

## Cooperation space

In December 2023, a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States was held, at which the participants noted that the member states of the association were able to return to the growth trajectory this year. In fact, according to the results of the first nine months of 2023, the volume of industrial production in the CIS increased by almost three and a half percent, cargo transportation - by almost six percent. And further efforts of the countries of the integration structure will be aimed at removing obstacles in mutual trade, liberalization in the sphere of services and attraction of investments in order to jointly produce competitive products. After all, the creation of high-tech products with characteristics superior to foreign analogues is a benchmark for all participants of the Commonwealth. And there are already many examples of such effective cooperation, including in cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union. In particular, a cooperative project to create a Eurasian electric bus is under active consideration. Such cross-cutting integration projects in the post-Soviet space could utilize the joint scientific, technological and financial potential of the Commonwealth. How does this cooperation work today? This is the subject of the proposed paper.



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Boris Zalessky



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*Chronicle of Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Commonwealth of Independent States  
Belarus with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States*

**Boris Zalessky**

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**Chronicle of Economic Cooperation between the  
Republic of Belarus and the Commonwealth of  
Independent States Belarus with the countries of  
the Commonwealth of Independent States**

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Chronicle of economic co-operation of the Republic of  
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Commonwealth of Independent States

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## **Commonwealth of Independent States: Free trade in services, innovation, science, education**

The year 2022 marks the end of the chairmanship of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which is based on the principles of continuity and is aimed at implementing long-term elements of the development strategy of this integration association in the post-Soviet space in various areas. The measures taken in 2021 under the auspices of the Belarusian presidency in conjunction with the efforts of the states at the national level allowed to ensure the growth of the most important macroeconomic indicators in the CIS in January-August. "Thus, the growth of industrial output was 4.3%, cargo transportation (without pipeline transport) - 5.2%, retail trade turnover - 8.5%"<sup>1</sup>. Achievement of such positive dynamics was largely facilitated by the CIS free trade zone for goods, which provides favourable conditions for the development of the economies of the CIS member states.

In 2021, thanks to Belarus' chairmanship in the CIS, active work continued together with other states on the draft **agreement on free trade in services**, which is designed to provide additional opportunities for sustainable economic development in the post-Soviet space. An important detail here is that "work on the preparation of this agreement has been going on for 9 years, since 2012"<sup>2</sup>. Its particular relevance lies in the fact that trade in services today accounts for about half of the gross product of the CIS countries. The removal of barriers in this matter will allow to further increase economic interaction in the post-Soviet space, where stable processes of restoration of integration ties are already observed. "Thus, in the first half of this [2021] year, mutual trade increased by almost 27 per cent, foreign trade turnover - by more than a quarter, the volume of gross domestic product in the Commonwealth as a whole increased by almost 4.5 per cent, freight transport and industrial production are growing"<sup>3</sup>.

Another very important document, which was worked on during the year of Belarus' presidency in this international organisation, is the **Comprehensive**

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus has always been in favour of the CIS development and is aimed at the development of regional integration [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10051>

<sup>2</sup> Lebedev: agreement on free trade in services in the CIS may be signed in May 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/lebedev-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-v-sng-mozhet-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-goda-469260-2021>

<sup>3</sup> Mishustin: agreement on free trade in services will stimulate economic interaction in the CIS [Electronic resource]. 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mishustin-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-prostimuliruet-ekonomicheskoe-vzaimodejstvie-v-sng-469224-2021/>



**Action Plan for 2021-2025 for the** implementation of the Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of the CIS countries for the period until 2030, which was approved by the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth in November 2021. It is relevant to recall here that at the October (2021) meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State a statement was adopted on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth, in which, considering trade and economic interaction as a key factor in further deepening economic integration and sustainable development of the CIS member states, the leaders of these states stated the need to "direct efforts towards stable economic growth through the development of a green economy, digitalisation, industrial cooperation, and the widespread use of innovations..."<sup>4</sup>

It should be recalled that in 2020 the implementation of the **Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of the CIS countries**, which was approved in October 2011 and in which the main objective was formulated - "the creation of an interstate space, uniting the capabilities of national innovation systems, giving a sustainable systemic character to innovation development, promoting the effective use of scientific and technological developments and inventions"<sup>5</sup>. During its implementation, certain results have been achieved. These include the formulation of a functioning mechanism for the implementation of interstate projects, the creation of a legal framework for the successful interaction of participants, and the formation of an innovation infrastructure.

With regard to the participation of the Republic of Belarus in the implementation of the provisions of the completed programme, Belarusian organizations have become executors in nine inter-State projects out of ten. Among the most significant of them is the development and implementation of a comprehensive information system for aerospace forecast monitoring of natural emergencies, which makes it possible to reduce the damage caused by such situations and the costs of eliminating their consequences by up to 20 per cent through timely measures. Another interesting example in this context is the development of a highly sensitive test system for detecting hepatitis E in humans, wild and domestic pigs, rabbits and reindeer, on the basis of which Belarus has developed a system of anti-epidemic measures among the population.

Continuation of systematic work in this direction was the adoption in November 2020 at the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS

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<sup>4</sup> CIS Heads of State adopted a Statement in connection with the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-gosudarstv-sng-prinjali-zajavlenie-v-svjazi-s-30-letiem-sodruzhestva-464684-2021/>

<sup>5</sup> Interstate programme of innovation cooperation of the CIS member states for the period up to 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19142cis.minsk.by/page/19142>

countries of the decision on the **Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of the Commonwealth member states for the period up to 2030.**

This document is "a system of mutually linked activities in terms of objectives, resources and timeframes, which takes into account the accumulated experience. In particular, much attention is paid to attracting extrabudgetary sources of financing for inter-State innovation projects"<sup>6</sup>. The main task of the new programme is to organise large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and promising developments in the common innovative Eurasian space. One of the innovations that distinguishes the new document from the previous one is that the new programme has become more flexible in its implementation. Whereas previously there was a strict condition for the participation of representatives of at least three Commonwealth countries in an innovation project, now "it is envisaged that projects may be launched with the participation of two CIS member states, and other interested countries may join later"<sup>7</sup>. The focus on measures to increase the efficiency of innovation activities is dictated by the fact that in the period up to 2030, global economic processes will be characterised by increased uncertainty and volatility, even possible radical changes under the influence of geopolitical factors. But the most important trends, which in the next decade can really affect the development of world processes, will remain new technologies, innovative solutions in the economy, creation of a large number of own high-tech industries.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, the Commonwealth has a lot to do to get rid of those obstacles in the innovation sphere, which CIS member states continue to face today, where there is still "a certain inertia, little consideration of the time factor, the level of strategic planning in the spheres of innovative development and international scientific and technical cooperation remains low, and measures to support small and medium-sized, including youth, scientific and technical and innovative entrepreneurship are not effective enough". Successful implementation of the new programme would make it possible to achieve the expected effect in 14 areas at once, including: increasing the number of breakthrough technologies, discoveries and promising developments by ensuring the promotion of research results on the market; creating potential for increasing the number of companies - world technology leaders - in the CIS; expanding scientific, technical and innovative cooperation as a basis for the

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<sup>6</sup> On the results of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/>

<sup>7</sup> The programme of innovation cooperation of CIS countries has become more flexible and adaptive - Shumilin [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/programma-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-sng-stala-bolsee-gibkoi-i-adaptivnoj-shumilin-421456-2020/>

<sup>8</sup> Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of the CIS Member States for the period up to 2030. - M., 2020. - C.8.

creation of joint competitive products, including those for the markets of third countries.

As for the approved Comprehensive Action Plan for 2021-2025, which contains specific activities, initiatives and projects with the indication of responsible executors and deadlines, they are structured in five main areas relating to regulatory, legal, organizational, informational, financial and personnel support for the implementation of the programme. The successful implementation of the plan is expected to strengthen the CIS position in the new architecture of the world economic system and to create conditions for achieving such results as "the development of inter-State innovation cooperation, the creation of scientific, technical and technological reserves for the organisation of large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and services within the Commonwealth's common innovation space"<sup>9</sup>. In addition to these provisions, this integration association is also expected to develop a programme for the development of industrial complexes until 2025, which will be another step in the development of the CIS.

Another priority goal of the presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2021 was to achieve a synergetic effect from the cooperation of the member states of this association in the post-Soviet space in various areas in order to attract the widest possible range of participants in addressing the issues of its deepening, observing the principle of multilevel and multirate integration. At the same time, in the **field of science and technology**, the task was set to "promote the creation of effective mechanisms to combine the efforts of the CIS member states in the scientific, technical and innovation spheres and to strengthen the innovation component of economic growth through the formation of national innovation systems and the implementation of inter-State innovation projects"<sup>10</sup>. One of the concrete steps towards its solution was the holding of several important events in Minsk in the last decade of November 2021, aimed at strengthening ties and expanding contacts between the community of scientists and scientific organisations of the CIS countries, including the 3rd Forum of Scientists, the 9th meeting of the Council for Cooperation in Basic Science, and the 29th meeting of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation.

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<sup>9</sup> The CIS approved the action plan for five years on innovative co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-utverzhdzen-plan-meroprijatij-na-pjatiletku-po-innovatsionnomu-sotrudnichestvu-469337-2021/>

<sup>10</sup> The Concept of the Chairmanship of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19314>

**The 3rd Forum of CIS scientists** gathered more than 150 participants - heads and leading scientists of academies of sciences, major scientific and research centres, educational organisations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Its main objectives were to: 1) to intensify scientific and technical cooperation of the Commonwealth states; 2) to stimulate new joint research; 3) to propose ways to develop innovation policy in the post-Soviet space; 4) to form "a system of international mobility of scientists and young specialists in the professional community"<sup>11</sup>. Within the framework of three round tables - "The State and Prospects of Basic Science Development", "Improving Scientific Cooperation in the Digital Era", "Innovative Scientific Research" - it was noted that in the context of the transition to the digital model of the Commonwealth economy, the importance of science is sharply increasing, where interaction is based on the strategy of mutually beneficial and equal co-operation and where such principles as: 1) preservation and further development of historical and cultural ties of the peoples of the CIS countries; 2) joining efforts for the implementation of national interests in the implementation of scientific programmes and projects; 3) formation of mutually beneficial partnerships of scientific organisations of the Commonwealth countries; 4) flexibility of collective cooperation formats and decision-making mechanisms in the implementation of joint scientific research. The declaration "Science in the context of global challenges" adopted at the end of the 3rd Forum notes that "the scientific and technical policy pursued by the Commonwealth states is aimed at uniting the efforts of scientists of the CIS countries in the search for new forms of cooperation in the field of scientific research to solve problems in modernising national socio-economic systems and improving the welfare and quality of life of people"<sup>12</sup>.

At the **9th meeting of the Council for Cooperation in Basic Science of the CIS countries**, the increasing role of basic science in the development of society as a basis for prosperity and well-being of future generations of our countries was noted, and a proposal was made to develop a plan of cooperation in this area, designed for a two-year period and dealing with areas of particular interest to the scientific community of the CIS - ecology, space exploration, biotechnology, digitalisation, and aimed at solving existing problems of

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<sup>11</sup> Scientists of the CIS countries will adopt a declaration on co-operation in the scientific sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenye-stran-sng-primut-deklaratsiju-o-sotrudnichestve-v-nauchnoj-sfere-471428-2021/>

<sup>12</sup> Representatives of the scientific community of the CIS countries adopted a declaration in the context of global challenges [Electronic resource]. - 20231. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/predstaviteli-nauchnogo-soobshchestva-stran-sng-prinjali-deklaratsiju-v-kontekste-globalnyh-vyzovov-471791-2021/>

cooperation in the scientific sphere on "One of them is the lack of centralised funding for scientific developments"<sup>13</sup>. In December 2021, the draft list of promising scientific projects corresponding to the priority areas of fundamental research of the CIS countries was finalised and sent to the Commonwealth states to finalise internal coordination. "Six states are involved in the work on the draft list: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan"<sup>14</sup>. The agreed draft includes scientific developments in such areas as physical, mathematical and chemical sciences, information and communication technologies, new substances and materials, biological, agrarian and medical sciences, biotechnology and genetic engineering, rational nature management and environmental protection, nuclear, alternative and renewable energy, mechanical engineering and instrumentation, socio-economic and humanities, space exploration.

At the **29th meeting of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation**, a draft concept of scientific, technical and technological cooperation of the CIS countries was announced, which envisages the solution of such tasks as "development and introduction of new breakthrough technologies in priority areas of scientific and technical activities, as well as the creation of new high-tech industrial enterprises for the production of knowledge-intensive and innovative products"<sup>15</sup>. The system of training of highly qualified scientific and engineering personnel will also undergo significant changes in the near future.

The concept of Belarus' chairmanship in the CIS in 2021 also implied that one of the priorities of the country's chairmanship in this international organisation would be to further strengthen humanitarian ties and expand contacts in the field of education and science. In this case, it is about continuing work on the development of the regulatory and legal framework aimed at creating a **common educational space of the Commonwealth**, promoting "the development of partnership ties between educational organizations of the CIS member states, implementation of joint educational projects and programmes"<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> The CIS intends to develop a plan of co-operation in the field of basic sciences [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-namereny-razrabotat-plan-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-fundamentalnyh-nauk-471803-2021/>

<sup>14</sup> CIS experts finalised the list of projects in priority areas of fundamental research [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/eksperty-sng-dorabotali-perechen-proektov-po-prioritetnym-napraavlennjam-fundamentalnyh-issledovaniy-473644-2021>

<sup>15</sup> The CIS has prepared a draft concept of scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-podgotovili-proekt-kontseptsii-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-471701-2021/>

<sup>16</sup> Chairmanship of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. 2020. - URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.by/multilateral/belaruscischairmanship2021/>

It should be recalled that the **Agreement on co-operation in the field of education by the member states of the Commonwealth** was signed in May 1992 in Tashkent. In this document, the parties agreed to support joint scientific research, "to fully promote the maintenance and development of direct partnership ties in the field of education between the territories and educational institutions of the member states"<sup>17</sup>. Five years later, in January 1997, the normative-legal base of interaction in this sphere was supplemented by the **Agreement on Cooperation for the Formation of a Common (Common) Educational Space of the CIS**, in which the parties, solving the task set by this document, declared their intention to create "a mechanism for coordination of integration processes in the field of education, training and certification of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel"<sup>18</sup> and created the **Council for Cooperation in the Field of Education of the Commonwealth Member States**. Since then, about forty documents have been adopted in the CIS on the initiative of this coordinating body. These include: decisions on the concepts of adult education development (2006) and distance learning (2007); agreements on coordination of work in the field of informatisation of educational systems (2007), on professional development of pedagogical staff of educational organisations (2007), on mutual recognition of documents on higher/higher professional education (2013); Regulations on the Congress of Teachers and Education Workers (2018). Кроме того, в рамках Содружества 17-ти высшим учебным заведениям придан статус базовых организаций по различным направлениям образовательной деятельности, в числе которых есть и белорусские вузы: Международный государственный экологический институт имени А.Д. Сахарова Белорусского государственного университета – базовый в СНГ по экологическому образованию; Республиканский институт профессионального образования – базовый по профессиональной подготовке, переподготовке и повышению квалификации кадров в системе профессионально-технического и ср

Another interesting project in the educational sphere of the Commonwealth is the **CIS Network University**, which was established in 2009 by a consortium agreement signed by the rectors of 11 leading universities of the Commonwealth with the aim of training highly qualified personnel and developing a common educational space of the CIS. Initially it was planned to train personnel in humanities and social disciplines. But since 2010, the technical vector has been

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<sup>17</sup> Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Education [Electronic resource]. - 1992. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7570>

<sup>18</sup> Agreement on Co-operation for the Formation of a Common (Common) Educational Space of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 1997. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7552>

developing, and such areas as oil and gas business and construction have appeared. The essence of training specialists here comes down to the fact that "by studying at a network university, students of the Commonwealth countries have the opportunity to receive a document on education of two countries, and by this they automatically increase their competitiveness in the labour market"<sup>19</sup> . It should be noted that from 2010 to 2019, 1,100 undergraduates were trained here. And today 38 universities from 9 CIS member states "participate in this project"<sup>20</sup> , including two domestic universities - Belarusian State University and Belarusian National Technical University. In particular, master's students of the Belarusian State University are trained in international law in the fields of "Management", "Economics", "Philology", "International Relations". And "upon successful passing of the state examination and defence of the master's thesis, the graduate receives two diplomas: Russian and Belarusian"<sup>21</sup> .

In May 2020, during the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, an Agreement on the Establishment and Functioning of the CIS Network University was signed, which actually legalised at the governmental level the inter-university project that had existed for more than ten years. In December 2020, the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus ratified this document, which should give a new impetus to the development of educational interaction in the Commonwealth. The entry into force of this agreement, signed in order to improve the quality of staff training in higher education institutions, to implement joint scientific and scientific-technical projects prioritised by the participating countries, to support the study of languages, culture and traditions of the peoples of the Commonwealth member states, "will create the necessary conditions for the expansion and deepening of contacts between the countries in the humanitarian and educational sphere"<sup>22</sup> , will strengthen cooperation and inter-university ties in the field of higher education in Eurasia. As a result, it will contribute to the realisation of the task of creating a common educational space of the CIS.

Among the concrete steps that were taken in 2021 to promote the formation of a common educational space of the Commonwealth, we should also mention

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<sup>19</sup> . More than 800 people were trained at the CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bole-800-chelovek-proshli-obuchenie-v-setevom-universitete-sng-337497-2019/>

<sup>20</sup> Information on the activities of the Council for Co-operation in the Field of Education of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the formation of a common educational space of the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3063/79383/>

<sup>21</sup> CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ums.bsu.by/ru/am/cis-net-university>

<sup>22</sup> Deputies ratified the agreement on the establishment and functioning of the CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/deputaty-ratifikirovali-soglashenie-ob-uchrezhdenii-i-funktsionirovanii-setevogo-universiteta-sng-420406-2020/>

the **6th Congress of teachers and education workers of the CIS** countries, which was held in late October in Dushanbe, brought together representatives of the education system from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and its main theme was "The educational space of the Commonwealth of Independent States - a strategic resource for sustainable development". Let us say at once that holding such an event is a unique phenomenon in the world practice, as "in no other region of the world there is interstate cooperation in the field of education, covering the whole range of educational services, from childhood to professional orientation of youth, higher vocational education and adult education"<sup>23</sup>.

We recall that the fifth Congress was held in October 2018 in Bishkek. The past three years have shown that the national education systems of the Commonwealth countries have been successfully developing in a number of areas: from improving management and updating the content of education, introducing innovative information technologies to the formation of a modern educational environment, improving the professional competence of teaching staff, and developing an inclusive approach in education. Among the positive trends of this period is the "intensification of interaction between CIS countries on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements on education"<sup>24</sup>. In particular, over the past period Belarusian state bodies in the field of education concluded 10 agreements and treaties on cooperation, including an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in the field of secondary vocational education.

Among other projects implemented by the Belarusian side in the period between the congresses, we should mention a few more. In terms of the implementation of modern approaches in education, Belarus published a series of manuals "Competency Approach" for grades 1-9 for all curricula. In 2019, the scientific research "Development of scientific and methodological support for the formation of supraprofessional competences of specialists for innovative industries in the process of continuous vocational education" was carried out. Speaking about the formation of common approaches to assessing the results of competence-based education and the development of state and independent systems of education quality assessment, we note that the World Bank project "Modernisation of Higher Education in the Republic of Belarus" planned to create

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<sup>23</sup> Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/show?id=7774>

<sup>24</sup> CIS countries intend to intensify co-operation in the educational sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/strany-sng-namereny-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-v-obrazovatelnoj-sfere-467074-2021>



a new national agency for quality assurance of education and join the European Association of Quality Assurance Agencies. And at the beginning of December 2021, "the Government agreed the establishment of the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Education by the Ministry of Education"<sup>25</sup>.

In order to develop digital infrastructure and technologies in the field of education management, Belarus has been developing a unified information and educational resource for software and methodological support of the educational process, and on 1 September 2020 the "Profile Education" resource for teaching and methodological support for the study of academic disciplines at an advanced level in the 10th grade began to function. With regard to preschool education, Belarus is developing tools for assessing its quality in the context of the competency-based approach, as well as scientific and methodological support for the development of a national system for assessing the quality of education at the preschool, general secondary and special education levels. It is envisaged that, taking into account the results obtained, a national system for assessing the quality of preschool education will be established in the country by 2030.

With regard to support for programmes for the additional education of children and young people, in Belarus they are implemented in the following profiles: technical, sports and technical, tourism and regional studies, environmental and biological, physical culture and sports, artistic, socio-economic, social and pedagogical, cultural and leisure, military and patriotic, natural and mathematical, and social and humanitarian. A special type of educational institution, the National Children's Technopark, is being set up to work with gifted children and young people on a systematic basis. The integration of education and science in the CIS has been actively pursued over the past three years, including through co-operation between scientific institutions and universities. For example, Belarusian participants have been particularly effective in interacting and will continue to expand these partnerships with institutions and organisations in Azerbaijan, Russia and Uzbekistan within the framework of agreements on scientific, scientific-technical and innovation cooperation.

The resolution adopted by the 6th Congress outlines a detailed programme of actions to develop the common educational space of the Commonwealth, where much attention is paid to the issues of international cooperation. In particular, it provides for "expanding the range of educational, including joint, programmes for the development of import and export of educational services in the CIS member

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<sup>25</sup> The National Agency for Quality Assurance of Education will be created in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/natsionalnoe-agentstvo-po-obespecheniju-kachestva-obrazovaniya-sozhdadut-v-belarusi-473393-2021>

states<sup>26</sup>. All this will make it possible to form a common educational space here at all levels: preschool, school, secondary and higher professional, postgraduate and academic.

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<sup>26</sup> Resolution of the VI Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (28-29 October 2021, Dushanbe) [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3173/96167/>

## Commonwealth of Independent States: Towards the First Forum of Regions

In December 2021, the 10th meeting of the Council for Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held to discuss preparations for the first CIS Regions Forum. Due to the current unfavourable epidemiological situation, it was decided to hold it in 2022. The draft programme of the forum envisages four panel sessions, an exhibition of agricultural products and achievements of the CIS regions. The sessions are planned to consider the development of co-operation ties between the regions in industry, transport and transit, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The focus of attention of the Council participants on this topic is explained by the fact that "it is interregional cooperation that is the basis for further development of mutual trade, entails cooperation in the market of production, investment and labour resources"<sup>27</sup>. Such figures show how relevant this issue is for the Republic of Belarus. Belarusian regions today have more than 800 documents on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres with partners in the CIS countries, the foreign trade turnover with which in January-October 2021 increased by another 36 per cent and came close to forty billion dollars. This co-operation is now developing particularly actively with the regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

In particular, **Russia** accounts for about 80 per cent of all interregional cooperation documents, and one of the most successful forms of developing these partnerships has been the holding of bilateral regional forums. In 2021, the eighth such forum was held, during which \$800 million worth of real sector contracts were signed, facilitated by the fact that "about 80 regions are involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side"<sup>28</sup>. One of the leaders in this regard on the Russian side is **Moscow**. In the first ten months of 2021, the trade turnover of the Republic of Belarus with it increased by 27 per cent and exceeded \$3.7 billion with a positive balance for the Belarusian side of more than \$1.2 billion. This was due to supplies of cars, leather shoes, non-alloyed steel bars, railway and tramway freight cars, cheese and cottage cheese, hosiery, dried, salted and smoked fish, butter, furniture and its parts. It is also a fact that "about 20 per cent of the

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<sup>27</sup> Strahar: interregional co-operation is the basis for the development of mutual trade in the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strahar-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-javljaetsja-bazisom-dlja-razvitiya-vzaimnoj-torgovli-v-sng-474946-2021/>

<sup>28</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. From the forum of regions - to the expansion of cooperation / B.L. Zaleskii // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Proceedings of academic science - 2021", August 30 - September 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 16.

Russian capital's food imports come from Belarus, especially dairy products. <...> A lot of Belarusian-made motor vehicles are used by the city municipal structures and services, the population especially appreciates modern environmentally friendly electric transport..."<sup>29</sup>. It should be assumed that all these positive trends will be maintained and continued in the new programme of cooperation between the parties for 2023-2025, which will be developed in 2022.

As for **Kazakhstan**, the regions of this country interact with Belarusian partners within the framework of about 20 documents on interregional cooperation. A good example in this regard is demonstrated by the **Kostanai** and **Grodno** regions, which signed a roadmap of cooperation for 2022-2023 at the end of September 2021. For the Belarusian region, this Central Asian country is one of the five largest foreign economic partners, with trade turnover with it having increased one and a half times over the past five years. At the same time, "now Grodno Region supplies its products to 13 regions of Kazakhstan. Among the main commodity items are meat and dairy products, woodworking and machine-building products. In the first six months of 2021 the export of goods to Kostanay region totalled \$3.1 million"<sup>30</sup>. It should be assumed that the adoption of the road map, which deals with intensification of cooperation in investment and trade and economic spheres, as well as in agriculture, tourism, culture, health care, education, will give new impulses to this interaction and will lead to new deliveries of products of Grodno enterprises and possible organisation of joint assembly production in Kostanai region.

The capital cities of **Minsk** and **Bishkek** continue to be the flagships in the development of co-operation between the regions of Belarus and **Kyrgyzstan**. In November 2021, the twin cities reached new practical arrangements in the implementation of partnership ties. The fact is that today the Kyrgyz capital needs about 1,200 units of urban public transport. Both gas-fuelled buses and electric buses. And a number of Minsk enterprises have already expressed their readiness to provide the necessary assistance to their partners from Bishkek. Especially since there "recently appeared a few watering cars produced in Belarus"<sup>31</sup>, which were liked by the capital's residents. As a result, Minsk discussed not only the supply of certain types of equipment from the Belarusian capital, but also the

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<sup>29</sup> Industry, transport, humanitarian sphere: the directions of cooperation between Belarus and Moscow were discussed in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-transport-gumanitarnaja-sfera-v-minske-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-s-474907-2021/>

<sup>30</sup> Grodno and Kostanay regions signed a roadmap for the development of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnuju-kartu-po-razvitiju-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-grodnenskaja-i-kostanajskaja-oblasti-462339-2021/>

<sup>31</sup> Mayor of Bishkek: we are interested in the purchase of Belarusian equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mer-bishkeka-my-zainteresovany-v-zakupke-belorusskoj-tehniki-469870-2021/>

creation of joint ventures in Bishkek to service and equip them. In this regard, we would like to remind that "an assembly plant for BELARUS tractors has already been set up in Bishkek. Machines for the needs of the municipal sector can be assembled there as well. The site is ready, there are qualified specialists and a service centre. In order to launch production, it is necessary to resolve issues related to the supply of components"<sup>32</sup>.

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

Gomel residents are also developing co-operation with other Uzbek partners, cooperation agreements with whom were signed at the First Forum of Regions of the two countries. Thus, in July 2020, an online forum of representatives of business circles of Gomel and **Fergana** regions was held. Among the participants from the Belarusian side were such business entities as OJSC "Managing Company of Gomel Meat and Dairy Company Holding", GU "Gomeloblprom", OJSC "Trading House "Sozh". The participants of the online forum constructively considered "issues of bilateral cooperation in terms of trade in fruit and vegetables, textile, meat and dairy products, construction materials, agricultural machinery and equipment. The parties also discussed the possibility of opening a trading house of the Fergana region in Gomel"<sup>33</sup>. In particular, one of the major exporters of fruit and vegetable products in Fergana region - Uz-Segang JV LLC - proposed cooperation with partners in Gomel region in the form of creating a single distribution centre for Uzbek vitamin products. The Gomeloblprom State Institution made an offer to the textile enterprise A. Akbarali Ltd. to establish supplies of Uzbek vitamin products to Belarus. Akbarali to supply cotton yarn to the Belarusian region.

