the Great Stone. Back in May 2017, the first phase of the trade and logistics subpark was opened here, located on 29 hectares. This is a hundred thousand square meters of real estate, half of which was occupied by warehouses, and almost a quarter - by the exhibition center. "About \$120 million was invested in the construction of the sub-park. In the near future it is planned to start the construction of the second stage. In total the territory of the sub-park will occupy the area of more than 90 hectares, the volume of investments - \$500 million"¹⁴⁴.

At the 11th meeting of the Working Group on the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park, held in November 2018 in Beijing, it was noted that in the near future the necessary support would be provided for the practical implementation in the "Great Stone" of sub-parks in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, and Guangdong Province. It was also planned "to work on the establishment of sub-parks in an industrial park with Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces and Hangzhou City by the end of 2019"¹⁴⁵. As far as Guangdong Province is concerned, as early as January 2017, in its administrative center

¹⁴² Konoga, P. Alexander Yaroshenko told about new residents of "Great stone" industrial park, satellite city and plans for 2019 / P. Konoga // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/vysech-pribyl-iz-kamnya.html>.

¹⁴³ The "Great Stone" offers foreign partners to create sub-parks [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-predlagaet-zarubezhnym-partneram-sozdavat-subparki-365694-2019/>.

¹⁴⁴ Anatoli Kalinin took part in the opening of the first stage of the trade and logistics sub-park in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7228>.

¹⁴⁵ Protocol of the 11th session of the Working Group on the issues of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://belaruschina.by/data/fck/file/minekonomiki/protocol_11.pdf.

- Guangzhou City - "a ceremony of signing an agreement on the establishment of the Chinese (Guangdong) LED sub-park in the Great Stone Industrial Park" was held. as¹⁴⁶ well as five other documents of intent to join this subpark of specific companies.

Another landmark document in the context of this topic was signed in November 2018 at the first Chinese exhibition of imported goods and services in Shanghai. This is an agreement on the establishment of the Chengdu-European Industrial Sub-Park in the Great Stone. The fact is that Chengdu - the administrative center of Sichuan Province - has a significant industrial potential, including developed automotive and aerospace industries, which corresponds to the priorities of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park. In addition, "Chengdu is the most economically close city of China to Europe"¹⁴⁷.

Let us note an important detail: a number of important meetings and negotiations have taken place recently, where the issues of creating national sub-parks of European countries in the "Great Stone" have been discussed. In particular, in August 2019 this topic was discussed in the government of the Republic of Belarus with representatives of the Swiss business community, including the management of Ceres Group Holding AG and the Swiss industrial park BUSS, who positively assessed the Belarusian proposal not only to create a Swiss sub-park in the "Great Stone," but also to "act as a developer and attract Swiss business to cooperation with Belarus"¹⁴⁸. It is noteworthy that already in December 2019 the 60th resident - already mentioned above "Swiss company Hess Great Stone for the production of electric passenger transport"¹⁴⁹ was registered in the industrial park. And in January 2020 the issue of "possible future

¹⁴⁶ A subpark of LED products [Electronic Resource] will be established in the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park. - - 2017. - URL: <https://industrialpark.by/novosti/2017/v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-budet-sozdan-subpark-svetodiodnoj-produkcii.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Chinese Chengdu is considering the possibility of creating high-tech industries in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: https://interfax.by/news/policy/ekonomicheskaya_politika/1251824/.

¹⁴⁸ Krizhevich, I. In territory of "Great stone" the Swiss subpark can be created / I.Krizhevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/na-territorii-velikogo-kamnya-mogut-sozdat-shveysarskiy-subpark.html>.

¹⁴⁹ The Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" has the 60th resident [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://interfax.by/news/biznes/businesses/1268182/>.

creation of the Italian-Belarusian sub-park in the "Great Stone"¹⁵⁰ was considered in practical terms at the meeting in Rome with owners and managers of Italian companies interested in investing in the projects of the industrial park.

Undoubtedly, all these facts underline the very high dynamics of the development of the "Great Stone" industrial park - a project, the role of which in the Belarusian economy will soon become a landmark both in terms of innovation and investment, and in terms of technology.