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<sup>32</sup> Bishkek plans to purchase from MTZ machinery for street cleaning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planirujut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehniku-dlja-uborki-ulits-470601-2021/>

<sup>33</sup> Uzbek companies are interested in co-operation with partners from Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoj-oblasti-398194-2020/>

The third Uzbek partner of Homiel Region is **Khorezm** Region. The cooperation agreement signed by the parties in July 2019 named "trade and economic, scientific and cultural spheres, tourism, healthcare" among the promising areas of interaction<sup>34</sup>. At the same time, the enterprise "Gomselmash" concluded a cooperation agreement with the joint-stock company "Urgenchkormmash" from the Khorezm region - a plant of forage harvesters. All in all, in preparation for the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, the companies of Gomel region signed contracts with Uzbek partners totalling almost \$1.5 million.

All these facts show that the Uzbek market is very promising for the enterprises of Gomel region. In 2020, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with this Central Asian country increased by almost 65 per cent and exceeded \$17 million. "Polymers, dairy products, wallpaper, screws, hardware, timber are exported to Uzbekistan. Among the exporters are KolorMaster JLLC (polyvinyl chloride), Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC (mechanical devices, machine tools), Milkavita OJSC, Kalinkovich Dairy Plant UE (milk powder), SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC (chemical threads)"<sup>35</sup>.

Obviously, the above-mentioned First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened "new horizons of cooperation in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, food industry, as well as in cultural, humanitarian, information and communication and scientific spheres"<sup>36</sup>. More than 200 representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent provinces took part in the forum from the Uzbek side alone. The fact that 26 direct agreements between the regions were adopted at this forum speaks for its effectiveness. In addition to three documents of Gomel region, agreements on cooperation in trade-economic, scientific-technical and humanitarian spheres were signed by then regions: Grodno region - with Samarkand and Andijan regions, Vitebsk region - with Namangan region, Brest region - with Bukhara and Syrdarya regions. Similar documents were signed between Mahiliou and Andijan and Dzhizak voblasts. Minsk Regional Executive Committee agreed on co-operation in the social sphere with Tashkent region. An

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<sup>34</sup> Gomel region will sign three agreements with Uzbekistan at the I Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-podpishet-tri-soglasheniya-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionov-356296-2019/>

<sup>35</sup> Gomel region and Navoi region of Uzbekistan intend to develop co-operation in IT-industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-navoijskij-region-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-it-otrasli-440395-2021/>

<sup>36</sup> The Forum of Regions opened new horizons for Belarus and Uzbekistan in many areas - Safaev [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-regionov-otkryl-novye-gorizonty-dlja-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-vo-mnogih-oblastjah-safaev-356612-2019/>

action plan for 2019-2020 to implement the agreement between the Tashkent khokimiyat and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation was signed"<sup>37</sup>.

The growing importance of Uzbek partners for the Belarusian regions as a whole is evidenced by such figures already in 2021. At the end of the first quarter, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by another quarter and totalled \$67.5 million. An important detail: "Exports of Belarusian goods during this period increased by 37.4% and totalled \$58.7 million <...>. The balance of foreign trade in goods was positive for Belarus and totalled \$49.8 million"<sup>38</sup>. This was due to an increase in supplies of chilled and frozen beef, medicines and polymers, tractors and lorries to the Uzbek market. It would have been extremely difficult to achieve such results without the keen involvement of the Belarusian regions.

Tajikistan is also one of those countries in Central Asia whose trade and economic relations with the regions of which the Republic of Belarus has been developing particularly intensively over the last year and a half. Thus, if in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between them increased "almost threefold and exceeded \$111 million"<sup>39</sup>, then only in January-August 2021 trade turnover came close to the mark of \$110 million, "including Belarusian exports - \$107.5 million"<sup>40</sup>. Such supplies from Belarus as tractors and tractor-trailers, sugar, cars designed to transport ten or more people, petroleum products, insulated wires, cables, stationery made of paper and cardboard, tyres played their determining role in achieving these figures. The fact that there are already "about 20 dealers of Belarusian manufacturers" in Tajikistan speaks volumes. We are talking about the assembly of tractors, machinery of Bobruiskagromash and Gomselmash. Joint projects in the dairy industry are also being prepared"<sup>41</sup>, in each of which the interaction of specific regions of the two countries should play a decisive role.

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<sup>37</sup> Package of interregional agreements on co-operation signed at the I Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/paket-mezhregionalnyh-soglashenij-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisan-na-i-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-356632-2019/>

<sup>38</sup> Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by 25.3% to 67.5 million in the I quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-uzbekistanom-za-i-kvartal-velichilsja-na-253-do-675-mln-440482-2021/>

<sup>39</sup> Ambassador: Belarusian projects in Tajikistan are not just justified, but have an economic effect [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-belorusskie-proekty-v-tadzhikistane-ne-prosto-obosnovany-a-dajut-ekonomicheskij-effekt-459969-2021/>

<sup>40</sup> Trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/belarus\\_tajikistan/trade\\_economic/](https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/belarus_tajikistan/trade_economic/)

<sup>41</sup> Denisenko: friendship of the leaders of Belarus and Tajikistan is a good basis for comprehensive cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/denisenko-druzha-liderov-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-horoshaja-osnova-dlja-vsestoronnego-sotrudnichestva-460655-2021/>

It should be recalled that the topic of intensifying interregional cooperation was discussed back in April 2021 at the 14th meeting of the intergovernmental Tajik-Belarusian commission on trade and economic cooperation, where "topical issues of interaction in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, health care and education, investment and information technology" were considered<sup>42</sup>. An important detail: today such regions of Tajikistan and Belarus are developing trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural ties within the framework of signed co-operation agreements as: Sughd region - with Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev regions, Khatlon and Gomel regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, Khujand and Mogilev, Yavan and Uzden districts.

One of the most active participants in Belarusian-Tajik interregional cooperation is **Minsk Region**, whose foreign trade turnover with Tajikistan more than tripled to over USD 22 million in the first eight months of 2021. The key role in achieving such indicators was played, among other things, by the implementation of the cooperation agreement with **Sughd Region**, signed in 2014. At the same time, the parties are not going to stop at what has been achieved, outlining new plans for mutually beneficial partnerships. In particular, at the meeting of the heads of the regions A. Turchin and R. Ahmadzoda in early November 2021, they discussed a number of new promising areas of cooperation. One of the obvious priorities is the Belarusian light industry, for which Tajik cotton can become a raw material. In this regard, Belarus was also interested in establishing joint ventures for cotton processing in Tajikistan. As for the Tajik partners of the Belarusian capital region, they are interested "in supplying vegetables and fruits to Belarus, as well as receiving quality Belarusian potato seeds. Within 3-4 years the region plans to increase the volume of potato production up to 1 million tonnes"<sup>43</sup>. In general, the parties expect to expand bilateral ties very seriously in the near future. This is evidenced by the fact that at a business meeting held in November 2021, "representatives of more than 30 Tajik and Belarusian enterprises held talks on possible co-operation in machine building, healthcare, woodworking, food and processing industries"<sup>44</sup>. The memorandum of co-operation between the cities of Zhodino and Gulistan, signed

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<sup>42</sup> Zaleski, B.L. In the line of positive dynamics of co-operation / B.L. Zaleski // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 13.

<sup>43</sup> Cotton, fruit, potato seeds: Minsk region plans to increase co-operation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/hlopok-frukty-semena-kartofelja-minskaja-oblast-planiruet-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-tadzhikistanom-467756-2021/>

<sup>44</sup> Enterprises of Minsk and Sughd regions are interested in co-operation in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriatija-minskoj-i-sogdijskoj-oblastej-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnicestve-v-sfere-promyshlennosti-468050-2021/>



in November 2021, should also contribute to the expansion of co-operation between the two regions.

**Mogilev** region intends to actively develop partnership relations with Sughd region. The parties signed a co-operation agreement in 2017. And in the three quarters of 2021, the trade turnover between them increased by almost a third. And in this case we are talking about an active search for new opportunities for co-operation. One of the priorities is the creation of joint productions. Given the fact that Mogilev is home to the largest Belarusian textile producer, OJSC Mogotex, there is a serious interest in cotton supplies from Tajikistan. And the Tajik partners, who annually increase the area of cultivation of this crop, also have their own interest: to organise a joint venture with the Belarusian side to process cotton. "This will make it possible to create several thousand new jobs here [in Sughd Oblast]"<sup>45</sup>. OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" is also planning to set up joint production of lifts in the Tajik region. And this is only a part of the proposals voiced in November 2021 at the business meeting of the parties in Mogilev, within the framework of which a cooperation agreement was signed by the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Sughd region. Besides, "OJSC "Mogilev plant "Strommashina" and CJSC "Nord Asia Metal" agreed to sign an agreement of intentions on the implementation of the project on manufacturing and supply of technological equipment for the production of asbestos-cement sheets"<sup>46</sup>. And representatives of other Mogilev enterprises from a number of industries have established contacts for trade in finished products and raw materials. And this is encouraging.

As we can see, the ties between the regions of the post-Soviet countries are gradually being filled with concrete projects, stimulating today the integration processes in the Commonwealth and demonstrating the relevance of holding the First Forum of Regions of the CIS countries in 2022.

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<sup>45</sup> Zayats: Mogilev region and Sughd region of Tajikistan are interested in close co-operation and implementation of projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zajats-mogilevskij-region-i-sogdijaskaja-oblast-tadzhikistana-zainteresovany-v-tesnom-sotrudnichestve-i-467893-2021/>

<sup>46</sup> Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Sughd region of Tajikistan signed a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevskoe-otdelenie-beltp-p-i-tpp-sogdijaskoj-oblasti-tadzhikistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-468065-2021/>

## **Eurasian Economic Union: Focusing on long-term priorities**

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

- 1) give a new impetus to industrial co-operation in the form of joint ventures in industry, agro-industry and services;
- 2) eliminate remaining barriers to mutual trade between the member countries of this integration formation at the central, regional and municipal levels;
- 3) harness the potential of cross-border transport arteries and logistics hubs to build trust across the Eurasian continent;
- 4) to make comprehensive digitalisation a driving force for the development of the economies of the member states of the Union, giving qualitative acceleration to the introduction of digital technologies in industry, agriculture, transport;
- 5) expand access to foreign markets, "more actively develop trade and economic relations with third countries and integration associations"<sup>47</sup>.

The effective and full implementation of the Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, adopted by the heads of the EAEU member states at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020 and published in January 2021, will contribute to the fulfilment of these tasks. This document contains 330 measures and mechanisms to develop cooperation, grouped into 11 system blocks, the implementation of which by 2025 should lead to the achievement of such results as:

- 1) completion of the formation of a common market for goods, services, capital and labour;
- 2) increasing the efficiency of regulation of the common market of the EAEU;

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<sup>47</sup> Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the Heads of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

3) transfer to a qualitatively higher level of customs regulation and administration;

4) ensuring guarantees of quality and safety of goods;

5) formation of the EAEU digital space;

6) Establishment of mechanisms for targeted economic development assistance;

7) building a management system for joint co-operation projects, development of high-performance sectors;

8) stimulation of scientific and technological progress;

9) improving the efficiency of the EAEU institutions;

(10) Launching co-operation mechanisms in the fields of education, health, tourism and sports;

11) establishment of the EAEU as one of the most significant development centres of the modern world.

In order to realise these strategic directions, "it will be necessary to conclude 13 international treaties, adopt more than 60 regulatory legal acts, and introduce about 25 amendments and additions to the Treaty on the EAEU and national legislation"<sup>48</sup>. It is assumed that all these measures will help to increase by 2025 only non-resource exports to third countries from the EAEU states by a quarter. This can be achieved if we follow the path of creating joint Eurasian companies to mutually complement each other and produce competitive products. So far, "there are 17.5 thousand joint ventures in the EAEU, including 2.4 thousand in Belarus. The EAEU is interested in implementing investment projects with a total estimated cost of about \$200 billion"<sup>49</sup>.

Another important segment of Eurasian integration is the implementation of digital projects, as the process of integrating digital technologies into all aspects of activity is now a key condition for progress. The Republic of Belarus is going to play not the least role in this in the EAEU, where sufficient infrastructural groundwork for digital transformation has already been created, where the largest IT cluster in Eastern Europe - the High Technology Park - has been functioning

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<sup>48</sup> Pivovarov, E. The strategy for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025 has been published / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opublikovana-strategija-razvitiya-evrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-integratsii-do-2025-goda-423997-2021/>

<sup>49</sup> Pivovarov, E. Myasnikovich considers it necessary to develop industrial co-operation in high-tech industries in the EAEU / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-schitaet-neobhodimym-razvivat-v-eaes-promkoooperatsiju-v-vysokotekhnologichnyh-otrasljah-427278-2021>

for quite some time. "In 2020, its exports exceeded \$2.5bn - that's more than 20% of Belarus' total exports of services"<sup>50</sup>.

At the Digital Almaty Forum 2021 international forum held in February 2021, the Belarusian side named the Eurasian Development Bank's project "Travelling without COVID" as one of the joint digital projects in the EAEU that were actually implemented in the interests of the population. At the same time, the attention of the forum participants was drawn to the fact that other projects on the EAEU digital agenda are stalled. Few tangible results, including economic ones, have been achieved in three years. This is why the implementation of the digital agenda in the Union has not yet led to the development of national segments. In this regard, it is now very important to set specific tasks, identify the executors, develop clear rules for the information architecture, and synchronise the pace of work both in the EAEU member states themselves and at the integration level, so that, as a result, digitalisation will bring the real sector of the economy to a new level in the first place. In fact, Kazakhstan, which will chair the EAEU in 2021, is demonstrating just such an approach in this matter. Suffice it to say that the project initiated by Kazakhstan to create wholesale and distribution centres, as well as the full-fledged launch of the ecosystem of digital transport corridors, proposed by Belarus together with its partners in the union, are now among the priorities in the union. In addition, one of the joint projects could be a "smart city", as all major cities in the EAEU have the same tasks of managing lighting, traffic flows, electricity, water and heat supply. According to the Belarusian side, "all these tasks can be solved with the help of multifunctional digital platforms"<sup>51</sup>, but this will require a lot of concerted work to achieve a powerful synergistic effect.

Another of the most important areas of development of the Eurasian Economic Union for the next five years should be the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations, which will allow for coordinated work on the conjugation of integration processes in the Eurasian space, including economic interaction "within the framework of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership"<sup>52</sup>. Recall that the idea of forming a Greater Eurasian Partnership, proposed in 2015 by the Russian side, is a network of dialogues between key players in Eurasia, not only among the largest national economies, but also regional economic associations linked by a flexible system of

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<sup>50</sup> HTP exports in 2020 exceeded \$2.5bn - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-pvt-v-2020-godu-prevysil-25-mlrd-golovchenko-427222-2021/>

<sup>51</sup> Belarus is in favour of accelerating the implementation of digital projects in the EAEU - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-uskorenio-realizatsii-tsifrovyyh-proektov-v-eaes-golovchenko>

<sup>52</sup> Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 9.

international legal norms, transport and logistics, energy, telecommunications and financial infrastructures, joint projects and institutions. This large-scale concept, which has already been called the most ambitious integration project of the current century, implies the implementation of a number of basic principles that distinguish it from other Eurasian unification plans.

First of all, it does not pretend to compete with other regional integration structures, but only develops them for the future unified Eurasian economic mechanism. The Greater Eurasian Partnership "does not act as a unification of the Eurasian East against the European West"<sup>53</sup>. It is assumed that the implementation of this project, whose participants are already characterised by differences in models of social, political and economic development, will not impose a single set of values on anyone, but will only create the most comfortable conditions for all participants, not dividing them into leaders and outsiders, but providing for a variety of flexible forms of involvement of individual countries in the partnership. It is expected that the Greater Eurasian Partnership will affect not only the economy, but also other spheres of interaction - science, education, culture, humanitarian sphere, as well as in parallel will contribute to strengthening food, energy and continental security, addressing such global problems as climate change, combating pandemics, migration. Another distinctive feature of this project should be the very principle of implementation - "from the bottom up", whereby specific agreements between regional integration associations and individual countries will form the basis of the project. In particular, the planned pairing of the Eurasian Economic Union with China's One Belt, One Road initiative fits very harmoniously into this scheme. And not only that.

Thus, as early as the East Asia Summit held in November 2020, it was stated that the further development of various integration projects in the Asia-Pacific region will only contribute to the strengthening of economic cooperation. In this regard, such "regional and subregional associations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation can interact in the interests of the entire region, harmoniously and effectively complement each other"<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Kortunov, A. Eight principles of the Greater Eurasian Partnership / A. Kortunov // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/vosem-printsipov-bolshogo-evraziyskogo-partnerstva/>

<sup>54</sup> The world's largest free trade zone is created in Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/28129>

<sup>55</sup>In turn, Kazakhstan, which will chair the EAEU in 2021, declaring its approach to the consistent expansion of access to foreign markets, active development of trade and economic relations with third countries and integration associations, focused its attention not only on systematic work to establish an equitable, mutually beneficial and pragmatic dialogue between the EAEU and the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also on the fact that "an effective strategy of interaction with the new EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will have to be developed.

Indeed, in mid-November 2020, an agreement was signed at the ASEAN summit to form potentially the world's largest free trade bloc between the ten countries of this association (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the five leading economies of the Asian region - Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam. This agreement "brought together countries with a combined gross product approaching \$26 trillion (one-third of global GDP) <...> and a population exceeding 2.2 billion"<sup>56</sup>. It is clear that the development of mutually beneficial interaction with such a major partner in the global arena can become a powerful impetus for the EAEU to become one of the most significant development centres of the modern world.

The Central American Economic Integration Subsystem, which was formed in October 1993, could also soon become a promising partner of the Union. Its members are such countries of the region as Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala. In February 2021, the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America (SIECA), which is the technical and administrative body of the Subsystem, signed a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations aimed at intensifying trade and economic cooperation between the parties in such areas of interaction as mutual trade, technical regulation and standardisation, industry and agro-industry, macroeconomics, to share experience, develop recommendations, and promote cooperation between the two countries. The EAEU believes that "Central American countries have great potential for increasing co-operation. The signing of the memorandum is the first step to intensify trade and investment co-operation and, in the long term, to integrate into global value chains <...>. Since 2015, mutual trade turnover has

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<sup>55</sup> Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the Heads of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

<sup>56</sup> Erokhin, V.L. Comprehensive regional economic partnership: a review of the main indicators of the trade alliance / V.L. Erokhin // Marketing and Logistics. - 2020. - №6. - C. 25.

increased by 22.6 per cent"<sup>57</sup>. In order to practically implement the provisions of the memorandum, the parties will soon form a joint working group.

Another country of the American continent with which the EAEU's interaction will be significantly intensified in 2021 is Cuba, with which a memorandum of understanding was concluded back in 2018 and which was granted the status of an observer state to the EAEU at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020. Many facts show that the level of development of trade and economic co-operation between the parties to the memorandum has serious potential for growth. In particular, "at the end of 2019, the EAEU's trade turnover with Cuba totalled \$214.7 million, including exports - \$197.1 million and imports - \$17.6 million. In 2018, a record level of trade turnover between the EAEU and Cuba was recorded since 2010 - \$417.5 million"<sup>58</sup>.

Continuing the theme of the EAEU's bilateral format of international cooperation, we note that in fulfilment of the tasks set out in the Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, the Eurasian Economic Commission is now doing the necessary work to conclude agreements on the creation of free trade zones with a number of other countries. In Asia, among the states interested in developing full-scale co-operation with the EAEU is Iran, with which an interim agreement leading to the formation of a free trade zone was signed in May 2018 and entered into force in October 2019. In December 2020, the heads of the EAEU member states decided to start negotiations on an agreement to establish a free trade area with Iran by October 2022. Already in February 2021, the participants in these negotiations focused their attention on transport and logistics projects that could "have a positive impact both on the growth of trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Iran and on increasing the level of transport connectivity of the entire large Eurasian region"<sup>59</sup>.

In 2021, the EAEU intends to establish interaction between business circles and significantly strengthen trade and economic ties with such a South Asian country as Bangladesh. A memorandum of co-operation with Bangladesh was signed in 2019. The fact that the Bangladeshi economy "has demonstrated

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<sup>57</sup> Pivovarov, E. EEC and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America signed a memorandum / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-i-sekretariat-po-ekonomicheskoy-integratsii-v-tsentralnoj-amerike-podpisali-memorandum-430366-2021>

<sup>58</sup> Pivovarov, E. Cuba has appointed a representative in the Eurasian Economic Commission / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kuba-naznachila-predstavitelja-v-evrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-427078-2021/>

<sup>59</sup> Chairman of the EEC Collegium Mikhail Myasnikovich met with Chairman of the Majlis of the Islamic Council of Iran Mohammad Beger Ghalifab [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/09-02-2021-01.aspx>

significant growth over the past ten years, with GDP increasing by 8% per year on average and even during the pandemic the growth rate was 5.6%"<sup>60</sup> speaks of a rather high potential for the development of partnership ties. And it is now important to identify where the two sides have mutual interest and where trade diversification can be achieved. In addition, studies on the prospects of forming free trade zones with Indonesia and Mongolia have already begun. And in the first half of 2021, the negotiation process will resume "with the largest economy in Africa - Egypt, as well as with India"<sup>61</sup>.

The EAEU is also expected to intensify its actions across the entire post-Soviet space, as evidenced by the signing in February 2021 of the Action Plan for 2021-2022 for the implementation of the memorandum on deepening cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which envisages the implementation of joint projects and the holding of joint events, including with the participation of business communities. Recall that the memorandum signed in 2018 provides for cooperation between the EAEU and the CIS "in the areas of customs regulation, traceability and labelling of goods with means of identification, public procurement, consumer protection, digital economy, tax policy and administration, foreign trade, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, as well as sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary measures"<sup>62</sup>. And in bilateral terms, the EAEU is very interested in Uzbekistan's proposal to jointly build the Trans-Afghan railway. This is explained by the fact that "in 2020, the volume of railway transit through the states of the Union in the direction from Asia to Europe and back increased by more than 60%, and the efficiency of transport has significantly increased. This shows the prospects of this direction and the need for concerted efforts"<sup>63</sup>. In other words, by contributing to the concept of transport connectivity in Greater Eurasia, the implementation of this project will allow both the EAEU member states and Uzbekistan to improve the competitiveness of their enterprises and the efficiency of trade, as well as to create new jobs. This is the orientation towards long-term priorities in the Eurasian Economic Union.

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<sup>60</sup> Possibilities of intensification of trade and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and EAEU discussed in the EEC [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx>

<sup>61</sup> Pivovarov, E. EAEU intends to create free trade zones with Egypt, India, Indonesia and Mongolia / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-nameren-sozdat-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-egiptom-indiei-indonezii-i-mongoliej-426578-2021/>

<sup>62</sup> EEC and CIS Executive Committee signed a plan of co-operation for 2021-2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-02-2021-07.aspx>

<sup>63</sup> Pivovarov, E. EAEU will consider Uzbekistan's initiative on the construction of the Trans-Afghan railway / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-rassmotrit-initsiativu-uzbekistana-o-stroitelstve-transafganskoj-zheleznoj-dorogi-431104-2021/>



## **Eurasian Economic Union: to build on what has already been established co-operation mechanisms**

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, approved in December 2020, include among the main tasks the further development of the contractual and legal framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with third countries and their integration associations on the creation of preferential trade regimes for the development and comprehensive deepening of trade and economic cooperation. In fact, the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations over the next five years should become one of the most important areas of the EAEU, which "will make it possible to carry out coordinated work on the issues of interfacing integration processes in the Eurasian space"<sup>64</sup>.

In December 2021, the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2022, which include the development of already established mechanisms of cooperation with third countries, regional integration associations and international organisations, as well as identifying potentially promising partners. In particular, "priority for the EAEU in 2022 will be cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union (EU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum..."<sup>65</sup>. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as the development of exports, transport and energy infrastructure, industrial cooperation, the introduction of new technologies, as well as creating conditions for joint entry of member states' enterprises into the markets of third countries, including the states of South-East Asia, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific region, North Africa, and Latin America.

In 2022, the presidency of the EAEU passed to Kyrgyzstan, which intends to focus primarily on achieving the goals laid down in the strategic directions of

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<sup>64</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Eurasian integration in the context of a large partnership on the continent / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa myśl informacyjnej powieki - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C.24.

<sup>65</sup> The EAEU approved the main directions of international activities for 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/v-eaes-utverdili-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoj-deyatelnosti-na-2022-god/>

Eurasian economic integration until 2025. <sup>66</sup>An undoubted priority in this regard is international cooperation, which "it is important to develop both the dialogue format of cooperation and trade and economic relations with third countries by signing trade agreements in order to enter new promising markets..."<sup>67</sup>, so that producers from the countries of this integration entity, including Belarus, "receive the most favourable conditions when exporting their products to foreign markets, and consumers receive safe, high-quality and inexpensive goods" xml-p

It should be recalled that by the beginning of 2022, the EAEU had already concluded preferential agreements on the creation of free trade zones (FTZs) with Vietnam, Serbia, Singapore, and a temporary agreement with Iran. An agreement on trade and economic co-operation with the People's Republic of China has also entered into force. As for the search for potential partners, "negotiations on the establishment of FTAs with Egypt and Israel are at an active stage, work is underway to prepare the first round of negotiations with India, and negotiations have begun to prepare for a full-scale free trade agreement with Mongolia and Indonesia"<sup>68</sup>. And intensive work continues on identifying new partners and negotiating appropriate agreements with them.

Thus, in December 2021, following the second forum "Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Latin America and the Caribbean (LACB): Removing Barriers and Building Bridges for Business Cooperation", the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) signed a joint statement with the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System, in which the parties reaffirmed their commitment to developing and strengthening comprehensive cooperation, noting the strategic importance of relations between the two regions. It should be noted that for the EAEU, the Latin American and Caribbean region is strategically important. This is evidenced by the fact that the dynamics of trade between the parties "reached its maximum value in 2018 - \$17.6 billion". US DOLLARS. The main article of imports remains agricultural goods, fruits and nuts, oil seeds and fruits, meat and fish. EAEU countries in turn export fertilisers, ferrous metals,

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<sup>66</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Indonesia, Chile, Egypt / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XV Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka konference "Vedecky prumysl evropskeho kontinentu - 2019". Volume 6: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 11.

<sup>67</sup> Address by President Sadyr Zhaparov to the Heads of the EAEU Member States on the occasion of Kyrgyzstan's chairmanship in the bodies of the Union in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/obrashnenie-prezidenta-sadyra-zhaparova-k-glavam-gosudarstv-%E2%80%93-93-chlenov-caes-po-sluchayu-predsedatelstvovaniya-kyrgyzstana-v-organakh-soyuza-v-2022-godu/>

<sup>68</sup> Gorelik, Y. Without industrial lockdowns and reduction of export activity / Y. Gorelik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bez-promyshlennyh-lokdaunov-i-snizhenija-eksportnoj-aktivnosti-predstavitel-mid-o-vneshnetorgovoj-477276-2021/>

mineral fuels, cereals and other goods to the LACB"<sup>69</sup>. Recently, co-operation in such spheres as pharmaceuticals, machine building, information and communication services has been growing. Bioengineering, green technologies, services, including tourism and education, could become new areas of co-operation. Among the main reasons for the still insufficient level of trade and economic co-operation, the joint statement pointed out "the low level of awareness of the subjects of economic relations about the needs and opportunities of business in the EAEU and LACB countries, <...> the lack of modern trade and economic agreements between the countries and integration associations of the EAEU and LACB"<sup>70</sup>. As a result, an agreement was reached to move from agreeing on general areas of co-operation to substantive negotiations with the involvement of interested business representatives. Among the possible areas of co-operation were the post-wild and green economies, economic methods of combating climate change, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth, and expanding the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in foreign trade.

A kind of complement to the development of relations with the LACB will apparently be the plan of joint actions until 2025 with Cuba, signed by the EAEU in December 2021, which covers 34 areas of co-operation. For Cuba, this document is important in the context of the implementation of the country's National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030 and the Economic and Social Strategy to stimulate the economy and overcome the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, "the Cuban side showed particular interest in strengthening sectoral dialogue, in particular, in the areas of technical regulation and regulation of the circulation of medicines in the EAEU"<sup>71</sup>.

Other international organisations with which the EAEU plans to intensify mutually beneficial cooperation in the near future include the International Sugar Organisation (ISO), which currently unites 87 states and promotes international cooperation in sugar production, consumption and circulation. In December 2021, the ECE and ISO signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which defines the main areas and activities of cooperation to bring the two organisations to "the

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<sup>69</sup> EAEU and Latin American countries intend to reach pre-crisis trade indicators by the end of 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-strany-latinskoj-ameriki-namereny-vyjti-na-dokrizisnye-pokazateli-torgovli-po-itogam-2021-goda/>

<sup>70</sup> ECE and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System announced the transition to substantive negotiations on trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-postoyannyj-sekretariat-latinoamerikanskoj-ekonomicheskij-sistemy-zayavili-o-perehode-k-predmetnym-peregovoram-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve/>

<sup>71</sup> EAEU and Cuba signed a plan of joint actions until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-do-2025-goda/>

horizon of practical interaction <...> to develop effective measures for the development of a common market for sugar and sugar-containing products"<sup>72</sup> .

If we talk about the development of EAEU co-operation with partners on different continents, at the end of 2021, its structures were particularly active in co-operation with such Asian countries as China, Iran, Mongolia and Bangladesh. Thus, in December 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission on the implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC, it was noted that the volume of mutual trade in 2021 will exceed the pre-pandemic level and reach a record \$165 billion, demonstrating the high intensity and mutual complementarity of trade ties. Discussing the progress in preparing a roadmap for the implementation of the agreement between the EAEU and the PRC, which came into force in 2019, the parties highlighted the development of digital transport corridors as the main section of this document, as "the digitalisation of rail transport can have a cumulative effect"<sup>73</sup> . The issues of green trade and green investment were not left aside, where the Chinese side proposed to strengthen interaction between the PRC and the EAEU on the global climate agenda, as well as the prospects for cooperation in three areas that "relate to the issues of smart customs, smart customs borders and smart interconnectivity"<sup>74</sup> . At the same time, the Chinese side expressed its willingness to share its experience in implementing the concept of "three intelligent spheres", which is based on the modern technological mode with the use of new methods, systems and equipment, with the aim of intelligent customs control and management.

As for Iran, the temporary free trade agreement with Iran entered into force in October 2019. Thanks to this document, "the list of goods for which exporters of EAEU countries, including Belarus, received preferences includes meat and oil and fat products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"<sup>75</sup> . In December 2021, this interim agreement was extended until 2025. The past two years have shown

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<sup>72</sup> ECE and the International Sugar Organisation signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-mezhdunarodnaya-organizatsiya-po-saharu-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimaniy/>

<sup>73</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "EAEU-PRC co-operation is gaining momentum, it organically complements the bilateral relations of our states" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-sotrudnichestvo-eaes-knr-nabirayet-obo-roty-ono-organichno-dopolnyaet-dvustoronnie-otnosheniya-nashih-gosudarstv/>

<sup>74</sup> Formation of "single window" and intelligent customs discussed by representatives of the EEC and China [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/formirovanie-%C2%ABedinogo-okna%C2%BB-i-intellektualnuyu-tamozhnyu-obsudili-predstaviteli-eeek-i-kitaya/>

<sup>75</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Serbia, Iran, China / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XV Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Perspektywy i wyzwania opracowania sa nauka i technikami - 2019", Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 20.

that the interaction between the parties is developing exclusively on an upward trajectory. Thus, in the first half of 2021, "exports of the Union's member states increased by almost 47% to \$1.35 billion, while imports increased by 34% to \$825 million"<sup>76</sup>, which indicates great prospects for this co-operation.

Another promising EAEU partner in Asia is Mongolia, a memorandum of co-operation with which was signed back in 2015. In December 2021, the 4th meeting of the joint working group on interaction between the EEC and the Mongolian government was held, at which it was noted that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the parties totalled \$1.5 billion. And "in the first nine months of the current [2021] year, trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Mongolia increased by 23 per cent, while the potential of mutual trade is clearly not fully utilised"<sup>77</sup>. In order to maintain this positive dynamics, it was decided to update the plan of joint measures for the implementation of the above-mentioned memorandum until 2025. As a key reserve for the development of trade and economic ties, the parties identified the activation of contacts between business circles and business associations. And for this purpose, a business forum will be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2022 at the suggestion of the Mongolian side.

Also in December 2021, the 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group on ECE engagement with the Government of Bangladesh on the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in May 2019 was held. It noted that trade volume between the two sides has grown six times in the last ten years. In 2020, its growth continued by another 11 per cent to more than two and a half billion dollars. And "in January-September of this [2021] year, the EAEU's trade turnover with Bangladesh increased one and a half times - to \$2.2 billion. USD"<sup>78</sup>. As a real task, the parties are now considering increasing this indicator to three billion dollars. There are reserves for this: agricultural products, machinery, equipment, vehicles, pharmaceuticals, as well as other types of products with a relatively high share of added value.

Among the international organisations with which the EAEU plans to actively develop cooperation in 2022 is the European Union (EU). In particular, it is a question of developing a dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the European Commission (EC), including interaction

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<sup>76</sup> Pivovar, E. The validity of the temporary agreement on free trade between the EAEU and Iran is extended until 2025 / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dejstvие-vremennogo-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-mezhdu-eaes-i-iranom-prodleno-do-2025-goda-474217-2021>

<sup>77</sup> EEC and the Government of Mongolia discuss plans of interaction until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-i-pravitelstvo-mongolii-obsuzhdayut-plan-y-vzaimodejstviya-do-2025-goda/>

<sup>78</sup> EAEU countries and Bangladesh have the potential to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/strany-eaes-i-bangladesh-imeyut-potentsial-dlya-dostizheniya-tovarooborota-v-3-mlrd-dollarov-ssha/>

with specialised EU bodies, "in the areas of technical regulation, application of sanitary and veterinary measures, circulation of medicines and medical devices, competition, certain aspects of trade policy, as well as in other areas of the Union's activities"<sup>79</sup>.

The relevance of the EAEU's European vector of international cooperation is already explained by the fact that "the European Union continues to be the key trade and economic partner of the Eurasian Economic Union, occupying 35.5% of EAEU imports"<sup>80</sup>. EU member states are the main buyers of goods exported from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. In 2021, trade turnover between them grew by another 40 per cent or so and is "expected to reach about \$330 billion. U.S."<sup>81</sup>. And this is far from the limit if a number of pressing problems in trade between the parties are resolved. Many of these were discussed in December 2021 during the 8th round of the EEC and EC technical dialogue, in which the parties addressed the difficulties faced by business. In particular, the conversation was about the registration of medicines and medical devices in the EAEU countries, as well as the validity of the technical regulation "On the safety of alcoholic beverages". The topics of technical regulation in the field of railway transport in the EU countries, e-commerce, development of the "single window" mechanism as a tool to simplify trade procedures were discussed. An important detail: convinced of the usefulness of the technical dialogue "both parties plan <...> to continue interaction in this format in 2022, as well as to consider the possibility of holding specialized webinars on topical issues"<sup>82</sup>.

In the same December 2021 meeting with the Association of European Businesses, issues related to free trade agreements, response to climate change, labelling, e-commerce, rules for importing certain types of goods, and determination of customs value were discussed in practical terms.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, a meeting was held in the EEC with the heads and representatives of the Russian-German Foreign Trade Chamber, the Franco-Russian Chamber of

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<sup>79</sup> . Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 53-54.

<sup>80</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "Strategy-2025 meets the interests of both Eurasian and European business" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergej-glazev-%C2%ABstrategiya-2025-otvechaet-interesam-kak-evrazijskogo-tak-i-evropejskogo-biznesa%C2%BB/>

<sup>81</sup> The meeting of the management of the trade block of the Eurasian Economic Commission with the Association of European Business was held [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sostoyalas-vstrecha-rukovodstva-torgovogo-bloka-evraziyskoy-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-s-associaciyev-ropeyskogo-biznesa/>

<sup>82</sup> EEC and the European Commission held consultations on topical issues of business work [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-evrokomissiya-proveli-konsultacii-po-aktualnym-voprosam-raboty-biznesa/>

<sup>83</sup> Ruslan Beketayev: "Direct dialogue is an effective tool of interaction between the EEC and European entrepreneurs and investors" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ruslan-beketaev-%C2%ABpryamoy-dialog-%E2%80%93-3-effektivnyj-instrument-%20vzaimodejstviya-eeek-s-evropejskimi-predprinimatelami-i-investorami%C2%BB/>

Commerce and Industry, the Association of Italian Industrialists in Russia, the Working Group for the elaboration of the initiative to create a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, where a wide range of issues of relevance to European business communities were discussed, including "in the areas of intellectual property, taxation, labour migration, regulation of the circulation of medicines and pharmaceuticals".

Among the individual EU member states with which the EAEU intends to seriously intensify co-operation in the near future is Portugal. In November 2021, the 4th Russian-Portuguese Innovation Forum "New Opportunities and Challenges in Innovation" addressed the issues of promoting high-tech products and facilitating the diversification of trade and economic ties between the EAEU and Portuguese-speaking countries. It was emphasised that "business circles in Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries are building their commercial strategies taking into account the factor of Eurasian economic integration and the opportunities associated with it"<sup>84</sup>. As a result, the forum participants were able to consider promising projects of cooperation in such areas as information and communication technologies, bioenergy, agriculture, healthcare, transport infrastructure, and interregional cooperation. German business, whose representatives attended a seminar held by the EEC in September 2021, can be named among the promising EAEU partners in the European direction. The exchange of views focused on such areas of interaction as "digital agenda, green economy, customs co-operation"<sup>85</sup>. One of the outcomes of this event was the consolidated opinion of its participants on the importance of continuing the dialogue between the EAEU and German business in various formats to promote mutual trade and facilitate foreign economic activity of economic entities, as well as the creation of a dialogue mechanism to resolve disputes.

It is clear that all these measures aimed at expanding foreign markets and diversifying the exports of the EAEU member countries are extremely important for Belarus, which is very actively involved in all the systematic work on the creation of free trade zones with third countries and interaction with international organisations.

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<sup>84</sup> Gohar Barseghyan: "Portuguese business captures new opportunities in the EAEU market" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/goar-barseghyan-%C2%ABportugalskij-biznes-fiksiruet-novye-vozmozhnosti-na-rynke-eaes%C2%BB/>

<sup>85</sup> The EEC held a seminar for German business on the regulation of foreign economic activity in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosam-regulirovaniya-vneshneekonomicheskoy-deyatelnosti-v-eaes-/>

## **Eurasian Economic Union: from memorandums and agreements - to practical matters**

Intensification of economic cooperation with international organisations and foreign countries is one of the most important areas of development of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) until 2025. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as "creating conditions for joint entry of enterprises of member states into the markets of third countries..."<sup>86</sup>. In December 2022, at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek, the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2023 were approved, where, in the context of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the EAEU's priorities will promote the realisation of the export potential of the Union's countries.

As of mid-November 2022, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has already concluded "46 memorandums with international organisations, 27 memorandums with governments, ministries and agencies of third countries, 14 memorandums with regional integration and interstate associations, 7 trade agreements with third countries"<sup>87</sup>. In 2023, the EAEU will interact with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the European Union, the BRICS countries, as well as with the World Customs Organisation, the World Trade Organisation and the African Union. In this context, the development of dialogue with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) is one of the priorities of the EAEU's international activities.

**ASEAN** is a regional organisation comprising 10 Southeast Asian countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia - established to promote social, economic and cultural cooperation in the region. The ECE has been successfully cooperating with the ASEAN Secretariat since 2018 under the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation. The purpose of this document is to promote economic cooperation to enhance trade, economic and investment interaction between EAEU member states and ASEAN in "the following areas: a)

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<sup>86</sup> Zaleskii, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

<sup>87</sup> Approved the Main directions of the EAEU international activities for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdenny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-eaes-na-2023-god/>



customs regulation and trade facilitation; b) sanitary and phytosanitary measures; c) technical regulation; d) e-commerce; e) trade in services and investment; f) entrepreneurship development, primarily for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises..." .<sup>88</sup>

A Cooperation Programme for 2020-2025 has been adopted to implement the Memorandum. It covers such areas as customs legislation and law enforcement, trade policy, business activities, technical and antimonopoly regulation, SPS measures, energy, functioning of domestic markets. All this work contributes to the growth of trade and economic co-operation of EAEU states with ASEAN countries. "In 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with ASEAN increased by 34.6 per cent to \$23.9 billion," he said. The Union's exports rose to \$10.2bn (up 53.5 per cent) and imports to \$13.7bn (up 23.3 per cent). ASEAN's share in the Union's foreign trade turnover was 2.8 per cent"<sup>89</sup>. The Parties focus on new points of growth, search for balanced solutions for successful interaction and new long-term forms of cooperation, identifying prospects for the development of scientific, technical and innovative interaction, industrial cooperation, as well as mechanisms for the exchange of practices and competences, taking into account the goals of sustainable development. In particular, the digitalisation of the economy, where the EAEU and ASEAN have their own serious developments of mutual interest, is among the promising areas of cooperation. In order to steadily increase trade, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation in the financial and banking sphere, including the use of payments in national currencies. The Eurasian Economic Union is successfully developing cooperation with the governments of a number of ASEAN countries in bilateral formats, including **Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia**.

Speaking about cooperation with **Indonesia**, we recall that in September 2022, the EEC Council decided to start negotiations with this country to conclude a free trade agreement in 2023. Indonesia is the largest economy in ASEAN and the fourth in the world - in terms of population, so trade relations with this Asian state have significant potential. "The EAEU's trade turnover with Indonesia in 2021 grew by 41.5% to \$3.7bn compared to 2020. At the same time, exports added

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<sup>88</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the field of economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/%D1%8E%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82+%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BB.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> EAEU and ASEAN increase the volume of trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeu.Развития.nion.org/news/eaes-i-asean-narashchivayut-obemy-tovarooborota/>

34.1 per cent and imports increased by 44.5 per cent"<sup>90</sup>. At the end of three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost half more, with EAEU exports increasing more than two and a half times. And there is confidence that the liberalisation of trade conditions may allow to increase trade turnover by at least another \$1.5 billion. In December 2022, the EAEU and Indonesia recorded an agreement to hold the first negotiating round in the first quarter of 2023, emphasising that the parties "have prospects both for agricultural goods, which traditionally make up the bulk of the Union's imports from Indonesia, and for an industrial group actively traded in both directions"<sup>91</sup>. So the potential for partnership in 2023 remains high.

If we talk about the EAEU's co-operation with **Thailand**, the first meeting of the joint working group on interaction was in November 2019. In September 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the working group, the parties stated that "at the end of the first half of this year [2021], the trade turnover of the EAEU countries with Thailand increased by 32.6% compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion". The EAEU's trade turnover with Thailand increased by 32.6 per cent compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion. The EEU's exports totalled USD 330.5 million, imports USD 907 million, and imports USD 1.2 billion. USD"<sup>92</sup>. Exports increased mainly due to the export of metals and metal products, food products and agricultural raw materials, leather raw materials, fur and fur products. And imports from Thailand increased due to increased imports of machinery, equipment and vehicles. Further development of co-operation between the parties is inextricably linked to the strengthening of ties between business circles in the field of transport infrastructure, introduction of new technologies. Bioengineering, supplies of energy resources and energy equipment, as well as agricultural products can be mentioned as promising areas.

Another ASEAN country developing interaction in the EAEU is **Cambodia**. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2016. In September 2021, following the third meeting of the working group between the EEC and the Government of Cambodia, the parties expressed a strong interest in increasing trade and investment and identified such areas of cooperation as trade and investment, customs cooperation, innovation, telecommunications and

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<sup>90</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2023 it is proposed to hold a business dialogue with Indonesia" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-v-ramkakh-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-foruma-v-2023-godu-predlagaetsya-provesti-bizn/>

<sup>91</sup> EAEU and Indonesia gave a start to negotiations on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-indoneziya-dali-start-peregovoram-po-soglasheniyu-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

<sup>92</sup> EAEU and Thailand are interested in developing cooperation in infrastructure, new technologies, digitalisation and green economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-tailand-zainteresovany-v-razviti-i-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-infrastruktury-novyh-tehnologij-tsfrovizatsii-i-zelenoj-ekonomiki/>

information and communication technologies, industry and infrastructure, technical regulation, SPS measures, intellectual property issues. Recall that in 2020 the EAEU trade turnover with Cambodia declined for objective reasons, but already in the first half of 2021 statistics inspired cautious optimism. "Trade increased by 1.4 times compared to the same period last year [2020] and reached \$130 million. US\$130 MILLION. At the same time, growth was observed in all EAEU states"<sup>93</sup>. Nevertheless, the existing trade turnover does not fully reveal the full potential of cooperation between the EAEU countries and Cambodia, so the parties plan to develop dialogue and intensify trade.

In 2023, the EAEU also plans to co-operate with other Asian states, including the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran**.

In June 2022, the EEC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Government of the **UAE**. The EAEU considers this country as one of the most promising partners for trade and economic co-operation in the Middle East region. "According to the results of 2021, the dynamics of trade and economic co-operation between the EAEU and the UAE is positive. The trade turnover increased by 60.9% and reached \$6.3bn, while in the EAEU as a whole the foreign trade turnover increased by 35.1%"<sup>94</sup>. The parties agreed in the memorandum to increase the volume of mutual trade, as well as to implement measures aimed at removing barriers. The EEC and the UAE intend to cooperate in the areas of customs and technical regulation, application of sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary measures, financial markets, transport, industry and agro-industrial complex, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, intellectual property.

In April 2022, the parties established a joint EAEU-UAE research group to study the prospects of concluding a free trade agreement. In December 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to launch negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and the UAE. The negotiations are planned to be held in an accelerated mode. The fact is that the formation of a free trade zone with the UAE will create conditions for the growth of supplies of more than 1,300 commodity items in both the industrial sector and the agro-industrial complex. "The relevance of multifaceted interaction is confirmed by the high interest and presence of a large number of companies of the Union's countries, including innovative ones, in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the role of this

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<sup>93</sup> ECE and the Government of Cambodia signed a joint statement on enhancing co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-pravitelstvo-kambodzhi-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zayavlenie-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>94</sup> The EAEU and the UAE Government signed a Memorandum of Co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-pravitelstvo-oae-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

state as an international trade and transport and logistics hub. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is seen from the point of view of strengthening the positions of EAEU exporters in countries throughout the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South corridor"<sup>95</sup>.

In January 2023, the EEC, discussing with the Emirati side the issues of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU countries and the UAE, including the prospects for increasing export and import supplies and diversifying trade, invited the UAE leadership and entrepreneurs to take an active part in the Eurasian Economic Forum, which is scheduled for May 2023. Note that "according to the EEC, from 2015 to 2021, the volume of trade between the EAEU countries and the UAE increased 4 times, EAEU exports to the UAE increased 4.7 times, and EAEU imports from the UAE increased by 47 per cent. At the same time, trade turnover in the period from January to October 2022 compared to the same period in 2021 increased by a further 55%"<sup>96</sup>.

There are also plans to conclude a new comprehensive trade agreement between the EAEU and **Iran in 2023**, which will "provide an impetus for increasing mutual supplies"<sup>97</sup>. In this context, the prospects for the development of long-term mutually beneficial co-operation in transport, co-operation in industry, agriculture and food security, as well as in other areas, are impressive. A future agreement will provide a strong contractual basis for these joint plans. As for the figures, "in 2021, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran grew by 74 per cent, and in the first 10 months of 2022 - by another 25 per cent compared to the same period of the previous year"<sup>98</sup>. In January 2023, the parties agreed on all issues to finalise negotiations and sign the agreement with the exception of mutual market access for certain categories of agricultural products, for which discussions are still ongoing, but the issue will soon be closed.

**The African Union** is another key vector of EAEU international co-operation. The EEC considers interaction with African countries, regional and sub-regional associations of this continent as an important and priority area of the EAEU's international activities, which should be intensified, first of all, with the

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<sup>95</sup> EAEU will start negotiations with the UAE on the conclusion of a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-nachnet-peregovory-s-oae-o-zaklyuchenii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

<sup>96</sup> Pivovarov, E. Negotiations on a free trade zone between the EAEU and the UAE are planned to be conducted in an accelerated mode [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/peregovory-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-caes-i-oae-planiruetsja-vesti-v-uskorennom-rezhime-546918-2023>

<sup>97</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Today we have a serious incentive for the development of regional agreements and regional connectivity" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-segodnya-my-imeem-sereznyy-stimul-dlya-razvitiya-regionalnykh-soglasheniy-i-regionaln/>

<sup>98</sup> Andrey Slepnev discussed in Tehran the issues of finalising negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-obsudil-v-tegerane-voprosy-zaversheniya-peregovorov-po-soglasheniyu-o-zone-svobodnoy-/>

participation of the business community. The most important tasks in this direction are to strengthen economic ties and create conditions for unlocking competitive advantages. The EEC is engaged in a dialogue with the African Union within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation of 24 October 2019. Note that "in 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with African countries increased by 21.9 per cent (to \$18.9 billion), exports by 24.0 per cent (to \$15.4 billion) and imports by 13.7 per cent (to \$3.5 billion)"<sup>99</sup>.

In the context of the EAEU's interaction with regional and subregional associations of this continent, the first working meeting of official representatives of the EEC and the **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)** was held in June 2022. This is an integration association of Central African countries, established in 1983, which includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe. "The stated objectives of the organisation are to develop integration processes between member countries, to promote their comprehensive deepening with reliance on their own economic strengths, and to move towards the creation of a common market. In addition to the "classic" set of integration tasks, ECCAS is also engaged in the functions of promoting peace and stability, combating terrorism and piracy, and supporting electoral processes in the community space"<sup>100</sup>. In 2023, the parties hope to take new steps towards a more substantive dialogue aimed at practical interaction.

With regard to specific countries on the African continent, in 2023, ECE plans to intensify cooperation with African States such as **Egypt, Ethiopia** and the **Republic of South Africa (RSA)**.

As for **Egypt**, this country has already actively entered into negotiations with the EAEU on the creation of a free trade zone. "This African state will be the first to have a joint industrial infrastructure with the EAEU, the creation of which will become a window for the countries of the integration association to promote <...> industrial products to the countries of Africa and the Middle East"<sup>101</sup>. The signing of this agreement in the near future will open up opportunities for large-

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<sup>99</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "I invite the African continent to co-operate with the EAEU in the creation of a new financial and economic architecture". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-priglasayu-afrikanskiy-kontinent-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-eaes-v-sozdanii-novoy-finansovo-/>

<sup>100</sup> The Economic Community of Central African States shows interest in interaction with the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ekonomicheskoe-soobshchestvo-gosudarstv-tsentralnoy-afriki-proyavlyayet-interes-k-vzaimodeystviyu-s-e/>

<sup>101</sup> Zaleskii, B. With a focus on co-operation. Chronicle of international co-operation in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 24.

scale diversification of trade and expansion of cooperation both in traditional areas and in building new logistical and financial links, jointly addressing the issues of technological transformation, which are determined by the climate agenda and the tasks of technological sovereignty.

For reference: the EAEU's trade with Egypt "in the first half of 2021 increased by 32.5% compared to the same period last year [2020]. In particular, exports of EAEU member states to Egypt in this period increased by almost 40 per cent (from USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.95 billion), imports from Egypt to the EAEU increased by 11 per cent (from USD 437 million to USD 489 million)"<sup>102</sup>. In 2022, trade turnover increased by almost another 40 per cent. So in the near future the parties will actually be able to "make significant progress on the key issue - on the parameters of mutual reduction of import duties, as well as on the preparation of the final text of the draft agreement"<sup>103</sup>. And the plans are to increase the scale of economic co-operation between the EAEU and Egypt, which in the near future may contribute to the emergence of new joint and effective projects.

**South Africa** stands out among the countries of the African Union for its high level of development of key areas of agriculture, such as livestock breeding, fish farming, fruit and wine production. South Africa pays special attention to soil conservation and efficient farming, and applies advanced agricultural techniques. This has enabled the country to fully meet its domestic food needs. In January 2023, the EEC proposed the creation of a Eurasian industrial zone in South Africa, which could become an entry point for EAEU producers to enter the untapped markets of the African continent. The parties agreed that "in order to implement the agreements reached, the first step will be to hold consultations between representatives of the EEC and interested authorised officials of South Africa, which will allow the parties to reach a new level of exchange of successful practices of agricultural production, solving the tasks of creating modern, competitive industrial and agro-industrial complexes, and increasing the volume of mutual trade"<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "The EAEU and Egypt expect to hold a full-fledged round of free trade negotiations in the near future" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-caes-i-egipt-rasschityvayut-na-provedenie-polnocnogo-raunda-peregovorov-o-svobodnoy-torgovle-v-blizhayshey-perspektive/>

<sup>103</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Trade and economic relations between the EAEU and Egypt continue to develop at an accelerated pace" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnosheniya-caes-i-egipta-prodolzhayut-razvivatsya-uskorennyimi/>

<sup>104</sup> EEC and South Africa will discuss the creation of the Eurasian industrial zone in South Africa and intensify cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-yuar-storonny-obsudyat-sozdanie-v-yuar-evraziyskoy-promyshlennoy-zony-i-aktiviziruyut-vzaimodey/>

In addition, areas of co-operation of mutual interest may include the development of agricultural products (fruit) and seafood production, material and technical resources, in particular agricultural machinery, as well as winemaking. Stimulation of investments in the agro-industrial complex will contribute to increasing the efficiency of agricultural production and the development of infrastructure. Moreover, the dynamics of mutual trade between the EAEU and South Africa in agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs shows the potential for growth. And the potential for this co-operation between the parties is simply enormous.