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¹⁵⁰ Belarus and Italy will consider creating a joint sub-park in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - – 2020.
- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-italija-rassmotrjat-vopros-sozdaniya-sovmestnogo-subparka-v-velikom-kamne-376060-2020/>.

Vitebsk region: points of growth - Featuring a free economic zone

Vitebsk region is one of those regions of Belarus where, according to the head of state, "it is necessary to take technological and organizational measures to cope with the problems that exist there"¹⁵¹ and to direct the development of the region in an innovative direction. The free economic zone (FEZ) "Vitebsk", established twenty years ago in 1999, is one of the real instruments used in the region to solve this problem. Until August 2018 it consisted of 13 sectors, including 7 sectors in Vitebsk, 4 sectors in Orsha, and one sector each in the Vitebsk and Postavsk districts.

In August 2018 the Republic of Belarus adopted Decree No. 346 for further development of free economic zones and intensification of attraction of national and foreign investments, which stated the need to expand the territory and optimize the existing FEZs in the country - "Minsk", "Vitebsk", "Grodnoinvest", "Mogilev", "Gomel-Raton". It was assumed that the measures taken in the decree "would allow locating residents, taking into account the prospects for their further growth, organizing jobs, the optimal use of vacant land plots with the existing engineering and transport infrastructure, as well as attract investment in the creation of export-oriented and import-substituting industries"¹⁵².

It should be noted that only in the FEZ "Vitebsk" this decree defined 16 sectors, located not only in the area of Vitebsk, but also in other cities and urban settlements of the region - Postavy, Orsha, Barani, Bolbasovo, Novopolotsk, Polotsk district, as well as near the villages of Kosachi and Kopti of Vitebsk district, each of which can and should receive powerful impulses for development. And these plans have already started to be implemented in practice. In their territory 48 enterprises with participation of investors from 14 countries, including Germany, Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Great Britain, USA, Israel, Cyprus, Estonia, including German "Witella", Polish

¹⁵¹ Meeting on the development of agroindustrial complex in Vitebsk region [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschanie-po-voprosam-razvitiya-agropromyshlennogo-kompleksa-vitebskoj-oblasti-22434/.

¹⁵² Belarus will consider the possibility of taking a loan to build energy infrastructure in a FEZ [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-privlechenija-zajma-dlja-stroitelstva-energeticheskoy-infrastruktury-330424-2018/>.

"Dekora East", British "LINPAC Peking East" started to operate, Estonian Soyuz-Cable, American CESS-Bel and a number of others, which operate in 25 production areas, including mechanical engineering, electronics, veterinary medicine, chemical, fuel, food and light industries. And the total number of employees at resident enterprises was about 11 thousand people.

In December 2018, the first resident with Lithuanian capital appeared in FEZ "Vitebsk" - LLC "VMG WoodArt", whose production site is located in the first sector of the FEZ on the territory of the former military airfield on the outskirts of Vitebsk, which is named "Zhurzhevo". The new resident is a part of one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of furniture and wood chipboards in the Baltic States - international holding "VMG", headquartered in Klaipeda, which unites a number of companies in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. The project proposed for FEZ "Vitebsk" involves the creation of sawmill production and factories for the production of wood chipboards and furniture. Its implementation will take place in two stages. "Initially in the period until 2023 it is planned to invest more than 50 million euros in the development of production activities, to create about 200 jobs. The total volume of wood processing at the holding companies will be about 700 thousand cubic meters per year. In total, at least 500 workplaces will be created"¹⁵³.

Among the countries with which Vitebsk FEZ residents are successfully developing cooperation, Latvia should be mentioned as well. During three quarters of 2018 their trade turnover with Latvian economic entities came close to 25 million dollars, which is more than a third of the volume of mutual trade of the whole Vitebsk region with this Baltic country. "The following companies are involved in export-import transactions with Latvia: LLC "BelGigaSint", LLC "PO "Energokomplekt", OJSC "Vityaz", LLC "Modern-Expo", LLC "Allianceplast", RUPTP "Orsha flax mill"¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵³ A resident with Lithuanian capital is registered in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-s-litovskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-sez-vitebsk-330553-2018/>.