Another African country that intends to continue to actively engage with the EAEU in 2023 is **Ethiopia**. The Memorandum of Understanding between the parties in the field of economic co-operation was concluded in October 2019. The country is a traditional EEC partner in Africa. "The trade turnover between the EAEU member states and Ethiopia in January - October 2021 increased 4.7 times against the level of the same period in 2020. This is of particular importance in connection with plans to double trade turnover with the countries of the continent"<sup>105</sup>. It should be noted that such goods from Ethiopia as flowers, textiles, coffee and beans are traditionally in demand and competitive in the EAEU market. Apparently, in 2023, the parties intend to engage the business community in the dialogue in order to raise their awareness of the possibilities of using the EAEU's unified system of tariff preferences for developing and least developed countries, as well as certain aspects of supranational regulation within the EAEU. After all, Ethiopia is particularly attractive for investors due to the Chinese New Silk Road passing through its territory, as well as the growth rate of the Ethiopian economy. So the parties have a serious reserve for increasing trade, economic and investment co-operation.

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<sup>105</sup> EAEU and Ethiopia discussed plans for the development of cooperation for 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022.  
- URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-efiopiya-obsudili-plan-razvitiya-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-god/>

## **Eurasian Economic Union: Specific projects as a tool for diversifying integration**

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, which were adopted at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020, contain 330 measures and mechanisms to develop cooperation, grouped into 11 system blocks, the implementation of which should lead to the achievement of high results by 2025, including building a system for managing joint cooperation projects and developing high-productivity sectors, as well as harnessing the potential of cross-border arteries and logistics. "It is expected that all these measures will help to increase non-resource exports to third countries from EAEU [Eurasian Economic Union] states by a quarter by 2025 alone. This can be achieved by following the path of creating joint Eurasian companies to mutually complement each other and produce competitive products"<sup>106</sup>. In this context, it appears that the EAEU will focus on a number of specific promising Eurasian integration projects, which include the Eurasian **Agro-Express** and the Eurasian **Electric Bus**.

As a reminder, in February 2022, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council at a meeting in the capital of Kazakhstan supported the implementation of a joint project of the EAEU countries to implement accelerated rail and multimodal transport "**Eurasian Agroexpress**", aimed at increasing mutual supplies and exports of agricultural products and food, as well as its diversification. It was expected that initially regular shipments outside the EAEU would be organised to and from the Chinese and Uzbek directions. "In the future, the routes of realisation may be extended to other countries of the Asian and European regions. Regularity of shipments will make it possible to form tariffs competitive with respect to sea freight, as well as to reduce the delivery time of goods (up to 10-14 days to China and 4-7 days to Uzbekistan)"<sup>107</sup>.

In this case, we are talking primarily about supplies of oil and fat, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetable and ready-to-eat food products. The joint project envisaged the launch of two full trains per week along the route Belarus - Russia - Kyrgyzstan - Kazakhstan - China, including trains with refrigerated containers for frozen products. The monthly volume of transportations in the direction of

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<sup>106</sup> Zaleskii, B. With the aim of sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskyy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 4.

<sup>107</sup> Pivovarov, E. Prime Ministers of the EAEU approved the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" for accelerated delivery of food / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/premier-ministry-eaes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-po-uskorennoj-dostavke-prodovolstvija-486781-2022/>



China may reach about 10 thousand tonnes. The coordinator in this project is ANO Eurasian Agrologistics, and participation in it was confirmed by Bremino Group LLC (Belarus), KTZ Express JSC (Kazakhstan), NC KTZ (Kyrgyzstan), RZD Logistics JSC (Russia), and Slavtrans-Service JSC (Russia).

The Belarusian side, noting "the importance of the Eurasian Agroexpress project for food exports"<sup>108</sup>, expects to use it to increase food supplies, primarily to China. The fact is that today the carriers of products from Belarus "are mainly Chinese companies"<sup>109</sup>. The launch of this project will provide another profitable opportunity in this regard. Especially since the Celestial Empire market has traditionally been one of the main areas of Belarusian food export development. "In 2021, \$366.1 million worth of products were exported to China (47.9% growth by 2020). At the same time, in 2016, exports of food products to China totalled \$18.8 million. The main share in the formation of export growth is occupied by beef in cut form, milk powder and whey, chocolate and confectionery products, whole milk and other products"<sup>110</sup>. Supplies of starch, fruit jams and jellies, flour confectionery and pasta products, cereal flakes and butter have also increased. Moreover, 119 accredited Belarusian enterprises have already received the right to supply agricultural products to the Chinese market. All this indicates that there are considerable prospects for diversifying the commodity flows of Belarusian exports not only of meat and dairy products, but also of sugar, vegetable oil, and fish products.

In light of the trends observed in recent years, the Eurasian Agroexpress project may also become relevant for Belarus in the Uzbek direction. It should be recalled that at the same February (2022) meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in the capital of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan's initiative to expand its participation in the EAEU in four areas of mutual interest was approved: climate agenda issues; digitalisation of freight rail transport; e-commerce; and implementation of the Eurasian Agroexpress project. This Central Asian country was granted observer state status in the EAEU in December 2020.

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<sup>108</sup> Industrial cooperation, import substitution, food safety: Golovchenko on the key tasks of the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-importozameschenie-prodbezopasnost-golovchenko-o-kljuchevyh-zadachah-eaes-486890-2022/>

<sup>109</sup> Belarus expects to increase food supplies to China with the launch of "Eurasian Agroexpress" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspresa-486858-2022/>

<sup>110</sup> Brylo, I. Sustainable demand in the country and abroad: Belarus is increasing food supplies to all regions of the world / I. Brylo // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ustoichiviy-spros-v-strane-i-za-rubezhom-belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-prodovolstvija-vo-vse-regiony-mira-8088/>

And "in 2016-2021, Uzbekistan's total trade turnover with EAEU member states increased more than 2.5 times: from \$4.5bn to \$11.6bn"<sup>111</sup> .

As for Belarus, it is agriculture that is one of the most promising areas in the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Uzbekistan. Suffice it to say that "in 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018"<sup>112</sup> . The positive dynamics of mutual trade continued in the following years. Thus, in 2021, Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$300 million and "increased by 7.8% by the level of 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>113</sup> . The main items of Belarusian exports included meat and meat products, milk powder, cheese and cottage cheese. Undoubtedly, the current dynamics of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the area of food and agricultural products suggests that the joint project of the EAEU countries "Eurasian Agroexpress" may become a very timely and effective tool for Minsk and Tashkent to diversify export supplies.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council held in the Kazakh city of Almaty, the heads of government of the EAEU countries supported the proposal of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) to include in the joint integration project "Eurasian Agroexpress" the transportations carried out along the North-South international transport corridor in the direction of Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of India. The point is that "without stably functioning logistics adapted to the new geopolitical realities, the prospects for the development of our [EAEU countries'] economies will not be bright. <...> For the North-South corridor to work, it requires the full-scale involvement of all member states"<sup>114</sup> .

It should be noted that due to the reorientation of a number of transport routes, the demand for the North-South corridor is growing significantly. Pilot

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<sup>111</sup> Pivovarov, E. Eurasian Intergovernmental Council supported the expansion of Uzbekistan's participation in the EAEU projects / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/evrazijskij-mezhpravsovet-podderzhal-rasshirenie-uchastie-uzbekistana-v-proektnah-eaes-486888-2022/>

<sup>112</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority of cooperation - agriculture / B.L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern european science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 9.

<sup>113</sup> Golovchenko: there are prerequisites for increasing trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-est-predposylki-dlja-naraschivaniya-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-uzbekistanom-486939-2022/>

<sup>114</sup> Golovchenko: full-scale involvement of the EAEU countries in the work of the North-South corridor [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-nuzhno-polnomasshtabnoe-vovlechenie-stran-eaes-v-rabotu-koridora-sever-jug-548158-2023/>

shipments to Iran and India made under the project have confirmed the attractiveness of the direction. The EAEU countries here have great potential to expand their transit and export potential. All the more so because the exceeding of the Eurasian Agro Express' targets for the first year of its operation is very encouraging. "A total of 525,500 tonnes were transported under the project in 2022, including 282,900 tonnes of refrigerated cargo. The nomenclature of goods included chicken and beef meat, milk powder, oil and fats, fruit and vegetable and grain legume products"<sup>115</sup>. Even in spite of China's restrictions on the supply of products due to the pandemic, multimodal transportations to this country were very active.

Of course, at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Council, a number of aspects that hinder the effective operation of the project were also noted. In particular, the problem concerns obtaining permits to import frozen products to China via overland railway routes through the Dostyk-Alashankou and Altynkol-Khorgos border crossings. Its solution could provide a significant advantage in terms of cost and time of cargo delivery compared to multimodal transportations through the ports of the Far East. In this regard, the EEC has been instructed to work with the authorised bodies of the interested EAEU member states to reach agreements with the Chinese side to remove restrictive measures and optimise customs and other administrative procedures.

But on the whole, during the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian Agroexpress", its participants are already reaching common parameters, a common approach to this issue. This means the point of collection and the localisation of loading. After all, EAEU partners from third countries have their own special requirements. That is why the project participants must be faultless, supply perfect and at the same time meeting all the requirements of the receiving party products and at the same time it is necessary to ensure seamless passage of such a container train at all stages. "It has to be ready for dispatch at a specific time at a specific place. Therefore, we need to synchronise the processes. This will ensure predictability of train formation, fulfilment of plans"<sup>116</sup>. And at the head of the corner - serving the interests of manufacturers and enterprises that are engaged in transport and logistics schemes.

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<sup>115</sup> Pivovar, E. The project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will include transportations to Turkmenistan, Iran, UAE and India / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-vkljuchat-perevozki-v-turkmenistan-iran-oae-i-indiju-548163-2023/>

<sup>116</sup> Legal relations in the currency sphere, common industrial policy and "Eurasian Agroexpress": what is discussed in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravootnoshenija-v-valjutnoj-sfere-edinaja-prompolitika-i-evrazijskij-agroekspress-cto-obsuzhdajut-v-547995-2023/>

Important detail: in September 2022, the Eurasian Agroexpress project directorate - ANO Eurasian Agrologistics - and the Russian Trading Company (RTC) in China, Hua No E Xiang, signed a co-operation agreement, which sets out a common legal framework for practical assistance in the development of foreign trade in EAEU food products at the so-called "last mile", within the contour of the Chinese sales market, including a wide range of services that can be provided to suppliers from the "five" countries. The parties "agreed to jointly work out demanded trade services in conjunction with the transport and logistics complex of services, including the organisation of fast and affordable transport of goods in containers, providing for multimodal solutions, assistance in search, selection and negotiations with the Chinese buyer, gradual transition to a digital format and the provision of a range of services in the mode "from supplier to counter""<sup>117</sup>. The projected annual traffic volume of the Eurasian Agro Express project was expected to be around 500,000 tonnes by the beginning of 2023. The observed growth in sales volume in 2022 allowed the project's logistics operators to dispatch scheduled route trains with long-term competitive tariff rates on an almost daily basis. So the first results of this project in the EAEU are already encouraging.

As for another integration project, the **Eurasian Electric Bus**, we must first make a small digression. The EEC has proposed to conclude a treaty in the EAEU on import substitution and to develop a corresponding Eurasian development programme. In this regard, the EEC has already formulated the union's Industrialisation Map, which already involves 158 projects in 25 sectors worth more than \$270 billion. This map also includes 669 technological directions in 30 industries. Recall that "in 2021-2022, the union has already implemented 25 import substitution projects totalling over \$21 billion - these are automotive, machine tool, electrical, chemical, metallurgical, medical, pulp and paper industries, as well as the production of lifting and transport, lifting equipment, construction and road, special, municipal equipment"<sup>118</sup>. In 2023, another interesting project in terms of import substitution should find its "face" in the EAEU.

The EEC industrial block has started work on the implementation of the pilot project of industrial cooperation "Eurasian Electric Bus" initiated by the Belarusian side. The project "is aimed at maximising the import-independence of

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<sup>117</sup> Trade instrument of the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will be the Russian trading company in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/torgovym-instrumentom-proekta-evraziyskiy-agroekspress-stanet-rossiyskaya-torgovaya-kompaniya-v-kita/>

<sup>118</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC proposes to conclude a separate agreement on import substitution in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cek-predlagaet-zakljuchit-v-eaes-otdelnyj-dogovor-po-voprosam-importozameshenija-548223-2023/>

the Union and involving as many industrial enterprises of the Union's member states as possible in the cooperation process"<sup>119</sup>.

The decision to launch the Eurasian Electric Bus pilot project was made in mid-July 2022 at a meeting of the EEC Council. "At the first stage, lists of critical components, assemblies and materials for the production of electric buses and companies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries with the necessary own production and technological potential will be formed"<sup>120</sup>. This will not only create a basis for the full-scale launch of the project, but also assess the possibility of reorienting and adapting the production of units and components designed for other types of passenger vehicles - buses, trolleybuses - for their further use in electric buses.

In early September 2022, a decision was made to form a special working group comprising representatives of state authorities of the Union's countries, manufacturers of electric-powered vehicles and automotive components, as well as academia of the member states. In October 2022, representatives of the EAEU countries discussed the approaches to the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian electric bus" at an off-site meeting of the expert group in the field of automotive industry under the EEC Advisory Committee on Industry, held at the site of the Belarusian holding Belkommunmash. The members of the expert group confirmed their interest in the development of electric transport in the EAEU countries, noting "the need to focus on organising the production of critical components, units and materials for the production of electric buses, such as traction motors and their control systems, energy storage systems, and bridges. It is proposed to consider setting up in the EAEU the production of cells for high-voltage batteries used in electric transport"<sup>121</sup>. In addition, an agreement was reached for the Belarusian side to send a list of investment projects being developed in Belarus in this area for consideration by EAEU experts in order to analyse specific proposals for the implementation of joint projects for the production of components for electric buses.

The proposal was actively supported at the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Yerevan in October 2022. After all, the

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<sup>119</sup> Golovchenko: it is necessary to work on achieving technological sovereignty within the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-neobhodimo-rabotat-nad-dostizheniem-tehnologicheskogo-suvereniteta-v-ramkah-eaes-548144-2023/>

<sup>120</sup> Pivovar, E. Implementation of the pilot project "Eurasian electric bus" started in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/realizatsiya-pilotnogo-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-nachalas-v-eaes-521716-2022/>

<sup>121</sup> Pivovar, E. Experts of the EAEU countries discussed the implementation of the project "Eurasian electric bus" at Belkommunmash / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-stran-eaes-obsudili-na-belkommunmashe-realizatsiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-528846-2022/>

implementation of the Belarusian initiative and the resolution of financing issues, both funding and preferential treatment, should launch "an irreversible process of further development of the industrial sphere and the real sector of the economy in our states on the principles of technological sovereignty. Eurasian integration should first of all ensure the interests of industrial enterprises, domestic businesses of the real sector of the economy"<sup>122</sup>. The implementation of this project with relatively cheap credit resources will create strong co-operation chains between the EAEU member states and develop the relevant competences. It is clear that "electric transport means highly productive jobs, so everyone will benefit from it"<sup>123</sup>.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Almaty, a discussion was held, at which it was noted that "the possible details of the implementation of this project are currently being worked out on the platform of the EEC. We need not only to identify partners for co-operation (such proposals from Belarus have already been received), but also to prepare all the necessary documents so that in the future these projects could qualify for some benefits in terms of financing"<sup>124</sup>. At the next meeting of the EEC Council with the participation of deputy prime ministers of the EAEU countries, which took place in February 2023, the recommendation "On measures to develop co-operation between the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the formation and implementation of projects in the field of electric vehicle construction" was approved.

This document lays down the main basic approaches to cooperation between the Member States for the development of electric transport production in the Union and measures to launch specific joint projects for the production of components. The recommendation also fixes the formed Lists of critical components and organisations with the necessary production potential. "First of all, it is necessary to develop competences in electric bus construction, since such products are already manufactured in most countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and demand for them is stimulated mainly through government procurement <...> Further work in this area will continue, but the main focus is planned to be on the formation of potential cooperation projects with the

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<sup>122</sup> Golovchenko: projects to create an innovative product under the Eurasian brand should be more [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-proektov-po-sozdaniyu-innovatsionnogo-produkta-pod-evrazijskim-brendom-dolzno-byt-bolshe-530593-2022/>

<sup>123</sup> About \$20 million per year will be allocated to support co-operation projects in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-20-mln-v-god-budut-napravljat-na-podderzku-koperatsionnyh-proektov-v-eaes-530531-2022/>

<sup>124</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC discusses the details of the project "Eurasian electric bus" initiated by Belarus / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-obsuzhdaet-detali-initsirovannogo-belarusiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-548208-2023/>

development of the possibility of subsidising interest rates on loans at the expense of the Commission's funds"<sup>125</sup>. In addition, during the elaboration of this issue, Belarus made proposals to consider the experience of Member States in the construction of charging centres, including chargers for charging electric buses, electric trucks and electric cars. Additionally, this issue will be worked out on the platform of the Commission on Cooperation and Import Substitution in priority and high-tech industries within the Union. And if necessary, the possibility of creating a joint co-operation project by the interested member states will be considered. So the Belarusian project "Eurasian Electric Bus" is already really starting its journey.

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<sup>125</sup> The EEC Council approved measures to develop co-operative cooperation of the EAEU countries in electric vehicle construction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sovet-EEK-odobril-mery-po-razvitiyu-kooperatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-eaes-v-elektromobilestroev/>

## Belarus - Kazakhstan: plans for the future - in the roadmap

In May 2021, the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarus-Kazakhstan Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, following which the parties adopted a roadmap or programme of activities for 2021-2022. The results of the interaction between the two countries in the first quarter of 2021 became a kind of tuning for this meeting. "Trade turnover totalled \$215 million and increased by 12% compared to the corresponding period of 2020"<sup>126</sup>. At the same time, the positive balance for the Belarusian side amounted to \$133.5 million. Among the main activities of the adopted roadmap is the development of Belarusian-Kazakh cooperation in industrial cooperation and machinery supplies, agriculture and construction, as well as in the interaction between the regions of the two countries.

Another important event in Belarus-Kazakhstan interaction took place at the end of June 2021, when a Belarusian government delegation led by Prime Minister R. Golovchenko visited Kazakhstan, during which the parties made serious progress in terms of developing bilateral **trade and economic relations**. This visit took place against the backdrop of very positive dynamics in mutual trade between the two countries. Suffice it to say that "in 2020, Belarusian-Kazakh trade turnover totalled \$847.9 million. The main items of Belarusian exports were tractors, combines, beef, milk, cream, sugar, cheese, cottage cheese, furniture and medicines"<sup>127</sup>. Such figures testify to a lot. There are 54 companies with Kazakh capital operating in Belarus, including 13 joint ventures and 36 foreign ones. And 366 companies with Belarusian participation operate in Kazakhstan. In addition, enterprises with Belarusian technologies operate in different regions of this country at ten production sites. And now the parties are focusing on increasing the localisation of machinery produced there - the same tractors and cars - in order to "reach new indicators in mutual trade in 2021 - more than \$1 billion a year in goods and services"<sup>128</sup>.

The contracts signed at the end of June 2021 between the economic entities of the two countries should contribute to the achievement of this goal. In

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<sup>126</sup> Promcooperation and Days of Culture - Belarus and Kazakhstan held a meeting of the intergovernmental commission [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkoopratsija-i-dni-kultury-belarus-i-kazahstan-proveli-zasedanie-mezhpravkomissii-443204-2021/>

<sup>127</sup> Ruslan Golovchenko visited large enterprises of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/roman-golovchenko-posetil-krupnye-predprijatija-kazahstana-447818-2021/>

<sup>128</sup> Belarus has agreed with Kazakhstan on oil supplies [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-dogovorilas-s-kazahstanom-o-postavkah-nefti-447959-2021/>



particular, Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 590 units of machinery to Kazakhstan for ten million dollars. "Another contract was signed between MAZ OJSC and Hyundai Trans Auto LLP for the supply of MAZ trailer kits worth \$1.3 million. Also, BELAZ OJSC and ASTANABELAZSERVICE LLP signed a contract for the supply of BELAZ machinery worth \$1.2 million"<sup>129</sup>. The same list of Belarusian exporters includes the company Bobruiskagromash, which has been working closely on the Kazakh market for the past five years, where it has an assembly plant for trailers, balers and mowers. In 2020, it increased its exports of agricultural machinery to that country by one and a half times. In 2021, the results promise to be no worse. At least, the signed contract for the supply of products in the amount of one million dollars with the entities of the commodity distribution network of "Bobruiskagromash" in Kazakhstan is aimed at this. Gomselmash OJSC and AgromashHolding KZ JSC - the only industrial enterprise in this country that produces combine harvesters, tractors and additional products in a wide range and is the exclusive distributor of Gomel's products in Kazakhstan - also signed an agreement on the development of cooperation for 2021-2022.

But, perhaps, Minsk Tractor Plant stands out more than others in terms of the development of **industrial cooperation** with Kazakh partners. Minsk Tractor Plant already has three assembly plants here, has its own trading house and plans to develop another assembly plant in this Central Asian country - with investments of \$50 million - on the basis of the enterprise "Composite Group Kazakhstan" in Kostanai. Now the assembly line here is designed to produce 1200 Belarus tractors. But plans have already been formed to develop the site, create new jobs, increase the number of technological operations, aimed at increasing the localisation of production. In particular, "at the first stage, together with Kazakh partners, a workshop for the production of cabins will be built. The next stage is the construction of another building with an area of 25 thousand square metres for the assembly of engines and radiators of all types. It is also planned to produce a new type of products - diesel pumps"<sup>130</sup>. It is quite possible that this enterprise will become an important element of the Belarusian industrial centre being created in the industrial zone of Kostanay. "It will be a multi-profile structure, which will combine not only production facilities, but also scientific and technical activities

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<sup>129</sup> Belarus is increasing supplies of machinery to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-narashivaet-postavki-tehniki-v-kazahstan-447970-2021/>

<sup>130</sup> Industrial enterprises of Belarus and Kazakhstan intend to sign large contracts [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prompredpriyatija-belarusi-i-kazahstana-namereny-podpisat-krupnye-kontrakty-447828-2021/>

and training of specialists"<sup>131</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that such a centre could become the core of innovative development.

**Agriculture is one** of the other areas of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation that should receive accelerated development in the near future. The market of this Central Asian country is important for Belarusian agrarians because it ranks second after Russia in terms of food supplies from Belarus. By the end of 2021, the Belarusian side plans to "reach 120% of exports of our products to Kazakhstan to the level of last year: in 2020 it was over \$300 million"<sup>132</sup>.

In this regard, it is important to recall the results of 2020, which showed that even in the context of restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus infection, the agro-industrial complex of both countries maintained growth trends in 2020. In particular, data from the Eurasian Economic Commission shows that "agricultural production in the territory of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2020 increased by 2.3 per cent to 114.3 billion US dollars. The highest production growth among the EAEU countries was recorded in Kazakhstan (by 5.6%) and Belarus (by 4.9%)"<sup>133</sup>.

Positive trends in the growth of cooperation between the two countries in the agro-industrial sector were also recorded at the second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Kazakh working group on developing promising areas of bilateral cooperation in agriculture, which took place in Minsk in February 2021. At the meeting, the parties focused on food trade, crop and livestock farming, veterinary medicine, breeding and selection, taking into account that "in 2020, trade turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs between Belarus and Kazakhstan increased by 1.2 times by 2019 and reached \$307.2 million. Exports totalled \$289.9 million (an increase of more than 20%)"<sup>134</sup>. At the same time, the parties noted the existing serious potential for further stable growth of trade turnover and consolidation of positive trends in mutual trade.

On the Belarusian side, these prospects are seen in the supply of equipment for the construction of dairy farms, the introduction of new technologies, the expansion of purchases of agricultural machinery, and the retraining of personnel

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<sup>131</sup> Golovchenko: the foundation of Belarusian-Kazakh cooperation is trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-fundament-belorussko-kazhastanskogo-sotrudnichestva-torgovo-ekonomicheskije-otnosheniya-447956-2021/>

<sup>132</sup> Brylo: Belarusian food exports to Kazakhstan are increasing every year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brylo-eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-kazhastan-kazhdyj-god-uvelichivaetsja-447921-2021/>

<sup>133</sup> About the meeting of the Ambassador of Belarus with the Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c66dcb28873a0b75.html>

<sup>134</sup> Export of Belarusian agricultural products to Kazakhstan in 2020 increased by more than 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozprodukcii-v-kazhastan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-na-20-430100-2021>

for the agro-industrial complex. Kazakhstan is particularly interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries, as well as in other areas of agricultural production. The nature of this interest lies in the fact that "the coronavirus has shown how much all agricultural products are in demand now. New niches are opening up"<sup>135</sup>.

In particular, in 2021, the parties have high hopes for continued cooperation between Belarus's Gomselmash OJSC and Kazakhstan's largest agricultural machinery company AgromashHolding KZ, which increased its production volumes by 1.7 times in 2020. Joint assembly of grain harvesters by these enterprises on Kazakh soil began back in 2007. "In 2019, the organisation produced 429 combines and tractors, and in 2020 - 730 units of equipment"<sup>136</sup>. Including the first combine harvester ESSIL KZS-790, which has already been tested in the Karaganda region and showed good results. The new machine has increased engine power and grain cleaning area, and threshing is done in a combined way: by drum and rotor. In 2021 the serial production of this model is planned. In addition, the production of self-propelled mowers will also increase, which is explained by the growing demand for them among Kazakhstani farmers. Recall also that back in the summer of 2020, more than 70 machine sets of the KZS-10 MAX model were sent to Kazakhstan from Gomel. "The innovations introduced on this model of combine harvester, mainly concerning more comfortable work of mechanisers, were liked by the agrarians of Kazakhstan. This prompted them to order another 30 such combines"<sup>137</sup>. And in the second half of December 2020, this additional batch of 30 machine sets was shipped to Kazakh partners.

Among the events that should have a positive impact on the development of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in agriculture in 2021, we would like to mention a few more. First, the idea discussed at the meeting of the Belarus-Kazakhstan Business Council in November 2020, which was attended by representatives of more than 160 enterprises of the two countries, may yield interesting results. Given the fact that one of the most important issues in the development of relations between the two former Soviet republics is the holding of exhibitions, "Belarus and Kazakhstan are considering the possibility of holding

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<sup>135</sup> Kazakhstan is interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of dairy and sugar industries [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kazakhstan-zainteresovan-v-belorusskom-opyte-razvitiya-molochnoj-i-saharnoj-otraslej-430102-2021>

<sup>136</sup> "Gomselmash" and "AgromashHolding KZ" will expand the line of agricultural machinery in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-i-agromashholding-kz-rasshirjat-linejku-agrotehniki-v-2021-godu-424825-2021/>

<sup>137</sup> "Gomselmash" additionally shipped to Kazakhstan 30 machine kits KZS-10 MAX [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-dopolnitelno-otgruzil-v-kazakhstan-30-mashinokomplektov-kzs-10-max-421382-2020/>

an offsite agricultural exhibition Belagro in Kazakhstan"<sup>138</sup> . This could be another concrete step towards intensifying bilateral cooperation and increasing mutual trade turnover. Secondly, back in November 2020, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) offered Kazakh companies to buy Belarusian meat and dairy products and sugar at exchange trading. At the same time, BUTB could assist companies from Kazakhstan in selling their products on the Belarusian market. As a follow-up to this proposal, in January 2021, BUTB agreed to intensify cooperation in the field of electronic trade with the Astana Universal Commodity Exchange, which "will make it possible to form a single database with commercial offers of Belarusian and Kazakh companies and will contribute to the growth of mutual trade volumes"<sup>139</sup> .

Another of the most important areas of co-operation between Belarus and Kazakhstan, which should receive intensive development in the very near future, is the **construction sector, as the** parties are seriously interested in this interaction. This is explained by the fact that "today, Belarus and Kazakhstan have multifunctional construction complexes, which are continuously carrying out their activities, increasing their pace every year"<sup>140</sup> . Among the priorities of interaction in this area, the parties see such areas of cooperation as the construction of industrial enterprises, housing and dairy complexes, production and supply of construction materials, as well as the establishment of a trading house of Belarusian construction materials in Kazakhstan and the expansion of supplies of sanitary faience, thermal insulation and roofing materials, and floor coverings to this Central Asian country.

If we talk about industrial construction, it was noted at the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission that "an important step in co-operation cooperation will be the construction by MTZ OJSC in Kazakhstan of a plant for the production of cabins for tractors and front axles"<sup>141</sup> . Let's add that the works on the mentioned production facilities in the Kazakh city of Kostanai have already started. "About 7 million dollars of investments will be directed on realisation of

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<sup>138</sup> Utyupin: the possibility of holding the exhibition "Belagro" in Kazakhstan is considered [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/utyupin-rassmatrivaetsja-vozmozhnost-provedenija-vystavki-belagro-v-kazahstane-417045-2020/>

<sup>139</sup> BUTB and Kazakhstan exchange "Astana" intend to develop cooperation in the sphere of electronic trade [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kazahstanskaja-birzha-astana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-elektronnoj-torgovli-425206-2021>

<sup>140</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan are interested in expanding co-operation in the construction sector [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-zainteresovany-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-v-stroitelnoj-sfere-452678-2021/>

<sup>141</sup> On holding the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarus-Kazakhstan Commission [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/dda48a09c28d30da.html>

the project. And it is planned to invest about 50 million dollars in the development of production facilities"<sup>142</sup>.

In addition, today the parties are working on the establishment and construction of a joint venture for the production of ceramic tiles on Kazakh soil. This project will be realised in reality if there will be enough raw materials in the subsoil of this country to produce these products. That is why "now the geological, environmental protection services of Kazakhstan are studying the volume of available resources"<sup>143</sup>.

Another interesting construction project, which is being worked out by the parties, concerns the construction of a "Belarusian neighbourhood" in Nur-Sultan. By its example, the Belarusian side could demonstrate its capabilities in designing and building residential complexes. The peculiarity of this project is that it does not exclude "the possibility of equipping the built housing with Belarusian furniture and household appliances, because in Kazakhstan some construction companies have such a practice of selling completely finished housing"<sup>144</sup>.

The next project discussed by the parties to open a trading house in Kazakhstan, which would include such Belarusian construction industry enterprises as Keramin, Berezastroyaterialy, and Belarusian Glass Company, looks logical in this regard. It is possible that later, according to the Belarusian Ministry of Architecture and Construction, the concern Bellesbumprom will join their ranks. The fact is that only in the first four months of 2021, its enterprises increased exports of its products to the Kazakh market by almost 30 per cent - to more than seven million dollars. "This is primarily furniture: it was supplied for more than \$2 million. Belarusian upholstered furniture and cabinet furniture made of solid wood are particularly popular in Kazakhstan. The country also exports chipboard and fibreboard, plywood, wooden windows and doors, wallpaper, paper, cardboard, sawn timber..."<sup>145</sup>. There is every reason to believe that sales of Belarusian woodworking products in the Kazakhstan market will continue to grow systematically. The use of the potential of a specialised trading house can only open up new additional opportunities for its sales.

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<sup>142</sup> Multimillion contracts and agreements on oil supplies: summarising the three-day visit of the Prime Minister to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9894>

<sup>143</sup> Joint plant of ceramic tiles and "Belarusian Quarter" may appear in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sovместnyj-zavod-keramicheskoy-plitki-i-belorusskij-kvartal-mogut-pojavitsja-v-kazahstane-452553-2021/>

<sup>144</sup> Belarus is interested in the construction of the "Belarusian Quarter" in Kazakhstan - Utyupin [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zajinteresovana-v-stroitelstve-belorusskogo-kvartala-v-kazahstane-utjupin-451644-2021/>

<sup>145</sup> Enterprises "Bellesbumprom" in January-April increased exports to Kazakhstan by 28.7% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-janvare-aprele-narastili-eksport-v-kazahstan-na-287-448021-2021/>

Finally, with regard to the construction of agricultural facilities, the Kazakh side is particularly interested in this issue. At the end of June 2021, an agreement was even reached to meet with partners from Kazakhstan in Belarus, where "we will demonstrate to them our capabilities to build fairly large farms for 2,400 heads"<sup>146</sup>. If this Belarusian experience finds a favourable response from the Kazakh side, then in the future we can talk about the implementation of a similar turnkey project of a Belarusian farm in Kazakhstan with its further expansion throughout the country. In this case, the concept of "turnkey" includes design, construction by Belarusian companies, supply of equipment and breeding stock.

**Interregional co-operation** also plays an important role in the development of Belarusian-Kazakh partnership ties. Suffice it to say that there are about 30 co-operation agreements between the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan. In particular, the relevant documents were signed by the executive committees of Minsk, Brest, Gomel, Vitebsk, and Mogilev regions and the akimat of Karaganda region. Gomel and Vitebsk voblasts have a co-operation agreement with North Kazakhstan voblast, Brest voblast - with East Kazakhstan voblast. Grodno region co-operates with Aktobe, Kostanay and Mangistau regions, Gomel region - with Almaty and Atyrau regions. These partnerships of the regions of the two countries are complemented by documents on co-operation of such cities as Minsk and Nur-Sultan, Brest and Semey, Bobruisk and Ust-Kamenogorsk, Mogilev and Shymkent. But due to the fact that "in 2020 the development of regional cooperation was to some extent hampered due to the introduction of quarantine restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus infection COVID-19"<sup>147</sup>, in 2021 the task is set not only to intensify existing partnerships, but also to work on establishing new ones.

In particular, serious intentions in this regard are demonstrated today by Gomel region, which offers Kazakh partners to expand cooperation, including through joint ventures, small business, transport infrastructure, tourism. In 2020, the volume of foreign trade of the region with Kazakhstan exceeded \$115 million. "The growth rate of trade turnover in January-April [2021] reached 161% compared to last year's four months"<sup>148</sup>, and among the main suppliers should be noted "Gomselmash" and a meat and dairy company. The same "Gomselmash" in

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<sup>146</sup> Belarus plans to double the export of construction materials to Kazakhstan - Parkhamovich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-udvoit-eksport-strojmaterialov-v-kazakhstan-parhamovich-447920-2021/>

<sup>147</sup> About interregional co-operation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/region/](https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/region/)

<sup>148</sup> JV, small business, tourism - Gomel region intends to expand cooperation with Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sp-malyj-biznes-turizm-gomelskaja-oblast-namerena-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kazahstanom-446559-2021/>

June 2021 signed an agreement on the development of co-operation for 2021-2022 with the Kazakh JSC "Agromashholding". The crux of the matter is that "the Kazakh side requested 570 units [of combines] for this year - for \$60 million. In the next three years, the goal is to produce up to 1,000 units of combines per year"<sup>149</sup>. The parties are also discussing other areas of co-operation. In particular, there are prospects for mutually beneficial partnership in the chemical and glass spheres. The proposal of the head of the Kazakh diplomatic mission in Belarus A. Beisenbayev, who expressed his views on this issue, is also noteworthy. Beisenbayev, head of Kazakhstan's diplomatic mission in Belarus, suggested in Gomel that a forum of regions of the two countries should be held.

Brest region is also going to actively develop cooperation with the Kazakh side, the volume of foreign trade turnover with Kazakhstan in 2020 exceeded 130 million dollars. Now nine enterprises with Kazakh capital are registered in Brest region. But there are certainly reserves and potential for continued cooperation. And today we are talking about "supplies of products with added value, first of all, in such industries as woodworking, food processing"<sup>150</sup>.

A real breakthrough in the development of cooperation between the regions of the two countries could be the emergence of the Belarusian Industrial Centre in the Kostanai region, which the parties agreed on in June 2021. "This will be a multi-profile structure that will combine not only production facilities, but also scientific and technical activities and training of specialists"<sup>151</sup>. This centre will be located in the industrial zone "Kostanai", which was opened in 2017 and is an industrial site of 400 hectares, provided with communications, which already houses enterprises of mechanical engineering, food and light industry, production of building materials and structures, agricultural equipment. Interestingly, the first "swallow" of this zone was the "factory for the production of tractors of the brand "Belarus" of the holding company "Composite Group Kazakhstan". It was opened in 2018, and now it is successfully developing"<sup>152</sup>. So the foundation for the emergence of the Belarusian Industrial Centre is already here.

As we can see, Belarus and Kazakhstan have great prospects for co-operation in various areas and have already created a good foundation for long-

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<sup>149</sup> Multimillion contracts and agreements on oil supplies: summarising the three-day visit of the Prime Minister to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9894>

<sup>150</sup> Belarusian-Kazakh intergovernmental commission plans to meet in Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-kazahstanskaja-mezhpravkomissija-planiruet-sobratsja-v-breste-434510-2021/>

<sup>151</sup> Belarusian industrial centre will appear in the industrial zone of Kostanay [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/beloruskiy-industrialnyy-tsentr-poyavitsya-v-industrialnoy-zone-kostonaya.html>

<sup>152</sup> Goray, O. Industrial zone "Kostanai" is gradually filled with new production / O. Goray // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://top-news.kz/industrialnaja-zona-kostanaj-postepenno-zapolnjaetsja-novymi-proizvodstvami/>

term co-operation between industrial, agro-industrial and construction complexes, as well as at the level of the regions of the two countries. Let's hope that all these plans discussed above will be successfully realised.

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## **Belarus - Kazakhstan: the road of friendship and co-operation**

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 in November 2017. In this document, the parties outlined the realisation of a qualitatively new stage in their bilateral relations. At the end of June 2021, during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to this Central Asian country, a task corresponding to this new stage was announced - to "reach new indicators in mutual trade - more than \$1bn in goods and services per year"<sup>153</sup>.

In February 2022, summarising the results of the past year, the parties stated at a high level that Belarusian-Kazakh trade turnover exceeded one billion dollars for the first time in history. To be absolutely precise, it "totalled \$1,092.5 billion and increased by 31.9% compared to the same period last year [2020], exports - \$911.8 million (up 25%). The balance is positive - \$731.1 million"<sup>154</sup>. Belarusian supplies were based on a variety of food products - fresh or chilled beef, condensed and dried milk and cream, cheese and cottage cheese, sausages and similar meat products, sugar, as well as parts of rolling stock, combine harvesters, furniture and its parts. The commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in Kazakhstan includes more than 40 companies, as well as more than 170 entities of the dealer network. There are also a number of joint assembly plants for Belarusian machinery and equipment.

In October 2022, high-level working meetings of representatives of the governments of Belarus and Kazakhstan were held in Astana, where the parties outlined priorities in the field of industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, and construction.

In the area of industrial co-operation, we note that seven Belarusian enterprises operate in Kazakhstan, including Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Plant, and Bobruiskagromash. They are steadily increasing supplies of machinery components to this country for the production of equipment. Within the framework of one of the largest projects on creation of tractor production in the industrial zone in Kostanai, the construction of a workshop for manufacturing of

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<sup>153</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. With an eye on trade and production co-operation / B.L. Zaleskii // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Dynamika naukowych badań - 2021", Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 21.

<sup>154</sup> Golovchenko: trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2021 for the first time exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kazachstana-v-2021-godu-vpervye-prevysil-1-mlrd-486829-2022/>

unified cabins with a production capacity of up to 10 thousand units per year has been completed. "The parties are studying the possibility of organising the production of not only elements and units of tractor equipment, but also machine tools, engines for tractor equipment, diesel generators, pumping units, optical products"<sup>155</sup>.

As for new prospects for cooperation, the production of fire trucks based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant and the Pozhsnab enterprise is being discussed. This is a new promising niche that needs to be filled with Belarusian equipment. In general, "we can increase mutual supplies with Kazakhstan by \$200 million"<sup>156</sup>. The experience of Minsk Motor Plant (MMZ), whose trading house was opened in early 2022 in Kazakhstan and which successfully sells Belarusian engines, special equipment and spare parts with increasing indicators, is interesting in this regard. In this context, in October 2022, MMZ took part in the KazAgro-2022 international exhibition, which is the largest and most visited in Central Asia. The goal of the Belarusian company at the forum is "to expand business and commercial prospects, opportunities to promote products, and increase brand recognition"<sup>157</sup>. For the same purpose, in September 2022 in Astana, more than 30 Belarusian business entities took part in international specialised exhibitions on mechanical engineering and metalworking, as well as on the manufacturing industry. Collective stands were "presented by enterprises of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Education, individual stands were presented by Minsk Tractor Plant and machine-tool enterprises"<sup>158</sup>. This suggests that new projects in Belarusian-Kazakh industrial co-operation are on the way.

In the agro-industrial sector, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan confirmed its interest in building a 1200-head dairy farm on Kazakh soil, where "Belarusian technologies, materials, equipment and dairy cattle will be used. The work will start this year and will continue in 2023"<sup>159</sup>. Belarus continues to study

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<sup>155</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Kazakhstan need to move forward in the field of industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarusi-i-kazahstanu-nuzhno-dvigatsja-dalshe-v-oblasti-promkooperatsii-531879-2022/>

<sup>156</sup> Snopkov: The basis of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan is production cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-bazoj-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kazahstana-javljaetsja-proizvodstvennaja-kooperatsija-506651-2022/>

<sup>157</sup> Minsk Motor Plant presented its products at the exhibition in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-predstavil-produktsiju-na-vystavke-v-kazahstane-528774-2022/>

<sup>158</sup> More than 30 Belarusian enterprises participate in industry exhibitions in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-belorusskih-predpriyatij-uchastvujut-v-vystavkah-promyshlennosti-v-kazahstane-525159-2022/>

<sup>159</sup> Production of veterinary preparations and construction of MTFs. How Belarus and Kazakhstan will co-operate in agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-vetpreparatov-i-stroitelstvo-mtf-kak-budut-sotrudnicat-belarusi-i-kazahstan-v-apk-531987-2022/>

the creation of veterinary drugs production in Kazakhstan, both to meet the needs of the domestic market and for prospective exports to third countries. BelVitonipharm will participate in this project on the Belarusian side. In addition, the Kazakh side expressed interest in supplies of Belarusian mixed fodders, premixes, amino acids, and in switching to potato seeds of Belarusian selection.

The Belarusian and Kazakh partners are also planning several projects in the construction sector in the near future. "Among them there are symmetrical ones - the construction of a Belarusian neighbourhood in Astana and a Kazakh neighbourhood in Minsk. <...> At this stage, the plan is to determine the land plots and concept, to attract state developers"<sup>160</sup>. Another project is the joint production of ceramic tiles. Kazakhstan has a lot of mineral resources, so it is planned to create a production facility with the involvement of Belarusian specialists and technologies.

Another interesting fact: Belarus and Kazakhstan are also planning to develop freight transport by railway. In October 2022, a Belarus-Kazakhstan round table was held in Astana, where more than 80 participants, including about 40 Kazakh companies from the mining, oil, chemical, gas, metallurgical and agricultural industries, carriers and transport and logistics companies of the country, as well as representatives of Belarusian forestry, woodworking and food processing enterprises, transport and forwarding companies, discussed the prospects for the development of existing projects and current transport and logistics solutions for long-distance transport. At the same time, "considerable attention was paid to the issues of unimpeded passage of cargo from Belarus to Kazakhstan, as well as to China in transit through Kazakhstan, including as part of container trains"<sup>161</sup>.

Interregional co-operation is another important component of Belarusian-Kazakh bilateral interaction. Let us recall that "there are about 30 agreements between the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan"<sup>162</sup>. Among the Belarusian participants of this effective interaction is **Minsk Region**, whose trade turnover with Kazakhstan in 2021 increased by another 7.5 per cent to \$190 million. At the same time, "exports accounted for almost \$180 million, with a growth rate of 107.2 per cent. In foreign trade there was a surplus of almost \$170 million. The

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<sup>160</sup> Belarusian quarter in Astana, Kazakh quarter in Minsk. What new projects are discussed in construction [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-kvartal-v-astane-kazahstanskij-v-minske-kakie-novye-proekty-obsuzhdajut-v-stroitelstve-531980-2022/>

<sup>161</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan plan to develop freight traffic by railway [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-planirujut-razvivat-gruzoperevozki-po-zheleznoj-doroge-530740-2022/>

<sup>162</sup> Zaleskii, B. The goal is stable growth. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 52.

volume of foreign direct investment from Kazakhstan was more than \$1.2 million, or 137.2 per cent of the 2020 level"<sup>163</sup>. Karaganda and Pavlodar regions are among the active Kazakh partners of the Belarusian capital region.

Thus, the agreement on cooperation between Minsk **Region** and **Karaganda Region** was signed back in 1996 and included measures on cooperation in industry, agriculture, healthcare, and education. In June 2013, in this Kazakh region began its work LLP "JV KazBelAZ" - a joint venture for overhaul of units and assemblies, production of spare parts and manufacture of machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant. "The production is based at Karaganda Foundry and Machine Building Plant (KLMZ) - a branch of Kazakhmys Corporation LLP"<sup>164</sup>. This JV became one of the largest in the State Programme of Forced Industrial and Innovative Development and was included in the Map of Industrialisation of Kazakhstan for 2010-2014. The first Belarusian dump truck was assembled in Karaganda in August 2013 by "Karaganda automobile masters who were trained at the Belarusian plant"<sup>165</sup>. And in October 2021, the parties have already discussed the establishment of a joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the Karaganda region. At that time, "21 joint ventures were already operating in the Kazakh region. Among them is a company for the assembly of dump trucks, repair and maintenance of BelAZ equipment"<sup>166</sup>. Apparently, this interaction can be further expanded, as the region is interested in attracting Belarusian companies and is ready to create favourable conditions for them so that they could "take part in the implementation of agricultural projects, construction of schools. Co-operation in the IT sphere is also possible"<sup>167</sup>.

As for **Pavlodar Region**, Minsk Region signed an agreement with it on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation in 2009. In 2017, the parties agreed to cooperate in agriculture. A great interest of the Kazakhs then aroused the Belarusian experience in the construction of dairy and cattle complexes. "Handing over a package of model projects of agricultural facilities

<sup>163</sup> Turchin discussed with Beisenbaev the development of cooperation between Minsk region and Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-bejsenbaevym-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-minskoi-oblastju-i-kazahstanom-486296-2022/>

<sup>164</sup> Potylitsyn, S. The process of regular evolution / S. Potylitsyn // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://kazpravda.kz/n/protsess-zakonomernoy-evolyutsii/>

<sup>165</sup> Akhmetova, A. Karaganda residents assembled the first Belarusian dump truck / A. Akhmetova // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <https://www.altyn-orda.kz/karagandincy-sobrali-pervyj-belorusskij-samosval/>

<sup>166</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan can launch joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the territory of Karaganda region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus\\_i\\_kazahstan\\_mogut\\_zapustit\\_sovmestnoe\\_proizvodstvo\\_pozharnoy\\_tekhniki\\_na\\_territorii\\_karagan-38483/](https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus_i_kazahstan_mogut_zapustit_sovmestnoe_proizvodstvo_pozharnoy_tekhniki_na_territorii_karagan-38483/)

<sup>167</sup> About the visit of the Ambassador of Belarus to Karaganda region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c25b80e259079cad.html>

to Pavlodar residents, representatives of the capital region of Belarus expressed their readiness not only to advise them on this topic, but also to build dairy complexes at their place on mutually beneficial terms"<sup>168</sup>. In addition, the free economic zones of Pavlodar region invited interested companies of Minsk region to participate in projects on joint use of subsoil resources of the region. One of them is an aluminium cluster involving large companies from Germany, Poland, and Turkey. It should be noted that the machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant is already very actively used in this area of Kazakhstan. In particular, in February 2021, at the assembly site of the technopark of the technopark of the Vostochny open-pit mine of JSC "EEC" of the Eurasian Group (ERG), the assembly of three BelAZ dump trucks with a payload capacity of 130 tonnes, which were added to this coal mine enterprise, was completed. They joined "seven of their brethren, which have been in operation for two years at the cyclic-flow stripping areas of the open-pit mine, having earned the Ekibastuz miners a reputation of reliable and highly productive mining machines"<sup>169</sup>. As we can see, the range of development of relations between Minsk and Pavlodar regions can still be very wide.

In particular, co-operation with Kazakhstan is among the priority areas of development of foreign economic relations of **Gomel region**. The enterprises of the south-eastern region of Belarus have the most serious intentions to develop co-operation ties with Kazakh partners in import substitution and logistics opportunities. A good example is the joint production of Gomselmash OJSC and AgromashHolding KZ JSC, which has been operating in Kazakhstan since 2007. Today it is not just an assembly shop, but a real production facility. "During the period of cooperation, more than \$320 million worth of the plant's products have been delivered to the Kazakhstan market, and a total of over 3,700 units of jointly produced machinery have been sold"<sup>170</sup>. The products of other enterprises of Gomel region, including Belarusian Metallurgical Plant and Milkavita open joint-stock company, are also in demand in Kazakhstan.

**The Mogilev region** also cooperates closely with this country in Central Asia, which is beginning to step up its work in trade and economic co-operation. "In the first seven months of this year [2022], the foreign trade turnover between

<sup>168</sup> Zalesky, B. Actual media topics of Belarusian-Kazakh interaction / B. Zalesky // International Journalism-2018: global challenges, regional partnership and media: materials of the VII International scientific and practical conference, Minsk, 15 February. 2018 / comp. B.L. Zaleskii ; ed. by T.N. Dasaeva. - Minsk: Izd. Centre BSU, 2018. - C. 98.

<sup>169</sup> BELAZ delivered 130-tonne dump trucks to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-130-tonnye-samosvaly-v-kazakhstan-428544-2021/>

<sup>170</sup> Enterprises of Gomel region intend to develop co-operative relations with Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-kooperatsionnye-svjazi-s-kazhstanom-512360-2022>

Mogilev Oblast and Kazakhstan totalled about \$40 million"<sup>171</sup> . But there are still plenty of opportunities for the parties to work together. Kazakhstan is one of the most important trade and economic partners for the Belarusian region, ranking second in terms of foreign trade turnover among the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union both at the end of 2021 and for the first seven months of 2022. The main export items are machinery and spare parts for cars, dairy products, poultry meat, lifts and railway cars. In turn, Mogilev region buys equipment, chemical products and various raw materials in Kazakhstan. It should be noted that almost 45 per cent of all imports of the region is paraxylene, which is used by Mogilevkhimvolokno. Other enterprises of the Belarusian region, including those from the free economic zone Mogilev, also have a number of proposals for co-operation with Kazakh partners.

**Hrodna Region** is also intensifying its co-operation with Kazakhstan, having already concluded five agreements with Kazakh regions. Hrodna region actively supplies agricultural, processing and woodworking products to its partners. But "the time has come to intensify the work, to fill these agreements with real projects and contracts that will intensify the relations between the two countries"<sup>172</sup> .

As for cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in the educational sphere, the interaction between the parties was also enriched with new colours in 2022. In particular, in October, Baranavichy State University offered co-operation to Shakarim University, which is located in Semey, Abay region. More than seven thousand students study at five faculties in this educational and scientific centre of the north-eastern region of Kazakhstan. The two universities are interested in "jointly implementing educational programmes for students and teachers, organising academic exchanges, summer and winter schools. There are ideas for scientific and innovative projects"<sup>173</sup> .

And one more thing: in September 2022, a round table "Kazakhstan and Belarus: the Road of Friendship and Cooperation" was held in Minsk, where it was noted that "in 2021, trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Belarus exceeded

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<sup>171</sup> Isachenko at the meeting with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan: it's time to strengthen work in trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/isachenko-na-vstreche-s-poslom-kazakhstana-prishlo-vremja-usilit-rabotu-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoy-sfere-525098-2022/>

<sup>172</sup> Ambassador of Kazakhstan at the meeting with Karanik: our task is to help businessmen of the two countries to find each other [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-kazakhstana-na-vstreche-s-karanikom-nasha-zadacha-pomoch-biznesmenam-dvuh-stran-najti-drug-dru-ga-514826-2022/>

<sup>173</sup> BarSU aims to cooperate closely with the university from Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-natselen-tesno-sotrudnichat-s-universitetom-iz-kazakhstana-530948-2022/>

\$1 billion"<sup>174</sup> , but there are still solid reserves for increasing trade turnover: it is not only industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, transport, deepening interregional cooperation, joint ventures, but also interaction in cultural and humanitarian spheres.

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<sup>174</sup> Ambassador of Kazakhstan: Belarus is a country that one always wants to return to [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/posol-kazahstana-belarus-strana-v-kotoruju-vsegda-hochetsja-vozvrascatsja-526048-2022/>

## **Belarus - Uzbekistan: priorities outlined by the commission**

The eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was held in early March 2021 in Tashkent. It discussed issues related to the development of trade and economic, investment and cooperation ties, strengthening relations in the scientific-educational and socio-humanitarian spheres, interregional cooperation, information technologies, and tourism.

Diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by another 17 per cent and exceeded \$280 million with the share of supplies from Belarus - more than \$237 million. "The main items of Belarusian exports last [2020] year were trucks, tractors and tractor-trailers, meat and meat products, sugar and dairy products, medicines, vaccines, and blood serums"<sup>175</sup>. Noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission nevertheless focused their attention on those issues, the solution of which would help to bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of such urgent priorities was the expansion of the legal framework of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation, which had more than 70 agreements until March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed in Tashkent an agreement on co-operation, which defines the main areas of interaction for the next five years. The document refers to the close partnership of the parties in the development and implementation of programmes to create national and working measurement standards. "Another direction is participation in the development of interstate documents on the issues of ensuring the uniformity of measurements to solve the problems of harmonisation of national legislations and development of common principles of activity in this field"<sup>176</sup>. In addition, the programme of cooperation for 2021-2023 was adopted by the State Committee for Standardisation of Belarus and the agency "Uzstandart", which outlined comparisons of state measurement standards, calibration of

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<sup>175</sup> Belarus aims at further development of bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736>

<sup>176</sup> Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>



measurement standards and working measuring instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programmes. All this, together with the planned establishment of a permanent group, should help to resolve issues related to technical barriers to trade between the two countries. Another important aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union currently has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for the elimination of technical barriers to trade with third countries in high readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart is "working on the possibility and making a proactive proposal that the first pilot project under this agreement after its entry into force be implemented with Uzbekistan"<sup>177</sup>.

Ten more cooperation documents were signed in early March 2021 by higher education institutions of the two countries. They supplemented the already very extensive legal framework of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organisations, which already included about two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint faculties are now successfully functioning, Belarusian-Uzbek educational programmes are being implemented, including dual-diploma programmes. A joint Belarusian-Uzbek Interindustry Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The establishment of the Uzbek-Belarusian University of Materials Science is under consideration. The following figures are quite eloquent: "In the 2020-2021 academic year, Belarusian educational institutions will host about 2,000 Uzbek students. Exports of educational services to Uzbekistan last year [2020] totalled \$1.7 million, having increased by almost 14% compared to the previous year"<sup>178</sup>. It should be assumed that the appearance of ten more documents on co-operation between the universities of the two countries will only contribute to the further expansion of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction in the educational sphere.