¹⁵⁴ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in Belarusian-Latvian business forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>.

Even more significant results are typical for the interaction of FEZ "Vitebsk" resident enterprises with Russian partners, especially from Moscow and Moscow region. Thus, only in the first half of 2018 the turnover with them exceeded 60 million dollars, and in the leaders of business cooperation with Muscovites can be called not only OAO "Vitebsk Carpets", but also "foreign enterprise" VIC-animal health ", LLC" Prodexim ", LLC" TransExpedition ", CJSC" Pozhtechnika¹⁵⁵ " and a number of others.

Other specific plans of FEZ "Vitebsk" to expand the geography of international cooperation are also of interest. For instance, the Chinese company "Blue Lotus" planned to launch a project here in 2019 with investments of at least 300 million dollars. It is a question of creation by the Chinese investor on the territory of FEZ "up to ten production enterprises for production of wood products - from fuel biomaterials to furniture"¹⁵⁶. AL Maya Group from the United Arab Emirates, whose representatives visited Vitebsk in July 2018, saw one of the promising areas of investment cooperation in pharmaceuticals, "as the Middle Eastern partners have a wealth of experience in this area"¹⁵⁷. Finally, in September 2018, the administration of FEZ "Vitebsk" signed a cooperation agreement with Indian company India Advisory, which, according to the parties, "will serve as an impetus for further fruitful cooperation and attraction of Indian investments in Vitebsk region"¹⁵⁸.

High growth dynamics of attracting foreign direct investment was demonstrated by residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" in 2019 - three and a half times at once, reaching the level of \$ 16.5 million. As a result, "the share of FEZ "Vitebsk" in the investment portfolio of the Vitebsk region for 2019 amounted to almost 39% and increased by 10 percentage points compared to 2018"¹⁵⁹. Among the FEZ residents who have shown

¹⁵⁵ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in complex presentation of Vitebsk region in Moscow [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>.

¹⁵⁶ Agreement of intent was signed between FEZ "Vitebsk" administration and Chinese company [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>.

¹⁵⁷ FEZ "Vitebsk" administration was visited by businessmen from UAE [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>.

¹⁵⁸ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in Belarusian-Indian business forum [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>.

¹⁵⁹ Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased the volume of direct foreign investments by 3.5 times [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-uvelichili-objem-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-v-35-raza-379775-2020/>.

the greatest investment activity are JLLC "Natriks", LLC "Chess-Bell", LLC "Akitama", IUE "VIC animal health". In total 50 residents became to implement their projects in FEZ, of which almost half - with foreign capital. It should be noted that in 2019, "eight organizations, created with the participation of investors from Lithuania, Sweden, Spain, Russia and Belarus, received the resident status in FEZ "Vitebsk". The total volume of investments in the new projects exceeds \$52 million, it is planned to create at least 270 jobs¹⁶⁰. Apparently, these figures will only grow in the near future.

In November 2019 they were joined by a new resident - Rubovsky Dolomite Quarry Ltd. with the participation of a Lithuanian investor and a project to establish a dolomite-based building materials production. In this case we are talking about organizing the production of hypercompressed bricks like "Lego" and other decorative building materials from environmentally friendly raw materials. The production will be located on the territory of the former airfield on the outskirts of Vitebsk. Apparently, the project is designed for the long term, as the total reserves of dolomites in Vitebsk region "are estimated at more than 5 billion tons at a depth of 2.5 to 38 m, of which the volume of approved reserves is 878 million tons. The "Ruba" dolomite deposit is among the largest among the explored deposits in Belarus"¹⁶¹. As a matter of fact, and for this reason, production of construction materials based on natural raw materials is one of the priorities of the Vitebsk Oblast economy development.