It should be noted that a number of domestic universities are showing considerable interest in developing co-operation with Uzbek partners. Among them are the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Masharov State University of Vitebsk, the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, and the Francysk Skorina State University of Gomel. The Belarusian State University (BSU) is also busy implementing big plans to expand

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<sup>177</sup> Gosstandart of Belarus and the agency "Uzstandart" signed a programme of cooperation for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gosstandart-belarusi-i-agentstvo-uzstandart-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2021-2023-gody-431298-2021/>

<sup>178</sup> Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/uzuzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-431140-2021>

its presence in the Uzbek educational market and plans to seriously expand the range of joint educational programmes here.

In particular, the agreement signed in April 2021 on cultural and scientific co-operation between BSU and Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, the first and leading higher education institution in Central Asia, offers great opportunities in this regard. Established in 1918, today it unites 12 faculties: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Social Sciences, History, Geology and Geoinformation Systems, Geography and Natural Resources, Foreign Philology, Journalism and Taekwondo and Sports. Until recently, the interaction between the two universities consisted in joint training of Uzbek students in "medical and biological science" and "medical ecology" on the basis of the International State Ecological Institute named after A.D. Sakharov BSU.<sup>179</sup> The document signed in April concerns not only cooperation on student and faculty exchange, preparation of theses, dissertations and publications, joint scientific research and events, exchange of literature and periodicals, but also expands the subject area of inter-university relations in new directions, among which "the parties have indicated an increase in joint educational programmes in the humanities and natural sciences, the organisation of mutual summer schools, interaction between the Uzbek and Uzbek sides. In addition, the Uzbek side was interested in the BSU's experience in organising a system of continuing education for lawyers, which is implemented through a law college and faculty, as well as the Institute for retraining and advanced training of judges, prosecutors, courts and justice institutions. It is also quite possible that Belarusian scientists with relevant experience will participate in the development of a satellite for the Uzbek university.

The topic of expanding the range of educational programmes is also relevant in the BSU's interaction with the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, where Uzbek students have been jointly studying Oriental (Chinese) philology since 2019. Among the new areas under discussion is the use of BSU's experience in training specialists for the IT industry, as well as the development of interdisciplinary specialities. In particular, in April 2021, "the initiative of joint training of students in the field of computer linguistics"<sup>180</sup>, as well as the implementation of youth startup projects was supported.

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<sup>179</sup> BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan reach a new level of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-natsionalnyj-universitet-uzbekistana-vyhodjat-na-novyy-uroven-sotrudnichestva-436206-2021/>

<sup>180</sup> BSU plans to expand joint educational programmes with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-planiruet-rasshirit-s-uzbekistanom-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-435893-2021/>

A concrete result of the implementation of the roadmap signed in April 2021 between BSU and Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi will be the opening in December 2021 in Minsk of a cabinet of Uzbek language and literature, the activities of which "will be aimed at strengthening educational and cultural ties between the two countries, creating conditions for studying the language, history and ethnic characteristics of Uzbekistan"<sup>181</sup>.

The cooperation agreement between BSU and Tashkent State Law University has been in force since 2020. This year, this cooperation will be expanded through joint education of Uzbek students on the basis of the law college of the Belarusian university with the prospect of further enrolment in the BSU Law Faculty, as well as opening joint programmes with the BSU Faculty of International Relations. It is worth noting here that the Uzbek partners were very "interested in the experience of BSU participation in international rankings, according to which the Belarusian university is close to the top 1% of the world's best universities"<sup>182</sup>. In April 2021, the parties agreed to set up a working group to promptly develop documents on the implementation of the proposed initiatives, as well as to organise a joint educational programme to train legal personnel in September. Finally, in cooperation with the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan, the two sides are currently discussing the issues of Uzbek teachers' internships at BSU, their training in advanced training programmes, and inviting Belarusian university staff to lecture in Tashkent.

Another important outcome of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek business council held in Tashkent, which brought together more than 170 representatives of business circles of the two countries who were able to discuss "specific cooperation projects in agriculture, machine building, logistics, food industry, chemical and pharmaceutical production, science and education, and information technologies"<sup>183</sup>. The potential for the implementation of these projects is very eloquently demonstrated by the example of the Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought to the Uzbek capital contracts worth more than four million dollars. This is largely due to the fact that "MMZ's distribution network

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<sup>181</sup> Cabinet of Uzbek language and culture will be opened in BSU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbekskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bgu-435914-2021/>

<sup>182</sup> BSU will expand co-operation with Uzbekistan in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-436565-2021/>

<sup>183</sup> More than 170 business representatives of Belarus and Uzbekistan took part in the meeting of the Business Council [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-soveta-431374-2021>

in Tashkent is represented by BURAN-SAVDO, SIGMA, INDUSTRIAL MARKETING, FUTURE GENERATION MARKETING. In 2019-2020, MMZ sold more than 1 thousand engines to the primary and secondary markets of Uzbekistan"<sup>184</sup>.

A logical continuation of the first meeting of the Business Council was the participation of 23 Belarusian companies in April 2021 in the international exhibition "INNOPROM. Big Industrial Week in Uzbekistan", where exporters from Belarus presented products of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, chemical industry, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, as well as scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of the participation of Belarusian manufacturers in this exhibition event was the signing of a letter of intent by MAZ-Tashkent LLC, a subsidiary of the Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, "for the supply of chassis and machine kits for the assembly of vehicles to the Uzbek market for the amount of \$10 million. A contract was also signed with a private Uzbek company for the supply of 50 units of MAZ machinery for a total of \$3 million."<sup>185</sup> So the prospects for the development of economic ties between the two countries are serious.

We would like to remind that the basic document of trade and economic interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the roadmap of cooperation between the two countries, adopted in November 2018 and comprising 158 measures. By May 2020, more than a third of them had already been fulfilled. This had an immediate impact on the state of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership ties: "At the end of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the countries reached \$239 million and increased 1.5 times by 2018"<sup>186</sup>. This means that the parties intend to achieve as quickly as possible the goal, which was outlined in the same 2018 by the heads of the two states - to increase the volume of bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars. "The task is supposed to be solved in three to four years, actualising all possible areas of cooperation"<sup>187</sup>, among which agriculture is one of the most promising.

The fact is that the main trend in the development of the agro-industrial complex of Uzbekistan today is the formation of a cluster system of production.

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<sup>184</sup> MMZ during the intergovernmental commission in Uzbekistan plans to sign contracts for more than \$4 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mmz-vo-vremja-mezhpravkomissii-v-uzbekistane-planiruet-podpisat-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-4-mln-431277-2021/>

<sup>185</sup> More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

<sup>186</sup> Vladimir Dvornik held talks with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9423>

<sup>187</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 223.

In other words, clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and their processors into industrial enterprises. Uzbek partners view the Belarusian experience in this regard as very positive and therefore demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is evidenced by the figures.

In 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018. The positive dynamics of mutual trade in this area continued next year, despite the restrictions caused by the spread of the coronavirus. "Belarusian food exports more than doubled in 2020 and reached \$73 million. supplies of Belarusian beef more than doubled, sugar 3.5 times, milk powder twice, fish and fish products 1.5 times increased to Uzbekistan"<sup>188</sup>.

At the same time, cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, of course, is not limited only to mutual supplies of food products, but also includes a wide range of interaction, including the development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising areas of cooperation in the agro-industrial sector include participation of the Belarusian side in the construction of dairy complexes, organisation of milk processing, establishment of joint ventures for the production of veterinary drugs, cooperation in the field of breeding, organisation of training and retraining of Uzbek specialists on the basis of Belarusian agrarian educational institutions"<sup>189</sup>.

The first Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum, which took place in 2020 and was attended by more than 700 people, demonstrated this diversity of effective partnerships. The business part of the Belarusian delegation alone included about 150 representatives of agricultural and food exporting companies, scientific and educational institutions of the country. In particular, an active participant of the forum was Gomselmash OJSC, which signed an agreement with the Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Plant in autumn 2019. "The document provides for the creation of an assembly production of combines in the capital of Uzbekistan"<sup>190</sup>. From the Uzbek side were delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from the relevant ministries and organisations of the agro-industrial complex. As a result, on the margins of the forum, "Belarusian exporting enterprises signed

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<sup>188</sup> Belarusian food exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-uzbekistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-431838-2021/>

<sup>189</sup> On the results of Vladimir Dvornik's visit to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9301>

<sup>190</sup> "Gomselmash" will present its potential at the agrarian forum in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-predstavit-svoj-potentsial-na-agrarnom-forume-v-uzbekistane-380486-2020>

more than 30 agreements and contracts with Uzbek partners"<sup>191</sup>. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan adopted a Memorandum of Understanding and Co-operation.

Simultaneously with the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organised in Tashkent, where the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus alone presented more than 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Among the novelties of Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on Food, vegetable marmalade aroused great interest. "The line includes marmalade made of sweet corn, red carrots, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial colours"<sup>192</sup>. The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry demonstrated a range of complex mineral fertilisers with a balanced ratio of nutritional elements for cultivated crops. The S.N. Vyshellesky Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine showed vaccines for the prevention and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases of farm animals. Scientists from the Centre for Identification Systems and Electronic Business Operations offered technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. The Scientific and Practical Centre for Potato Breeding interested the visitors of the exhibition in new potato varieties - "Manifest", "Uladar", "Palats" - resistant to a complex of diseases. As we can see, even this short list of novelties presented in Tashkent clearly shows what tempting prospects are opening up in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership in agriculture in the near future.

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<sup>191</sup> More than 30 agreements and contracts signed as a result of the Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorussko-uzbekskogo-agrarnogo-foruma-381350-2020/>

<sup>192</sup> NAS of Belarus presented in Uzbekistan more than 60 innovative developments for agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>

## **Belarus - Uzbekistan: The goal is a qualitatively new level of co-operation**

In April 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Uzbekistan and signed contracts worth more than USD 25 million. An equally important outcome was the statement by Minsk and Tashkent that new points of growth in co-operation have been found. And "now the task is to fill it with new content"<sup>193</sup>, in order to bring the annual volume of mutual trade up to half a billion dollars.

The beginning of 2022 showed that the parties were confidently approaching the set goal. While in 2021 Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by almost 8 per cent and exceeded \$300 million with a surplus of almost \$190 million for the Belarusian side, "in January-February 2022 trade turnover amounted to \$53.5 million and increased by 9.9 per cent against the level of the corresponding period of 2021"<sup>194</sup>. The trade and investment volumes are expected to increase further, primarily through the implementation of joint co-operation projects.

It should be noted that 103 organisations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, Belvitunifarm LLC. One assembly production of Belarusian machinery with the participation of Belarusian capital - JV AMKODOR-AGROTEXMASH LLC - has been set up there. In particular, "the production of loaders has been set up at the Tashkent Tractor Plant, which shows the demand for these products in the local and regional market"<sup>195</sup>. In addition, co-operation between MAZ OJSC and KRANTAS GROUP LLC, MTZ OJSC and Uzavtosanoat JSC in the field of production of motor vehicles and tractors continues. And "Marko Company" is implementing a joint project in Uzbekistan for the production of footwear. Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC is implementing an investment project in this country to produce welding electrodes. For this purpose, the FE "MONOLITH ASIA" LLC

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<sup>193</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Uzbekistan can increase trade and investment, growth points have been found [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10260>

<sup>194</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan intensify the implementation of production and co-operation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-aktivizirujut-realizatsiju-proizvodstvenno-koooperatsionnyh-proektov-495026-2022/>

<sup>195</sup> Machinery, equipment, scientific and technical developments. What Belarus will present at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/tehnika-oborudovanie-nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-cto-belarus-prezentuet-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-8158/>

was established in Tashkent<sup>196</sup> . And these ties continue to be actively strengthened.

Thus, in April 2022, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in this Central Asian country - MAZ-TASHKENT LLC - started industrial assembly of MAZ vehicles from SKD kits. "The first model was the MAZ-5337 chassis. Localisation of assembly production in Uzbekistan will allow Minsk Automobile Plant to expand its presence in the market of Central Asian countries, and in the future - Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan"<sup>197</sup> . And within the framework of the Uzbek-Belarusian business forum, held in April in Tashkent, MAZ distributor "signed a contract with PE OLIY TEXNIK for the purchase of 41 MAZ vehicles. <...> The contract amount exceeded \$3 million"<sup>198</sup> .

The Minsk Tractor Plant is also actively increasing its presence in the Uzbek market, having increased shipments of its machines by almost a quarter in the first quarter of 2022. "In total, more than \$10 million worth of machinery was shipped"<sup>199</sup> . Interestingly, Belarusian tractors worth \$31 million were shipped to Uzbek partners for the whole of 2021. In late April and early May, a sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery was opened in Tashkent, which combines "a showroom and sales centre, a service point and production facilities"<sup>200</sup> . There is also a branch of the bank, which is focused on providing services on lending and leasing of machinery. It is noteworthy that the Belarusian side plans to open similar centres in other Uzbek regions.

Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the implementation of joint projects in the field of medicine is very promising. One of them is the joint venture Belpharm, which will produce antibiotics and has already invested over USD 8 million. In addition, the Belarusian side offered its partners to build a joint venture to process blood. An important detail: "Today, the organisations of Belpharmprom Holding have 166 registration certificates for medicines in Uzbekistan. The holding's members have signed 12 contracts with Uzbek partners for the supply of

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<sup>196</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

<sup>197</sup> . Minsk Automobile Plant has established the assembly of machinery in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-naladil-sborku-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-496181-2022/>

<sup>198</sup> "MAZ-Tashkent" signed a large contract with an Uzbek company for the delivery of 41 vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-tashkent-podpisal-krupnyj-kontrakt-s-uzbekskoj-kompaniej-na-postavku-41-avtomobilja-498224-2022/>

<sup>199</sup> MTZ in the I quarter increased supplies of machinery to Uzbekistan by more than 23% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-v-i-kvartale-narastil-postavki-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-bolee-chem-na-23-499321-2022/>

<sup>200</sup> Sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery opened in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-prodazh-i-servisnogo-obsluzhivanija-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-otkrylja-v-tashkente-499290-2022/>



pharmaceutical products. At the end of 2021, exports of Belpharmprom Holding organisations' products to Uzbekistan amounted to \$14 million, in January-February 2022 - \$3 million"<sup>201</sup> .

If we talk about other prospects for co-operation, we can name several other areas. One of them concerns electric transport. The fact is that "Tashkent is considering the possibility of resuming tram service. The Belarusian side is ready to provide comprehensive solutions with the necessary infrastructure, planning and supply of rolling stock"<sup>202</sup> . If the decision on this matter is made, the creation of a joint production facility on Uzbek soil will become a real possibility. The issue of supplying wooden houses from Belarus to Uzbekistan, where "it is now a very fashionable trend <...> and there is a great demand"<sup>203</sup> . This may open up good prospects for the Belarusian Newsprint Plant, which has a conveyor belt production of such houses.

In the same context, it is worth recalling that in late April 2022, the parties considered "the possibility of organising supplies of Belarusian peat substrates to forestry enterprises in Uzbekistan for further use as a basis for growing plantation seedlings"<sup>204</sup> . Given the considerable experience of Belarusian peat enterprises in this area, and in 2021 exports of peat industry organisations of Beltopgaz grew by more than a quarter, it is quite predictable that Uzbekistan will become the 25th country to receive Belarusian peat as early as this year.

Belarusian light industry enterprises, which produce worsted, linen, synthetic and artificial fabrics with various properties, pile fabrics, corsetry and hosiery, also see their prospects for increasing supplies to the Uzbek market. These are Orsha Flax Factory, OJSC "Mogotex", OJSC "Kamvol", which became participants of the 4th International Exhibition of Textile and Fashion Industry UzTextileExpo Spring 2022, held in April 2022 in Tashkent. Together with them, five more Belarusian enterprises of the chemical and petrochemical industry were also represented, which demonstrated to the numerous visitors of this business forum "artificial and chemical fibres for textile production, technical textiles for construction, polymer products, chemicals and fertilizers for agriculture, glass

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<sup>201</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discuss deepening co-operation in the pharmaceutical industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsuzhdajut-uglublenie-sotrudnichestva-v-farmotrasli-498163-2022/>

<sup>202</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

<sup>203</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is working out the supply of wooden houses to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-prorabatyvaet-postavki-v-uzbekistan-derevjannyh-domov-498185-2022/>

<sup>204</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying peat substrates to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-torfjanyh-substratov-v-uzbekistan-499019-2022/>

fibre"<sup>205</sup>. In short, everything that arouses a keen interest among partners from Uzbekistan and can become the basis for concluding new contracts.

Speaking about the participation of Belarusian exporters in foreign exhibitions, it should be noted that in 2021, participating in exhibitions and forums organised by Belinterexpo, the exhibition enterprise of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they signed 86 agreements and contracts worth more than \$80 million. At the same time, "agreements and contracts worth \$15 million were signed within the framework of national expositions"<sup>206</sup>. What is important here is that the most productive in terms of the amount of contracts signed included national expositions organised as part of exhibitions in Uzbekistan - "INNOPROM. Big Industrial Week" and UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo.

Speaking about the first of them, it should be noted that the "Big Industrial Week in Uzbekistan", held in April 2021 in Tashkent, was the largest event in this Central Asian country after a pause caused by the pandemic. At that time, the exhibition was attended by "more than 200 enterprises working in the fields of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry and medicine from Armenia, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the Czech Republic, the EAEU and Central Asia"<sup>207</sup>. As for the Belarusian pavilion, it included stands of 65 companies and organisations that presented engineering, metallurgical, chemical, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of their participation in this exhibition was "the signing by the subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC - of a letter of intent for the supply of chassis and machine kits for the assembly of vehicles to the Uzbek market for the amount of \$10 million. Also, a contract was signed with a private Uzbek company for the supply of 50 units of MAZ machinery for a total of \$3 million"<sup>208</sup>. Interestingly, in April 2022, this exhibition in the Uzbek capital was held under a new name - "INNOPROM. Central Asia" - and included six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, chemistry, industrial

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<sup>205</sup> Belarusian enterprises of light industry present their potential in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-predpriyatija-legkoj-promyshlennosti-prezentujut-svoj-potentsial-v-uzbekistane-498369-2022/>

<sup>206</sup> At the forums and exhibitions "Belinterexpo" domestic enterprises signed contracts for \$80 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-forumah-i-vystavkah-belinterekspos-otchestvennye-predpriyatija-podpisali-kontrakty-na-80-mln-476100-2021/>

<sup>207</sup> More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

<sup>208</sup> Zaleskii, B. Key task - development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 40-41.

automation, pharmaceuticals and medicine. There was also a plenary session "Central Asia. Space of Technological Breakthrough" and specialised sessions on infrastructure projects, logistics, financial instruments, and education. Belarusian participation in this business forum was no less representative due to the fact that "exports of Belarusian goods to Uzbekistan have grown six times in five years. The greatest demand is for machinery from Belarus (tractors and tractors-tractors, trucks), chemical products, foodstuffs, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, energy carriers, and oil products. In total, Belarus supplies Uzbekistan with 360 commodity items of all industries"<sup>209</sup>.

As for the agriculture and food exhibitions UzAgroExpo and UzProdExpo, held in Tashkent in November 2021, they are the largest sectoral business forums in Uzbekistan, which this time brought together 120 companies from 18 countries. The national pavilion of Belarus, where 17 companies were represented, demonstrated export opportunities of domestic enterprises in three main areas: food industry; agrarian engineering; and science. Especially many original novelties were presented in the first of them - beef in lingonberry sauce, soft cheese made according to Italian technology from ricotta whey, high quality coffee made according to own patented technology, peanut paste with sea salt, fruit bars made from a mixture of dried prunes, dried apple, oat flakes and syrup, protein milk chocolate with increased protein content, as well as "Belarusian whisky, an alcoholic blended drink made from artesian water on the basis of national grain crops - rye, wheat and barley malt"<sup>210</sup>. The Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian-Russian University and Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies showed numerous visitors the scientific developments in agro-industrial and food spheres, including technologies of restoring damaged soils, methods of producing innovative fermented milk drinks, cosmetics. The Minsk Automobile Plant and the Lidselmash enterprise also brought innovative machinery to the Uzbek capital - a specially designed for the Uzbek market MAZ-65012K cargo dump truck, which "is equipped with a metal body tilted by a hydraulic mechanism and is designed for transporting bulk cargo, including agricultural goods"<sup>211</sup>, and new modifications of a cultivator for cultivating cotton, the most popular agricultural

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<sup>209</sup> Belarusian national pavilion will be presented at the exhibition 'INNOPROM' in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-natsionalnyj-paviljon-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-innoprom-v-uzbekistane-480872-2022/>

<sup>210</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus is presented at the exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-predstavlen-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-471340-2021/>

<sup>211</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant presented a new gas dump truck at the exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. -2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-predstavil-novyj-gazovyj-samosval-na-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-471501-2021/>

crop in this Central Asian country. The concrete result of the work at these exhibitions was "an agreement between MAZ-Tashkent, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, and Nuraifshon Maxsus Texnika on the supply of engineering products worth \$1 million"<sup>212</sup>. At the Uzbekistan-Belarus agrarian forum, agreements were reached on the construction and reconstruction of a dairy complex using Belarusian technologies on Uzbek soil.

Another important area of interaction between the two countries is the intensification of partnership Belarusian-Uzbek regional ties, which are becoming one of the most important areas of cooperation in the current environment. The First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up new partnership opportunities in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, and food industry, and brought together "more than two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana, and Tashkent oblasts" from the Uzbek side alone<sup>213</sup>.

On the Belarusian side, Vitebsk region became one of the active participants of this forum, as the positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation with Uzbek partners has been observed over the past few years. Suffice it to say that in 2019 Uzbekistan entered the list of key partners of Vitebsk among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. At that time, the foreign trade turnover between the parties increased by more than a quarter and exceeded nine million dollars. Export supplies from the Belarusian region "increased one and a half times - up to \$6.7 million. Exports of food products amounted to \$0.9 million, or 13.4% of the total volume. <...> Cheese and dairy products of the Postavy Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, Polotsk Dairy Plant, as well as meat products of the Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant are already familiar to Uzbek consumers and are in good demand among them"<sup>214</sup>. In addition, the Vitebsk region successfully supplied the Uzbek market with baby food, a wide range of vaccines to combat diseases in domestic animals, and pharmaceuticals.

In 2021, the Belarusian region's mutual trade with this Central Asian country exceeded \$12.5 million, with Vitebsk's exports accounting for almost \$10 million, which were again based on medicines, cattle meat, milk and whey

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<sup>212</sup> MAZ signed a contract for delivery of machinery to Uzbekistan for \$1 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-podpisal-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-471344-2021/>

<sup>213</sup> Zalesky, B. Sustainability as a formula for growth. Features of international co-operation based on the innovative component / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 37.

<sup>214</sup> Tikhonov, A. Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum: afterword / A. Tikhonov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://produkt.by/story/belorusko-uzbekskiy-agrarnyy-forum-posleslovie>

powder, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and glass fibre products, and fibre-optic cable. In addition, a joint venture of the Marco leather and footwear holding company began operations on Uzbek soil. Other projects in the sphere of production co-operation are in the pipeline. In particular, starting from 2020, Vitebsk region is negotiating the opening of a joint venture with BelVitonipharm OJSC in Uzbekistan, which will initially trade in medicines with a subsequent transition to their production. In December 2021, a representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent. And already "the issues of project financing are being worked out in order to reach the sales of medicines in the amount of \$2 million per year"<sup>215</sup>.

Among other promising areas of interaction between the region's enterprises and Uzbek partners in March 2022 were discussed supplies of fruit and vegetable and meat and dairy products, as well as cooperation in such segments of the industrial sector as mechanical engineering, energy, chemical and gas industry. The activation of partnership ties of Vitebsk region with a number of Uzbek regions and especially with Namangan region should play an important role. The fact is that Vitebsk and Namangan regions signed an agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas in July 2019 within the framework of the I Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, already mentioned above. This document should help build mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between enterprises and organisations of the regions, provide "comprehensive support to business structures in concluding mutually acceptable contracts for the supply of goods and services". There is also talk of joint business seminars, exhibitions and fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial and business circles"<sup>216</sup>.

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of the Vitebsk Free Economic Zones (FEZ) and Kosonsoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic, and investment interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions; it not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnership between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for combining the potential of the parties in holding joint events. Note that "Kosonsoy-Pharm" was among the seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. In addition to it, then appeared "in Karakalpakstan - "Nukus-pharm", Jizzak region - "Zomin-pharm", <...> Syrdarya

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<sup>215</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Uzbekistan can become for the enterprises of Vitebsk region a springboard for supplies to Asia / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlja-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinom-dlja-postavok-v-aziju-491940-2022/>

<sup>216</sup> Namangan region will co-operate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya\\_oblast\\_budet\\_sotrudnicat\\_s\\_vitebskom.html](https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya_oblast_budet_sotrudnicat_s_vitebskom.html)

region - "Sirdaryo-pharm", Surkhandarya region - "Boysun-pharm" and Tashkent region - "Bustonlik-pharm" and "Parkent-pharm"<sup>217</sup>. They have special tax, customs and currency regimes on their territories. All of them specialise in the development of pharmaceutical enterprises. Several residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" are also engaged in the same sphere. That is why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines, medical products is one of the most promising areas of co-operation between the administrations of the two FEZs"<sup>218</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek free economic zones will further strengthen the emerging partnership between the Vitebsk and Namangan regions.

The documents signed during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Tashkent in April 2022 can also serve as an indication of what other areas of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation will be intensified in the very near future. Thus, the Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and an executive programme of scientific, technical and innovative cooperation for 2022-2023 with the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus also signed two significant documents: a memorandum of understanding with the State Committee for Veterinary Medicine and Livestock Development of Uzbekistan; a roadmap for further development of cooperation in agrarian science, education and innovation development for 2022-2023 with the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan, which, in turn, also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on further development of scientific and technical cooperation in the field of agrarian science, education and innovation for 2022-2023. Finally, an agreement on co-operation in the field of livestock breeding was concluded by Belplemzhivobedinenie and the Uzbekchorvanasl agency.

Back in autumn 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an intergovernmental agreement on socio-economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which "reflects the key agreements at the highest level on developing Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bringing them to a qualitatively new level"<sup>219</sup>. As we can see, the tasks set in this document are being fulfilled by the parties very actively and successfully.

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<sup>217</sup> Seven pharmaceutical FEZs are being created in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/05/pharm/>

<sup>218</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and Uzbek "Kosonsoy-farm" will develop investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

<sup>219</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 228.

## **Belarus - Uzbekistan:**

### **Joint initiatives build co-operation in innovative areas**

In August 2022, Minsk hosted the ninth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, where participants noted the importance of continuing systematic work for new promising joint initiatives in order to jointly achieve a multiple increase in the volume of mutual trade in the coming years. Recall that "in 2021, trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan amounted to \$301.9 million and increased by 7.8% compared to 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>220</sup>. The main items of Belarusian exports in 2021 were meat and meat products, medicines, vinyl chloride polymers, milk powder, diagnostic reagents, vaccines, blood serums, chipboard, cheese and cottage cheese. In the first half of 2022, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$190 million and increased by almost 40 per cent. At the same time, the positive balance on the Belarusian side totalled \$100.7 million. Now the parties see a real opportunity to achieve a mutual trade turnover of \$500 million. In this regard, Belarus is ready to increase supplies of food and agricultural goods, road-building, municipal and special equipment, dump trucks, woodworking products, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment.

As for industrial cooperation and the creation of joint productions, "a total of 103 organisations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, Belvitunifarm LLC"<sup>221</sup>. In 2022, a good result of joint work can be considered the release of equipment based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant. "If until recently only superstructures on ready-made machine kits were carried out, in April this year the first MAZ dump truck assembled in Uzbekistan was presented. There are all possibilities to ensure high localisation of this production"<sup>222</sup>. Work is underway to resume production of Belarusian tractors in Uzbekistan. And "BELAZ is ready to supply Uzbekistan with completely new models of machinery for transporting rock masses, which

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<sup>220</sup> Golovchenko and Aripov discussed building up the trade turnover of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-i-aripov-obsudili-naraschivanietovaroorota-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-520574-2022/>

<sup>221</sup> Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 23.

<sup>222</sup> Agro-industrial complex, industrial co-operation, construction. Zayats on the plans of interaction with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/apk-promkooperatsija-stroitelstvo-zajats-o-planah-vzaimodejstviya-s-uzbekistanom-520299-2022/>



are both highly environmentally friendly and efficient"<sup>223</sup>. Belkommunmash is interested to take part in the development of Uzbek transport infrastructure and jointly implement initiatives to launch environmentally friendly passenger transport. Belarusian specialists are ready to offer a comprehensive solution to create an efficient and safe system of public electric transport: from building the necessary infrastructure to supplying the most modern models of vehicles. The implementation of such a project would be a truly landmark event in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek relations.

Indicators between the two countries have also increased in the field of agro-industrial complex. In the first six months of 2022, the turnover of agricultural products increased in both exports and imports. "Meat products, dairy products and baby food are exported to Uzbekistan. Imports are mainly represented by vegetable and melon products, grapes, dried fruits, nuts"<sup>224</sup>. For Uzbekistan's growing livestock industry, Belarus is ready to organise supplies of high-yield premixes with access to joint production of mixed fodder in this Central Asian country.

Speaking about Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, Belarusian investors in Tashkent are successfully implementing a project for the production of antibiotics with a broad spectrum of action. Belarusian holding Belfarmprom and its colleagues in Uzbekistan are working out the possibility of setting up joint ventures to produce medical drugs in non-overlapping areas. In the field of construction, the parties are interested in jointly designing Uzbekistan's infrastructure facilities, industrial buildings, healthcare facilities, including those of the pharmaceutical industry. The Uzbek side is interested in Belarusian wooden house-building products. Given Uzbekistan's actively developing tourism sector and its need for environmentally friendly residential facilities, cooperation in this area is very promising.

Interesting Belarusian-Uzbek projects are also being implemented in the educational sphere. In particular, Baranavichy State University (BarSU), together with Samarkand State University and Jizzak State Pedagogical Institute, is currently implementing "double degree" programmes. It is expected that undergraduate and master's students will be trained at BarSU and partner universities on the basis of Belarusian and foreign positive experience.

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<sup>223</sup> Industrial cooperation, machinery supplies, woodworking. Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed mutual cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkkooperatsija-postavki-tehniki-derevoobrabotka-belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-vzaimnoe-520492-2022/>

<sup>224</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed the issues of further cooperation in the sphere of agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-voprosy-dalnejshego-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-apk-520545-2022/>



"Recruitment is planned to be carried out in the specialities of "practical psychology", "preschool education", "psychology", "economics""<sup>225</sup>. And Brest State Technical University will cooperate with the Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology. In July 2022, the universities signed cooperation agreements to interact in organising retraining and professional development of teachers from Bukhara in Brest. "We will start with this, further on we can co-operate on the first and second levels of higher education"<sup>226</sup>. The institute in Bukhara is a major educational and research centre in Uzbekistan. Teaching is carried out at eight faculties, higher education is received by more than 11 thousand students in 30 bachelor's degrees.

In January 2023, Belarus and Uzbekistan celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations. In recent years, the two countries have significantly intensified bilateral dialogue also at the regional level. Suffice it to say that as of April this year, the parties have already signed 15 interregional agreements. "Delegations from the regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan regularly exchange visits. The practice of developing roadmaps for the implementation of interregional agreements has proved effective"<sup>227</sup>. Among the active participants of this interregional interaction are such oblasts as Vitebsk and Kashkadarya, Gomel and Fergana.

In particular, in October 2022, the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a co-operation agreement with the khokimiyat of the Kashkadarya region. This document promotes the building up of mutually beneficial "trade and economic ties between enterprises and organisations of the regions. In addition, it will define ways to develop co-operation in scientific and technical, tourist, cultural, sports and health care areas"<sup>228</sup>. In the same October 2022, several important documents were also signed, developing the interaction between the individual participants of this interregional partnership: two agreements and two memoranda of co-operation. As for the agreements, these are the interaction between the Eufrosinia Polotskaya Polotsk State University and the Karshi Institute of Engineering and Economics, as well as between the P.M. Masherov Vitebsk State University and the Karshi State University. Memorandums were

<sup>225</sup> BarSU develops joint educational programmes with Uzbek partners [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-razrabatyvaet-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-s-uzbekskimi-partnerami-520325-2022>

<sup>226</sup> BrSTU will co-operate with Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-buharskim-inzhenerno-tehnologicheskimi-institutom-514381-2022/>

<sup>227</sup> C. Rachkov: Belarus considers Uzbekistan as an important partner in Central Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://sovrep.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/srachkov-belarus-rassmatrivaet-uzbekistan-kak-vazhnogo-partnera-v-tsentralnoj-azii-22630-2023/>

<sup>228</sup> Delegation of Vitebsk region in Uzbekistan will sign an agreement with the khokimiyat of Kashkadarya region [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsiya-vitebskoj-oblasti-v-uzbekistane-podpishet-soglashenie-s-hokimijatom-kashkadarjinskoj-527596-2022/>

adopted between the free economic zones of the two regions, the concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and an enterprise for the supply and processing of dairy products. In addition, the parties signed contracts worth about three million dollars. It is about food and woodworking products, as well as the supply of electrical equipment for the oil industry and measuring devices. And the Vitebsk region has been working out the issue of supplying its products to the Uzbek market. The Kashkadarya region was very interested in meat and dairy products, electrical appliances, cable products in terms of sharing the experience of enterprises in production within this country"<sup>229</sup> .

At the same time, the Belarusian and Uzbek regions planned to cooperate in other areas as well. For example, back in 2021, in the territory of the free economic zone of Kashkadarya region, the Vitsebsk holding Marko set up an enterprise where more than two hundred employees sew shoes. Now Uzbek partners are interested in new competences - in light industry, dairy farms, milk processing enterprises. In May 2023, at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovations. Investments. Prospects", held in Vitebsk, the parties proposed a number of other new areas of co-operation, including the linen industry. "Vitebsk region is ready to assist in providing varieties that can be grown under the conditions of Uzbekistan. This proposal is being prepared by specialists of the Flax Institute RUE. In addition, options for co-operation in woodworking are being actively worked out, in particular for the manufacture of individual wooden houses and furniture, including for educational institutions of Kashkadarya region"<sup>230</sup> . There are also initiatives in the pharmaceutical industry. For better development of contacts in economic, tourism and other spheres, the parties plan to organise joint information tours. Thus, joint activities of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions already create favourable prerequisites for both sides for the implementation of projects, which in the future may strengthen new points of contact in mutual cooperation.

As for Gomel region, which is also actively developing cooperation with Uzbek partners, we note that its trade turnover with Uzbekistan has more than tripled over the past three years and totalled \$33 million. And according to the results of 2022 Gomel exports increased almost one and a half times. "The main export positions of Gomel enterprises are paper, cardboard, wallpaper, chipboard boards, wood pulp, cattle meat, timber, paint, polyethylene products, wire,

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<sup>229</sup> Enterprises of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions signed contracts for \$3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predprijatija-vitebskoj-i-kashkadarjinskoj-oblastej-podpisali-kontrakty-na-3-mln-529745-2022/>

<sup>230</sup> Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions plan to organise infotours to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-i-kashkadarjinskaja-oblasti-planirujut-organizovat-infotury-dlja-aktivizatsii-567511-2023/>

chemical threads, dairy products, agricultural machinery, furniture..."<sup>231</sup>. Among the regions of Uzbekistan interested in joint projects with Gomel partners is Fergana region, which intends to develop cooperation with the Belarusian region in the production of agricultural machinery, woodworking, chemical industry, and tourism. In February 2023, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee and the Fergana Oblast Hokimiyat signed a roadmap for 2023, which includes various directions. And there are already concrete developments. In the near future, "a company shop is expected to be opened in Fergana region, where woodworking products of the Belarusian region will be sold. Some of them will be sent for re-export to Uzbekistan's neighbouring countries"<sup>232</sup>. In Gomel the idea to open a trading house for selling fruits, dried fruits and vegetables from Uzbekistan is being worked out. Besides, Fergana entrepreneurs are interested in joint production of chemical and pulp-and-paper products with Gomel companies. To all appearances, the roadmap of the two regions - Belarusian and Uzbek - will soon be filled in other areas as well.

Another interesting aspect of the interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the development of Belarusian exports in the Uzbek market using exhibition specifics. Especially since there will be several such projects in 2023. In March 2023, Tashkent already hosted the 22nd international exhibition "Foodstuffs, Ingredients and Production Technologies - UzFood", where Belarus presented a large-scale exposition - The Taste of Nature - with the participation of more than 20 food producers. Concern Belgospisheprom presented the products of confectionery factories Kommunar, Spartak and Krasny Izhevik, which familiarised the guests of the Belarusian pavilion with the best products and production novelties - new types of confectionery products, chocolate and chocolate candies, wafers, biscuits, chewy and jelly marmalade.

Meat processing companies and dairy producers, which are part of the Grodniasomolprom holding and the Brestmyasomolprom concern, were also well represented at the exhibition. These were Brest, Pinsk, Slonim, Volkovysk, Grodno and Oshmian meat processing plants, which offered high quality beef in various versions, sausages, meat semi-finished products. In particular, the Grodno meat processing plant demonstrated new products, which brought to Uzbekistan

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<sup>231</sup> Trade turnover of Gomel region with Uzbekistan has increased more than three times in the last three years [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-uzbekistanom-vyros-bolee-chem-v-tri-raz-za-poslednie-tri-goda-549254-2023/>

<sup>232</sup> From combine-building to tourism: Gomel and Fergana regions intend to develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-kombajnostroenija-do-turizma-gomelskaja-i-ferganskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-549242-2023/>

raw smoked sausages "Vostochnaya" and "Kavkazskaya", cooked-smoked salami "Favorit" with olives, as well as with cheese.

The dairy segment was represented by Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Minsk Margarine Plant, Luninets Dairy Plant, Lida Dairy Canning Plant, Molochny Mir, Molochny Gostinets and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. "Belarusian producers demonstrate a wide range of whole-milk products - milk, cream, kefir, cheese, cottage cheese, creams, yoghurts"<sup>233</sup>. Oil and fat products and rapeseed oil could also be seen at the exhibition. Bread and bakery products were presented by Berestaisky Baker OJSC, and Bellact Company showed products for baby food. In addition, the products of such enterprises as Maloritsky Canning and Vegetable Washing Plant OJSC and Lidskie Food Concentrates OJSC were demonstrated.

Within the framework of the exhibition, an Uzbek-Belarusian business forum was held, which was attended by more than 50 heads and representatives of state bodies and business circles of the two countries, where cooperation in the field of agriculture and food was discussed, the food potential of Belarus was outlined, and the export potential of the Brest and Grodno regions was presented. In addition, the business circles of the two countries held B2B negotiations, which took place separately and at the stands of Belarusian enterprises. As for the specific results of the exhibition, "Grodno Meat Processing Plant signed a contract for the supply of meat products worth \$500 thousand, and Minsk Margarine Plant signed a contract for the supply of its products worth 10 million Russian rubles. During the exhibition, Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1 held negotiations on increasing sales volumes to its key partners in Uzbekistan, in particular, on the supply of butter and skimmed milk powder, and also signed a contract for the supply of dairy products"<sup>234</sup>. Bellact discussed opportunities to increase sales of its products, increase supplies of dried baby food and agreed to supply curd desserts and milk powder, including lactose-free milk, to this Central Asian country, while Molochniy Mir signed an agreement to supply almost two and a half thousand tonnes of whey powder and more than a thousand tonnes of milk powder.

Bobruiskagromash Holding is also one of the Belarusian companies that are actively interested in promoting their export products in the Uzbek market. In March 2023, within the framework of the international exhibition "Agriculture -

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<sup>233</sup> Belarus presented its exposition at the exhibition of food industry in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predstavila-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-pischevoj-promyshlennosti-v-tashkente-557927-2023/>

<sup>234</sup> Belarusian enterprises intend to increase supplies to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-namereny-narastit-postavki-v-uzbekistan-559267-2023/>

AgroWorld Uzbekistan-2023", specialists of the Belarusian company held negotiations with key Uzbek partners - Metal processing, Planeta Servis and MCHJ Buxoro Agro Texnika Garant, "with whom further volumes of machinery deliveries were agreed, as well as technical design of machines to adapt them to the requirements of the Uzbek market. In addition, during the negotiations the representative of the holding familiarised the partners with the novelties of Bobruiskagromash machinery: cotton cultivator, seeders and heavy-duty trailers"<sup>235</sup>. Partners from Uzbekistan confirmed their interest in annual deliveries of agricultural machinery from Bobruisk. For reference, since 2022, machines for the application of solid organic fertilisers and rotary mower-shredders have already been working in Uzbek fields.

In April 2023, Tashkent hosted the international industrial exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia", which covered six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy and materials, energy solutions, chemical industry technologies, information and telecommunications technologies, and infrastructure development. The exhibition featured an extensive Belarusian exposition Made in Belarus, which showcased the best industrial developments and innovative equipment of the country's engineering industry flagships. "7 major enterprises expressed their interest in participating <...>: Belarusian Metallurgical Plant, BELAZ, Minsk Tractor Plant, BATE, Scientific and Technological Park BNTU "Polytechnik", "Gomselmash", "StankoGomel"<sup>236</sup>.

Another important reserve of Belarusian-Uzbek economic relations is the intensification of partnerships between free economic zones (FEZs) of Belarus and Uzbekistan, whose residents can build cooperation in various areas. In March 2023, during the Third Congress of Free Economic Zones held in Gomel, constructive negotiations took place between the administrations of FEZ Gomel-Raton and Navoi, where they discussed the potential for mutually beneficial partnership. In particular, "the first direction is to sell in Uzbekistan the demanded types of products of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents. Uzbekistan is quite an interesting market. It has 36 million population. <...> There are a lot of foreign investments, infrastructure projects"<sup>237</sup>. Among the most demanded products of

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<sup>235</sup> Uzbekistan is interested in supplies of agricultural machinery "Bobruiskagromash" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-postavkah-selskohozjajstvennoj-tehniki-bobrujskagromasha-556555-2023/>

<sup>236</sup> Belarus will present an exposition at the exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia" in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-innoprom-tsentrlnaja-azija-v-tashkente-557617-2023/>

<sup>237</sup> Industrial co-operation and access to new markets. General Director of FEZ "Navoi" about the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promkooperatsija-i-vyhod-na-novye-rynki-gendirektor-sez-navoi-o-partnerstve-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-557030-2023/>

Gomel manufacturers the Uzbek side names such topical positions as industrial, boiler, heating, ventilation, cooling equipment, as well as energy-saving and energy-efficient technologies. In short, the Uzbek market is an important area for Belarusian exports in Central Asia. And this is just the beginning.

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## **Belarus - Azerbaijan: co-operation in the spirit of openness, trust and mutual assistance**

Azerbaijan is one of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the interaction with which is of strategic importance for the Republic of Belarus. For less than thirty years, while diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established back in June 1993, Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction has shaped the traditions of the two peoples, which are based on "openness, trust, friendship and mutual assistance"<sup>238</sup>. Among the significant interstate documents that Minsk and Baku consider basic are: 1) the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Azerbaijan (2007); 2) the Treaty between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2025 (2015).

In 2018, when Belarus and Azerbaijan celebrated the 25th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, the parties noted a high dynamics of expanding interaction in all areas, including in the trade and economic sphere, where the main priorities were production cooperation, joint projects in the fields of science and technology, as well as investment cooperation. This was evidenced, in particular, by the results of 2018, when the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover "totalled about \$465.3 million and increased threefold compared to 2017"<sup>239</sup>. The fact that Belarusian products were supplied to the Azerbaijani market in more than 220 commodity items at that time also spoke volumes.

One of the key areas of cooperation between Belarus and Azerbaijan was industrial co-operation, the flagship of which was the Ganja Automobile Plant. Ganja Automobile Plant was the flagship of this co-operation, with the assembly of Belarusian tractors, Gomselmash grain harvesters, Minsk Automobile Plant machinery, and Belkommunmash electric buses. Their efficiency is evidenced at least by the fact that more than 11 thousand tractors, as well as about 3.5 thousand units of automotive and special equipment have been assembled here since 2007. In May 2019, a new assembly line was opened at the Azerbaijani enterprise, "for

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<sup>238</sup> Belarusian-Azerbaijani bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/political/](https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/political/)

<sup>239</sup> Igor Lyashenko made a working visit to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8786>

the first time a grain harvester KZS-575 "Palesse GS575" and an electric bus E321"<sup>240</sup>.

Of particular interest in Ganja was the launch of electric buses - public transport for 83 passengers, equipped with 26 seats, air conditioning, an information monitor and a video control system. This technique is favourable both in terms of minimal environmental impact on the environment and saving energy consumption. "The time to fully charge the batteries of an electric bus, which can reach speeds of up to 60 km/h, <...> is only six minutes"<sup>241</sup>. The Ganja Automobile Plant is expected to produce up to 40 per cent of spare parts for these eco-friendly vehicles in the future. If demand is high enough, the plant's capacity will allow it to produce up to 150 electric buses a year. And projects to assemble and supply municipal vehicles from Minsk Automobile Plant and medium-capacity passenger vehicles were still under development. In addition, in July 2019, in the Turkish town of Kırıkkale, 80 kilometres from Ankara, with the support of the Ganja Automobile Plant, the assembly of Minsk tractors began with the expectation to produce one hundred machines by the end of the year and two hundred next year. And in the end "the capacity of the plant will allow to assemble up to three thousand tractors per year"<sup>242</sup>. The assistance of the Azerbaijani side in this matter made it possible to save about one million dollars only on the construction of one building of the future production in Turkey.

Another important area of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction, which received a strong boost in spring 2019, is the participation of Belarusian exporting companies in Azerbaijan's exhibition events. In May, the exposition of Belarusian producers "Belarus. Taste of Nature" was presented in Baku at the international agricultural exhibition Caspian Agro, which has already "proved to be an important platform for promoting Belarusian interests in agriculture in the Azerbaijani market"<sup>243</sup>. Among more than two hundred companies from 25 countries that presented their traditional products and novelties in various sectors of the agricultural industry, 25 organisations and enterprises from Belarus showed

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<sup>240</sup> The President of Azerbaijan met with Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Lyashenko [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-azerbajdzhana-vstretilsja-s-vitse-premjerom-belarusi-lyashenko-347392-2019/>

<sup>241</sup> Azerbaijan has started to produce Belarusian grain harvesters and electric buses [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-azerbajdzhanе-pristupili-k-vypusku-belorusskih-zernoborochnyh-kombajnov-i-elektrobusov-347363-2019/>

<sup>242</sup> Matievsky, M. The assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Turkey should start in July / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-tractorov-v-turtsii-dolzno-zarabotat-v-ijule-344079-2019/>

<sup>243</sup> Belarus is interested in developing cooperation with Azerbaijan in agro-industrial complex and industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainterosovana-razvivat-s-azerbajdzhanom-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promkooperatsiju-347429-2019/>



their capabilities. For example, organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus demonstrated innovative equipment for agriculture - an energy-efficient harvester for berry harvesting, LED lights and greenhouse irradiators for growing plants in greenhouse farms. Belagro Bel offered visitors to the exhibition "a multi-brand portfolio of Belarusian-made agricultural machinery and integrated solutions for processing a wide range of crops"<sup>244</sup>.

Even more diverse Belarusian products could be seen at the exhibition in the section of confectionery, beverages and groceries. In particular, Krasny Izhevik from Bobruisk attracted attention with such novelties as: marshmallows - in the form of rose flower, pomegranate and duchesse flavours; marmalade - in the form of bottles with tequila, wine and cognac flavours. "Spartak" from Gomel demonstrated chocolate - bitter and milk chocolate, as well as white chocolate with almonds and coconut, with hazelnut and biscuit balls, with hazelnut and cereals. The Belarusian exposition in Baku was complemented by baby food, meat and poultry products, as well as products of the Minsk Margarine Plant. The business part of the Caspian Agro exhibition was also very effective for the Belarusian participants. In particular, a co-operation document was signed by the Belgospisheprom Concern and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation, in which the parties agreed to co-operate "in the sphere of tobacco product supplies between the Azertabak agro-industrial complex and the Grodno tobacco factory, which is part of the Belgospisheprom Concern"<sup>245</sup>, as well as to exchange production experience.

Now let's look at the results of 2021. They have shown that Azerbaijan has become one of Belarus's main trade and economic partners, with which cooperation is developing particularly intensively today. This is evidenced by the fact that Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover in 2021 almost doubled to \$885.5 million. At the same time, "Belarusian exports of goods increased 2.5 times and totalled \$478.0 million, reaching record figures in the history of bilateral relations"<sup>246</sup>. The main export items from Belarus to Azerbaijan were railway trains, fibreboard, medicines, furniture, timber, electric transformers, as well as beef, butter, cheese and cottage cheese. "A reliable channel for the purchase of Azerbaijani vegetables and fruits has also been established, which have replaced

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<sup>244</sup> Belarus presented the largest national exposition at the agricultural exhibition in Baku [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-krupnejshuju-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-selskohozjajstvennoj-vystavke-v-baku-347619-2019/>

<sup>245</sup> "Belgospisheprom" and Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-i-azerbajdzhanskaja-promyshlennaja-korporatsija-podpisali-protokol-o-sotrudnichestve-347723-2019/>

<sup>246</sup> On the results of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade in goods in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a81fa7c9e40a3b23.html>

imports from unfriendly countries. The Belarusian side is interested in further expansion and diversification of trade and economic co-operation"<sup>247</sup>.

The parties paid much attention to such a promising area of bilateral cooperation as agriculture **and food**. In September 2021, they even held the first meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security, where "issues of cooperation in the field of crop and livestock breeding, food security, agrarian education, expansion of trade and economic ties in agriculture... were discussed..."<sup>248</sup>. Coordination of joint efforts in this area allowed for good results in bilateral trade in agricultural goods and agricultural raw materials, the volume of which increased by almost 20 per cent to \$41.6 million in 2021, with Belarusian exports accounting for \$35 million. It is important that these positive trends continue now. "In January-February 2022, trade turnover of food products and agricultural raw materials between Belarus and Azerbaijan totalled \$5.7 million. Belarusian exports of goods amounted to \$4.6 million"<sup>249</sup>.

**Construction** is another promising area of Belarusian-Azerbaijani co-operation where serious positive developments are expected. The fact is that this segment of the economy ranks second after oil in Azerbaijan in terms of state investments. Belarusian companies may also be interested in the fact that there is a very high demand for sawn timber in this country, and a simplified tax is provided for companies in the industry. In 2021, reinforced concrete and metal structures, equipment and spare parts formed the basis of Belarusian construction exports to the Azerbaijani market. The dynamics of these supplies are illustrated by the following figures: "In the first quarter of 2021, organisations of the Belarusian construction industry supplied Azerbaijan with over \$3.5 million worth of products, which is 2.2 times more than in the same period in 2020"<sup>250</sup>. Further bilateral interaction in this area can be judged by some of the Belarusian exhibitors at the 26th International Specialised Exhibition BakuBuild, held in October 2021 in the Azerbaijani capital. In particular, the research and production company OKB TSP demonstrated there its own innovative technology for the erection of arch structures for various purposes, developed by specialists from the

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<sup>247</sup> Petrishenko: Belarus is interested in expanding trade and economic cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/petrishenko-belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-526693-2022/>

<sup>248</sup> On the meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Safety [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b29ba1099335e43e.html>

<sup>249</sup> Belarus and Azerbaijan in 2021 increased foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-v-2021-godu-uvelichili-tovarooborot-prodtovarov-i-selhozsyrija-pochti-na-20-496191-2022/>

<sup>250</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus will be presented at the BakuBuild exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-bakubuild-463807-2021/>

company Spetsmashinostroenie, which is part of OKB TSP. Interestingly, the company has already constructed 19 industrial buildings in Azerbaijan using this technology.

Belarusian regions also see their own prospects for developing co-operation with Azerbaijani partners. Thus, **Hrodna Region** is going to actively expand these ties. Recall that in 2021, exports of Hrodna enterprises to Azerbaijan doubled to \$17.4 million. In total, about 40 business entities of all forms of ownership supplied supplies from the Belarusian region to this country of the South Caucasus. At the same time, the Azerbaijani side remains highly interested in importing Belarusian agricultural machinery, woodworking products and food industry. According to the parties, "we have enough promising areas for co-operation. These are agriculture and machine building. We will redouble our efforts to develop the relationship"<sup>251</sup>.

Another interesting example in this context is **Brest region**, whose trade turnover with Azerbaijan in the first quarter of 2022 increased by almost half. For example, "the supplies of machines and mechanisms for harvesting and threshing of agricultural crops increased 15 times. Brest residents also export batteries, furniture"<sup>252</sup>. The main type of exports from the Belarusian region is food products, among which dairy products prevail.

Finally, the cities of **Homiel** and **Ganja**, which signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation back in November 2013, are active participants in Belarusian-Azerbaijani interregional cooperation. This Azerbaijani city is known to have an automobile factory, where assembly plants of Belarusian companies - Minsk Tractor and Automobile Plants, Gomselmash and Belkommunmash - have already been set up. In 2019, the first PALESSE KZS-575 combine harvester was assembled here. At the same time, the parties noted that "there are many points of contact for further development of relations between the Belarusian and Azerbaijani cities in various industries, cultural, educational and sports spheres"<sup>253</sup>. So, there are a lot of reserves for the development of co-operation here.

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<sup>251</sup> Grodno region is interested in expanding co-operation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-494171-2022/>

<sup>252</sup> Azerbaijan is interested in co-operation with the regions of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbajdzhan-zainteresovan-v-sotrudnichestve-s-regionami-belarusi-499846-2022/>

<sup>253</sup> Ganja Automobile Plant is interested in joint production of combines with "Gomselmash" [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gjandzhinskij-avtozavod-zainteresovan-v-sovmestnom-proizvodstve-kombajnov-s-gomselmashem-333783-2019/>

The 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission was held in June 2022. At the meeting, the parties named among the promising areas of cooperation: expansion of industrial cooperation, interaction in the spheres of machine-building, transport, agriculture, woodworking, healthcare, education and science. In particular, "it is necessary to fully implement the contract on supplying unassembled tractors to Ganja Automobile Plant, as well as to work out economic and technical aspects of the joint project of this plant and MTZ on entering the markets of third countries"<sup>254</sup>. It is also necessary to ensure the completion of tests of the grain harvester produced by Gomselmash and modified to meet the technical requirements of the Azerbaijani side, as well as to agree on the volume of supplies. Joint production of electric transport is among the proposals. Lift manufacturer Mogilevliftmash expects to take part in lift modernisation programmes in Azerbaijani cities. In the near future, preparatory work will also be completed to set up a joint production of veterinary drugs on Azerbaijani territory.