Another very promising direction of FEZ "Vitebsk" development is woodworking production. There are already five resident enterprises specializing in this industry. In particular, LLC "VMG Wood Art" is creating a vertically integrated woodworking complex. Another LLC, Akitama, is building a plant for processing low-value wood and producing wood-fuel pellets. And Karelia Venirs is organising veneer production. In addition, two other projects were under registration in the FEZ,

¹⁶⁰ Investors from 4 countries plan to start implementing projects in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource] this year. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-planirujut-v-etom-godu-nachat-realizatsiju-proektov-v-sez-vitebsk-379788-2020/>.

¹⁶¹ The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will create manufacture of building materials from dolomite [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-stroitelnyh-materialov-iz-dolomita-371163-2019/>.

including the organization of production of machinery and equipment for the woodworking industry.

Taking into account the obvious growing interest of investors in wood processing projects, FEZ "Vitebsk" came up with an initiative - to create a wood processing cluster in the region, which implies the union of manufacturers, research centers and educational institutions, which is expected to provide favorable conditions for innovation. After all, "this form of cooperation will stimulate scientific developments and their practical application. As a result, it will increase the depth of wood processing and create higher value-added products"¹⁶². The participants of this cluster can become enterprises, institutions of additional education, educational institutions where specialists for this industry are trained, including Vitebsk State Technical College. The agreement on the creation of a woodworking cluster was planned to be signed in spring 2020 in the framework of the International Economic Forum in Vitebsk. It should be assumed that this form of coordination, which implies a synergistic effect on the output, will really help introduce innovations not only in the free economic zone, but also outside it.

It should be noted that the emergence of this cluster in Vitebsk Oblast may continue and supplement the innovation direction of the northern Belarusian region. It should be reminded that in October 2017 the Novopolotsk innovation-industrial petrochemical cluster was already formed here, which included the Novopolotsk City Executive Committee, Polotsk State University, Naftan, Construction and Installation Centre No. 16, Novopolotsk, InterService LLC and the Novopolotsk Centre for Entrepreneurship and Real Estate. Already in 2020 the number of its participants is expected to increase almost twice, including at the expense of foreign participants. In particular, it could be the Chinese partners from Weihai, which is a twin city of Novopolotsk in Shandong province, who are interested in innovative developments of Polotsk scientists to create new types of petrochemical products and improve the characteristics of the fuel produced. Among the potential partners of the cluster, it

¹⁶² FEZ "Vitebsk" suggests creating a woodworking cluster [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-predlagaet-sozdat-derevoobrabatvyajuschij-klaster-371147-2019/>.

seems, is the company from the Czech Republic, which is interested in entering the Belarusian market.

The growing interest of foreign partners in the petrochemical cluster is pushing its organizers to optimize the mechanisms of interaction of its participants. For this reason, it is planned to create an association here in 2020, which will act as a coordinating center and will form proposals to improve the regulatory requirements governing the activities of the subjects of this innovative infrastructure. In addition, "the association will also take over the organization of events to develop effective interaction between participants, the formation of a portfolio of joint orders, promotion of the image of the cluster and improvement of personnel support of its activities"¹⁶³. There is every reason to believe that this format of cooperation can also have the most beneficial effect on the innovative development of the Vitebsk Oblast economy.

And the first resident registered in FEZ in 2020 was OOO BelBank, created with the participation of an investor from Russia. The investment project of this company involves the reconstruction and modernization of production facilities on the outskirts of Vitebsk and the site of JSC "Vityaz", as well as the installation of two lines for the production of tin cans for industrial food preservation. Production activity here is planned to start already in 2021. Raw materials - white tin - will be supplied by Miorsky Metal Rolling Plant, located in Vitebsk region, which is scheduled for commissioning in the second quarter of 2021. As a result, BelBank LLC will first produce full-drawn cans, where the bottom and the side surface represent a single whole, only the lid will be rolled. In the second stage, the company will produce prefabricated products consisting of three parts (bottom, body and lid)¹⁶⁴. The important detail: with an exit of the new enterprise on full capacity volume of production let out here will double. And all it will be shipped to foreign markets.

¹⁶³ The number of participants in the Novopolotsk petrochemical cluster is planned to almost double [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/chislo-uchastnikov-novopolotskogo-neftehimicheskogo-klastera-planiruetsja-uvelicit-pochti-v-dva-raza-371161-2019/>.

¹⁶⁴ In FEZ "Vitebsk" with the participation of a Russian investor will create a tin can production [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sez-vitebsk-s-uchastiem-rossijskogo-investora-sozdatut-proizvodstvo-zhestjanyh-banok-377712-2020/>.

The investment picture of 2020 in FEZ "Vitebsk" is very significantly complemented by the fact that it is already planned to register as residents of at least six companies created with the participation of investors from Canada, China, Azerbaijan and Russia. At the same time, the total volume of investment in these projects will exceed \$ 100 million, and the number of jobs created - at least 300. In particular, in Polotsk a resident of FEZ - Belsun International Corporation LLC on high technologies - will create a high-tech production of products of low-capacity chemistry, which have no analogues in the post-Soviet space. The Azerbaijani investor will produce innovative products designed "to service various types of machinery, including in harsh operating conditions. It is planned to start production by the end of 2020, the products will be fully shipped to foreign markets"¹⁶⁵.

In the same Polotsk, the Belarusian investor intends to create a production of stainless steel containers with about 20 jobs. The Belarusian-Russian JLLC Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metal Structures is considering a project with investments of about \$10 million in hot dip galvanizing in the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The Chinese company intends to invest about 28 million dollars in the woodworking complex in the outskirts of Vitebsk. And Belmatch LLC, created with the participation of an investor from Canada, is going to specialize in the production of match straw. In Orsha, the Belarusian company will try to establish production of fuel pellets, while Factory PAK will initiate a project to organize production of components for dump trucks.

In 2020, another significant investment event will take place in FEZ "Vitebsk" due to the fact that Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" decided to expand the financing of the investment project already being implemented in FEZ from 100 to 200 million euros. For this purpose, the investor is ready to organize additional production of solid wood furniture for the vertically integrated woodworking complex being created. As a result, the number of jobs created by the projects of the holding will increase to 1

¹⁶⁵ An investor from Azerbaijan will create high-tech production of low-tonnage chemistry in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investor-iz-azerbajdzhana-sozdast-vysokotehnologichnoe-proizvodstvo-malotonnazhnoj-himii-v-sez-vitebsk-381432-2020>.

thousand"¹⁶⁶. This is done in order to start production of new products - tables and chairs - at the new furniture production in 2021, the main buyer of which will be the IKEA concern, which now provides assistance in financing this project.

It should be noted that only in 2019 more than one billion dollars of investments were attracted to the economy of Vitebsk region. Thanks to an active investment policy, the first plant in Belarus to produce steel seamless cylinders was put into operation here. New enterprises and wood processing facilities were opened in Rosson, Sharkovski, Beshenkovichi, Gorodok and Polotsk districts. "The grain drying complex of the Vitebsk broiler poultry factory in the urban settlement of Surazh and the soybean processing shop of the Ekomol-Agro enterprise were put into operation"¹⁶⁷. In addition, the construction of the largest in Belarus dairy complex "Kupalinka" for more than two thousand heads is being completed at the agrocombinat "Yubileiny". In the first half of 2020 two more innovative objects of the agricultural enterprise "Ustie" will be put into operation - a grain drying complex for preparation of agricultural seeds for 10 thousand tons and a dairy complex with milking system "robotic carousel". And this is not a complete list. This is the pace set by the investments attracted today for the development of only one of the Belarusian regions, stimulating the creation of new growth points on its territory.

¹⁶⁶ Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" will increase the volume of investments on projects in FEZ "Vitebsk" to 200 million euros [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/litovskij-holding-vmg-grupp-uvelicit-objem-investitsij-po-proektam-v-sez-vitebsk-do-200-mln-evro-379950-2020/>.

¹⁶⁷ Bogacheva, O. More than \$1 billion of investments were attracted to the economy of Vitebsk region for 2019 / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolce-1-mlrd-investitsij-privlecheno-v-ekonomiku-vitebskoj-oblasti-za-2019-god-378810-2020/>.

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