In terms of exhibition activities, Belarus presented national expositions at major international exhibitions in Baku in 2022: the Caspian Agro agricultural exhibition and the InterFood Azerbaijan food industry exhibition, the Caspian Oil and Gas exhibition, the ADEX defence exhibition, and the International Exhibition of Medical Innovations. For example, the Belarusian pavilion was presented at the 27th Caspian Oil and Gas International Exhibition in early June 2022, where Belarusian enterprises Grodno Azot, Mogilevkhimvolokno, Mozyr Oil Refinery, Naftan, Polotsk-Steklovolokno, and Seismotekhnika participated. The exposition was notable for its diversity: nitrogen fertilisers, polyamide and polyester yarns, cord fabrics, polymer composites, polyester technical yarns, nonwoven fabrics, motor gasoline, diesel fuel, furnace fuel oil, oil bitumen, fuel gases, glass fibre and materials on its basis, oilfield and geophysical equipment. "Among the unique products presented at the exhibition is polyester fibre of the conjugate type for use as a filler in textile products, which is produced by Mogilevkhimvolokno."<sup>255</sup>.

In the transport sector, in August 2022, the Belarusian Railway started delivering cargo by accelerated trains from Belarus to Azerbaijan. "This makes it possible to deliver cargo produced in Belarus <...> to Azerbaijan in the shortest possible time (in a week) and at competitive tariffs. The first three trains loaded

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<sup>254</sup> Machine building, construction, agro-industrial complex. Petrishenko on the plans of interaction with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-stroitelstvo-apk-petrishenko-o-planah-vzaimodejstviya-s-azerbajdzhanom-505333-2022/>

<sup>255</sup> Belarus presented a pavilion at the oil and gas exhibition in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-paviljon-na-neftegazovoj-vystavke-v-azerbajdzhanе-505359-2022/>

with timber products have already set off from Orsha-Zapadnaya station (Belarus) to Apsheiron station (Azerbaijan)"<sup>256</sup>.

Bilateral contacts are also developing closely in the educational sphere. In particular, the Belarusian State University (BSU) is intensifying co-operation with institutions in Azerbaijan. In September 2022, BSU signed a cooperation agreement with Baku State University, which is the oldest and leading higher education institution in this South Caucasus country and includes 16 faculties of different profiles, two scientific institutes and the Confucius Institute. The document prescribes agreements in the field of education and science. "In particular, the parties agreed to implement joint projects in scientific, educational and cultural spheres, develop publication partnership, academic scientific and cultural mobility, exchange information, students, researchers and teachers"<sup>257</sup>. It is also envisaged to develop and implement joint research projects, educational programmes, courses and curricula, interaction in the field of scientific supervision of master's and postgraduate students. It should be noted that BSU is currently co-operating with other Azerbaijani scientific and educational institutions. Since 2019, there is an agreement on co-operation and exchange of students with ADA University (Baku). In 2021, the International State Environmental Institute named after A.D. Sakharov BSU signed a cooperation agreement with Hazar University (Baku) and an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with the Scientific Research Institute of Animal Husbandry of the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan. Two joint projects were submitted for participation in the contest of joint scientific projects for 2022-2023, announced by the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Azerbaijan: the Institute of Nuclear Problems and the Institute of Physics of the NAS of Azerbaijan; the Faculty of Chemistry and the Institute of Catalysis and Inorganic Chemistry named after Academician M. Nagiyev of the NAS of Azerbaijan. One more thing: six Azerbaijani students are currently studying at BSU.

So, despite the new geopolitical challenges, the dynamics of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction continues to develop at all levels: from industrial cooperation and transport to participation in exhibitions, science and education.

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<sup>256</sup> BZhd started to supply cargoes by accelerated trains from Belarus to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bzhd-nachala-postavljat-gruzy-uskorennyimi-poezdami-iz-belarusi-v-azerbajdzhan-517606-2022/>

<sup>257</sup> BSU and Baku State University concluded a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-bakinskij-gosuniversitet-zakljuchili-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-525475-2022/>

## **Belarus - Armenia: key direction - long-term co-operation**

In 2023, Belarus and Armenia will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In recent years, they have been experiencing positive dynamics in mutual trade. The interaction between the two countries in virtually all the main vectors of bilateral relations is gradually "gaining momentum". In the current international environment, Minsk and Yerevan emphasise the development of economic relations. Armenia has been and remains for Belarus the state in which the Belarusian side aims to expand its trade and economic component and is ready to participate in any projects, including those in Armenia, that would be of interest to its Armenian partners.

Recall that back in 2018, the Belarusian-Armenian trade turnover had positive growth dynamics, increasing by more than 17 per cent and exceeding \$50 million. Investment cooperation has become an important element of bilateral interaction. Suffice it to say that "\$7.6 million of investments came from Armenia to Belarus in 2018, including \$7.5 million of direct investments. \$3.5 million of foreign direct investments were attracted in the first quarter of this [2019] year"<sup>258</sup>. This picture of partnership ties between Belarus and Armenia was significantly supplemented by more than 80 entities of the commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises operating on Armenian soil, as well as 57 enterprises with Armenian capital - 17 joint ventures and 40 foreign ones operating in Belarus. In addition, there are three enterprises with Belarusian capital operating in Armenia: Ar-Be Armenian-Belarusian Trading House "Ar-Be" LLC, BelAZ Caucasus Trans Service LLC and BelAR Trading House CJSC"<sup>259</sup>. Nevertheless, according to the parties, "so far there are few joint investment projects, and those that are being implemented are often in a sluggish mode"<sup>260</sup>. That is why several years ago Belarus and Armenia raised an urgent issue: not just to trade with each other, but to create joint companies so that the business of the two countries would work more actively with each other. And there are such opportunities in many vectors of co-operation.

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<sup>258</sup> Armenian President Sarkisian arrived in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-armenii-sarkisjan-pribyl-v-belarus-353322-2019/>

<sup>259</sup> Meeting with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8605>

<sup>260</sup> Myasnikovich offered Armenia to intensify investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-predlozhit-armenii-aktivizirovat-investsotrudnichestvo-343419-2019/>

Agriculture has become one of the priority areas of bilateral Belarusian-Armenian interaction, as the issue of saturating the market with safe and high-quality food products is currently very important for Armenia. That is why international co-operation in this area has great prospects. The Armenian partners want to "create a food safety platform on the basis of which certain agreements with producers from different countries will be implemented"<sup>261</sup>. And the partnership with the Belarusian side looks very promising in this regard. This is evidenced by the fact that in 2018, agricultural exports from Belarus to Armenia increased by 30 per cent to \$13 million. The parties considered not only joint actions in the area of food trade, but also the expansion of supplies of agricultural and other machinery, strengthening the role of Belarus' trade house in Yerevan, the establishment of Armenia's trade house on Belarusian soil, as well as the organisation of joint ventures and cooperation in the area of livestock farming as measures contributing to the growth of trade turnover in agriculture. Understanding that the next step in the bilateral relations should be to reach a higher level of cooperation in the context of growing trade turnover, the Belarusian side also proposed, inter alia, "to take part in the renewal of Armenia's fleet of passenger vehicles and in the programme of renewal of lift facilities"<sup>262</sup>.

Another promising area of Belarusian-Armenian partnership is improving transport links between the two former Soviet republics. As is well known, there are no direct communications between Belarus and Armenia, but there is an opportunity to create them within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union along with the relevant infrastructure to ensure the delivery of goods and transit traffic between the countries. In particular, the parties are considering the possibility of transporting Armenian goods to Belarus and transit through its territory by rail. A promising logistical direction in this regard is the use of "the North-South road under construction, which will connect Georgia with Iran, and the FEZ in Meghri, where there is a free economic zone. This is a good opportunity to expand the geography of supplies of Belarusian goods"<sup>263</sup>.

In November 2021, the 15th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Armenian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, where the parties considered opportunities to strengthen the positions of Belarusian and

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<sup>261</sup> Armenia is interested in developing co-operation with Belarus in the field of agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 20190. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-353502-2019/>

<sup>262</sup> Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of Armenia's passenger vehicle fleet [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>

<sup>263</sup> Heads of transport departments of Belarus and Armenia outlined the points of growth of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glavy-transportnyh-vedomstv-belarusi-i-armenii-nametili-tochki-rosta-sotrudnichestva-354239-2019/>

Armenian exporters in each other's markets, expand the trade network, and cooperate in agriculture, science, and technology. A characteristic feature of the partnership ties between the two countries is the fact that trade turnover between them continues to grow annually. "Thus, if in 2016 it was a little over \$32 million, in 2020 - already over \$82 million. The growth of trade turnover was also recorded at the end of 9 months of this year [2021], it exceeded \$62 million"<sup>264</sup>. At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Armenian market are based on dairy products, furniture, computers for automatic information processing and medicines. This allowed Belarus to achieve a surplus in mutual trade of more than \$32 million in 2020. Another positive trend observed in the relations between the two republics is the further growth of Armenian investments in the Belarusian economy. In the first half of 2021, they received more than ten million dollars.

Discussing at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission the prospects for the development of partnership ties, the parties noted that there are significant reserves for increasing the volume of mutual trade. One of them is that "the economic way of developing trade by increasing supplies of traditional groups of goods is outdated and it is necessary to enter into co-operative projects"<sup>265</sup>, which will ensure long-term and fruitful cooperation, less dependent on various market fluctuations. The parties are already making certain practical steps in this direction. Thus, participating in the programme of modernisation of lift facilities in Yerevan, OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" supplied five hundred sets of lift equipment to Armenia. The issue of setting up a joint lift assembly plant in Armenia is already under consideration. Belarusian companies have great opportunities to participate in other Armenian government programmes on infrastructure and industrial development.

It should be noted that the volume of Belarusian-Armenian trade grew again in 2021 and totalled about USD 100 million. This trend continues in the current year as well. "Thus, in January-June 2022, trade turnover increased by more than 70% to \$60.3 million"<sup>266</sup>. This applies to both exports of goods to Armenia and imports of Armenian goods to Belarus. In addition, the countries ensured mutual growth in the supply of agricultural and food products, outlined industrial co-

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<sup>264</sup> Belarus and Armenia have increased trade turnover by 2.5 times in 5 years [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-armenija-za-5-let-uvelichili-tovarooborot-v-25-raza-471337-2021/>

<sup>265</sup> Drozhzha: Belarus and Armenia have reserves for increasing mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/drozhzha-u-belarusi-i-armenii-est-rezervy-dlja-naraschivanija-vzaimnoj-torgovli-471650-2021/>

<sup>266</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying lumber products to Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-piloproduktov-v-armeniju-523446-2022/>



operation projects and maintained a high frequency of air flights on the Minsk-Yerevan-Minsk route.

In October 2022, the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Armenian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Yerevan, where the parties again came to the conclusion that the extensive way of developing trade by increasing supplies of traditional groups of goods is outdated and it is necessary to develop cooperation projects that would guarantee long-term interaction. At the same time, "the key direction of this work should be the strengthening of production co-operation ties, joining efforts to create joint competitive products that are in demand not only in domestic and EAEU markets, but also in third countries"<sup>267</sup>.

In general, the signed protocol of the 16th meeting of the intergovernmental commission included a variety of measures aimed at strengthening and developing cooperation in a number of areas: mutual trade; industry and industrial cooperation; innovation, digital transformation and postal communications; transport and energy; agriculture; scientific and technical cooperation; education, culture, youth, sports, tourism, health care, labour and social protection; environmental protection; interregional cooperation. In particular, "Belarus and Armenia will work out the issue of using national currencies in settlements"<sup>268</sup>. The parties agreed to assist Armenian and Belarusian economic entities in expanding the trade network in the territory of the two countries. The Armenian side will work out the issue of establishing an "Armenia Trade House" in Belarus, which will have the status of exporter/importer. The partners will also "continue cooperation in the sphere of mechanisation of the Armenian agro-industrial complex, consider the possibility of creating cooperation projects in Armenia. It is planned to hold an agro-industrial forum where products of Belarusian and Armenian producers will be exhibited"<sup>269</sup>. In addition, the Armenian side expressed interest in the introduction of Belarusian experience in the use of innovative technologies in agriculture.

Speaking about Belarusian-Armenian production cooperation, in October 2022, "Minsk Automobile Plant signed a contract for the supply of 500 passenger

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<sup>267</sup> Kulik on the development of trade with Armenia: we need co-operation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kulik-o-razvitii-torgovli-s-armeniej-nuzhny-kooperatsionnye-proekty-526560-2022/>

<sup>268</sup> Belarus and Armenia are interested in the use of national currencies in settlements [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-armenija-zainteresovany-v-ispolzovanii-natsionalnyh-valjut-pri-raschetah-526881-2022>

<sup>269</sup> The 16th session of the Armenian-Belarusian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation was held in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/news/24151/v-erevane-sostojalos-16-e-zasedanie-armjano-belorusskoj-mezhpravitelstvennoj-komissii-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnichestvu>

vehicles to Armenia for \$73 million <...>. The passenger vehicles assembled in Armenia are intended for delivery to third countries"<sup>270</sup>. Belarus is also ready to further expand co-operation in the forestry sector. Construction and reconstruction of housing is actively underway in Armenia. The Belarusian side is ready to supply construction materials, including lumber products, to this South Caucasus country.

The Belarusian side sees another reserve for increasing trade with its Armenian partners in the active use of trade fairs and exhibitions that take place in this Transcaucasian country. Thus, the high interest of Belarusian manufacturers in the Armenian market was very eloquently demonstrated by the Made in Belarus exposition at the 20th universal regional trade and industrial forum Armenia EXPO, which was held in September 2021 in Yerevan. Suffice it to say that 17 enterprises of Belgospischeprom Concern became exhibitors of this one of the largest exhibitions in Transcaucasia: "Krasny zhegodivik", "Kommunarka", "Krasny Mozyryanin", "Spartak", "KF Slodych", "Maloritsky KOSK", "Gamma Vkusa", "Mashpischeprod", Minsk sparkling wine factory, Slutsk sugar refinery, Gorodeisky Sugar Refinery, Minsk Kristall - the managing company of Minsk Kristall Group holding, Krinita, Minsk Margarine Plant, Lidapischekoncentraty, Belkofs, Interferm. Their presence at this business forum in Yerevan can be explained by the fact that "almost all the products of the Concern's organisations are supplied to Armenia. In January-July 2021 the volume of export supplies to this country amounted to \$640.7 thousand or 215.4% of the level of the same period of the last year"<sup>271</sup>.

Having demonstrated the best samples of their products at the exhibition, Belarusian exporters continue to significantly expand their presence in the Armenian market. A good example in this regard was demonstrated by the unitary enterprise Kalinkovich Dairy Plant, which signed a \$55,000 contract for the supply of skimmed milk powder for the production of ice cream within the framework of the exhibition. "The enterprise also has agreements on concluding more contracts for the supply of products for ice-cream production"<sup>272</sup>. Slutsk Cheese Factory is also planning to seriously increase its supplies to the Armenian

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<sup>270</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant will supply 500 passenger vehicles to Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-postavit-500-mashinokomplektov-passazhirskoj-tehniki-v-armeniju-527026-2022>

<sup>271</sup> "Belgospischeprom" presented its products at the exhibition Armenia Expo in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospischeprom-predstavil-produktsiju-na-vystavke-armenia-expo-v-erevane-460163-2021/>

<sup>272</sup> Kalinkovich dairy plant concluded a contract for \$55 thousand at Armenia Expo. [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kalinkovichskij-molochnyj-kombinat-na-armenia-expo-zakljuchil-kontrakt-na-55-tys-460231-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/kalinkovichskij-molochnyj-kombinat-na-armenia-expo-zakljuchil-kontrakt-na-55-tys-460231-2021/>

market. It demonstrated in Yerevan the products of the trademark "Yas Belous" - cheese, milk powder and butter, which, together with cream and cottage cheese, dominated the export of Belarusian products to Armenia in 2020. Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural machinery also see good prospects here: Gomselmash, whose two machines under the Palesse brand have been operating in the fields of Armenia since 2020; JSC Managing Company of Grodnooblselkhoztehnika Holding, which produces tillage, forage harvesting, post-harvest machinery and milking units; and JSC Gomel Electromechanical Plant, a manufacturer of railway locomotives and rolling stock.

A year later - in September 2022 - companies from Belarus again took part in the regional trade and industrial forum Armenia EXPO, where "a wide range of thematic sections were presented: engineering, petrochemicals, construction, interior design, transport, trucking, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, woodworking, financial services, tourism and recreation"<sup>273</sup>. More than 170 companies, associations, unions and organisations took part in the exhibition. Among the participating countries were Armenia, China, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, India, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. The Made in Belarus exposition was also presented. In particular, 12 enterprises of Belgospisheprom Concern demonstrated their products. For example, the exposition presented a wide range of confectionery products, instant food, food concentrates, baby food, alcoholic beverages, sauces and vegetable oil, fruit and berry products, including a new line of morses and nectars, jams, jams, mushrooms and other food products. It should be noted that almost all the products manufactured by the organisations of the concern are supplied to Armenia this year. "For the first 7 months of 2022, the export volume increased 1.2 times compared to the same period last year, primarily due to increased supplies of malt, beer, food concentrates, potato products and oil and fat products"<sup>274</sup>.

The potential for interaction between Belarus and Armenia is still very extensive today in interregional co-operation as well. In particular, cooperation between Vitebsk Region and Armenian regions is intensifying in all spheres, from science to trade and culture. "The Vitebsk region's trade turnover with Armenia in January-March [2022] exceeded \$1.6 million. Almost all of these funds were exports of goods. Vitebsk region supplies meat and dairy products (accounting for

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<sup>273</sup> The exposition of Belarus will be presented at the trade and industrial forum in Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-torgovom-promyshlennom-forume-v-armenii-512548-2022/>

<sup>274</sup> "Belgospisheprom" presented its products at the exhibition "Armenia EXPO 2022" in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-predstavil-svoju-produktsiju-na-vystavke-armenia-expo-2022-v-erevane-524117-2022/>

more than 71 per cent), special purpose vehicles, medicines, carpeting, and imports fire detectors. A total of 8 organisations with Armenian capital operate in Vitebsk region"<sup>275</sup> . It is interesting that in Vitebsk region it is possible to set up production of Armenian medicinal product Narine, a fermented milk product created by Armenian scientists in the 60s and very popular in this country. The supplement helps regulate digestive problems. "The preparation has an EAEU certificate, it may well be applied in Vitebsk region, if there are those willing to create such a line at the dairy production. In Armenia, this product is produced in the form of paste, powder, kefir, tablets. This will be another good article of trade turnover between Armenia and Belarus"<sup>276</sup> . The proposal to master the production of Armenian sour-milk product, which is used as a medicine, in Vitebsk region was supported by Vitebsk authorities. The implementation of such a project will strengthen and expand the range of plants and make them even more competitive.

Another Belarusian region intends to intensify cooperation with its partners from Armenia - Brest Oblast. So far, the trade turnover between the parties is insignificant. "However, there has been a positive trend recently: in the first quarter of 2022, it increased by 71 per cent, and the region's enterprises increased exports by 50 per cent"<sup>277</sup> . Brest region intends to intensify cooperation with Armenian partners in the production of livestock products, machine building, woodworking, light industry. Another interesting fact: there has been a co-operation agreement between Brest region and Ararat marz for more than 10 years. The pandemic was a hindrance for maintaining contacts between the regions, but there are already intentions to restore ties.

On the whole, as it was noted at the 16th session of the intergovernmental commission, the potential of interaction between Belarus and Armenia continues to develop: from deepening mutually beneficial trade-economic and innovation cooperation to industrial and inter-sectoral cooperation, humanitarian and interregional partnerships.

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<sup>275</sup> Trade, science and culture: Vitebsk region and Armenia intend to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-nauka-i-kultura-vitebskaja-oblast-i-armenija-namereny-aktivizirovat-sotrudnichestvo-505369-2022/>

<sup>276</sup> The Armenian ambassador offered to master the production of sour-milk product Narine in Vitebsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-armenii-predlozil-osvoit-v-vitebskoj-oblasti-proizvodstvo-kislomolochnogo-produkta-narine-505390-2022/>

<sup>277</sup> Armenia is interested in interregional ties with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-v-mezhregionalnyh-svjazjah-s-belarusju-502868-2022/>

## **Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: priority task - accelerating co-operation**

The Republic of Belarus has traditionally been interested in the closest partnership with the Kyrgyz Republic, a country in Central Asia that possesses rich natural resources and minerals, high potential for the development of agriculture, hydropower and tourism. All the more so, trade and economic co-operation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan has been noticeably intensified recently.

Back in May 2013, the Kyrgyz side noted: "I would like the economic relations between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan to develop dynamically. Belarus has a number of goods in which Kyrgyzstan is interested. In turn, we are also ready to supply goods that are interesting for the Belarusian economy"<sup>278</sup>. In September 2015, at the meeting of the heads of government of the two countries, focusing on the need to increase mutual trade turnover, the parties agreed that "in addition to trade interaction, efforts should be directed at the development of production cooperation"<sup>279</sup>. And already in the first quarter of 2017, the Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade turnover increased by one and a half times, totalling \$15.2 million. The Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, whose sixth and seventh meetings were held in Bishkek in June 2016 and in Minsk in June 2017, played an important role in boosting bilateral interaction between the countries.

In particular, during the seventh meeting of the commission, the parties noted that contacts between Belarusian enterprises and their Kyrgyz partners had intensified significantly, which only contributes to the expansion of interaction between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in terms of machinery supplies and production cooperation, energy, agriculture, healthcare, education, science, culture, information and tourism, as well as the development of cooperation between the regions and free economic zones of the two countries. This extensive list of areas of Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation also included "training of specialists, raising

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<sup>278</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in the development of trade and economic relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.belvpo.com/ru/26710.html>

<sup>279</sup> Andrei Kobyakov met with the head of the Government of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6027>

their qualifications, creation of trade networks, joint ventures for the production of agricultural machinery, supplies of Belarusian lifts to Kyrgyzstan"<sup>280</sup>.

As far as mutual trade is concerned, Belarusian agricultural products are clearly in the lead, as evidenced by the figures: "At the end of 2016, exports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to Kyrgyzstan grew 3.1 times, and in the first quarter of 2017 - almost 14 times. The basis of export supplies is meat and dairy products"<sup>281</sup>. Agreeing to further increase mutual supplies of agricultural products, expand their commodity nomenclature, the parties also decided to consider the possibility of implementing joint projects in the development of livestock and crop production.

The flagship of Belarusian-Kyrgyz industrial cooperation is the tractor assembly production and service centre for agricultural machinery from Belarus opened in Bishkek in November 2016 on the basis of Avtomash-Radiator LLC. An important detail is that "about 90% of radiators for Minsk-assembled tractors are supplied from Kyrgyzstan. The same assembly shop has now started assembling combines of Gomselmash OJSC"<sup>282</sup>. In addition, the parties have been actively working on the issue of establishing joint ventures in the light industry, the prerequisite for which was the actualisation of trade relations in this area. Thus, in April 2017, the Kyrgyz company Opt-Invest first delivered a batch of textile products to Belarus, and in September 2017, it signed a contract with Belarus for the supply of garments.

In February 2020, Minsk hosted the ninth meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz commission on trade and economic co-operation, which addressed topical issues of developing and strengthening systemic mutually beneficial partnership ties. In Minsk and Bishkek, this meeting of the intergovernmental commission, where the status of co-chairs has already been raised to the level of deputy prime ministers, was seen as "a new impetus for the development of relations between our countries"<sup>283</sup>. Recall that in 2019, the volume of Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade totalled more than \$105 million with a surplus of over \$90 million for the Belarusian side, which was ensured by supplies from

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<sup>280</sup> About the meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://kyrgyzstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b7a170b217ff5943.html>

<sup>281</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in the establishment of assembly facilities for Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-zainteresovan-v-sozdanii-sborochnyh-proizvodstv-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-251058-2017/>

<sup>282</sup> Omuraliev noted a positive trend in the development of relations between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/omuraliev-otmetil-pozitivnuju-tendentsiju-v-razvitanii-otnoshenij-mezhdu-kyrgyzstanom-i-belarusiju-269017-2017/>

<sup>283</sup> The meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission will be held in Minsk on 21 February [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie-belorussko-kyrgyzskoj-mezhpravkomissii-proidet-v-minske-21-fevralja-378085-2020/>

Belarus of dairy products, tractors and tractor-trailers, meat and poultry by-products, medicines, furniture and chipboard. However, according to the parties, the volume of mutual trade between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus does not meet the economic potential of the countries. Actually, and for this reason, at the next meeting of the intergovernmental commission, the attention of the parties was focused on the priority areas of interaction: 1) **increasing the** volume of mutual trade; 2) **deepening of** industrial cooperation and creation of joint assembly production; 3) **expansion of** interregional cooperation.

In terms of **increasing the volume of mutual trade**, the Belarusian side made specific proposals to increase supplies of passenger, cargo, and municipal vehicles to Kyrgyzstan, which is in line with the plans of the Kyrgyz side to upgrade, for example, the fleet of passenger vehicles in Bishkek and other cities. In addition, in 2020, Belarus continued to actively participate in exhibition events in Kyrgyzstan to promote its products to the Kyrgyz market. Thus, in April, the exposition of Belarusian exporters was presented for the third time at the FoodExpo international food industry exhibition in Bishkek, where visitors could familiarise themselves with products and beverages from Belarus. The emphasis was placed on healthy food and products with Halal certificate. For the first time, the exposition "presented food additives, casings for meat and sausage products, baby food"<sup>284</sup> .

Speaking about **deepening production cooperation**, the Kyrgyz side suggested intensifying cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex. First of all, it is about the creation of a joint agro-cluster for milk processing in Kyrgyzstan using Belarusian technologies, as well as the "construction of dairy complexes with the necessary Belarusian-made equipment and supplies of pedigree cattle"<sup>285</sup> . To consolidate these agreements in the legal field, an agreement on cooperation in agriculture and food between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan was signed following the meeting of the intergovernmental commission. As for industrial cooperation, the plans voiced in Minsk look quite realistic: "assembly production of transformers may be established with the Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant, lifts - with

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<sup>284</sup> Nemankova, Y. The exposition of Belarusian producers will be presented at the FoodExpo in Bishkek / Y. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsija-belorusskih-proizvoditelej-budet-predstavlena-na-vystavke-foodexpo-v-bishkeke-378791-2020/>

<sup>285</sup> Kyrgyzstan offers Belarus to create an agrocluster for milk processing [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-predlagaet-belarusi-sozdat-agroklaster-po-pererabotke-moloka-380586-2020/>

Mogilevliftmash, gas meters - with BelOMO"<sup>286</sup>. The seriousness of these intentions of the parties is evidenced, in particular, by the fact of signing an agreement on co-operation between the V.I. Kozlov Minsk Electromechanical Plant and Mashelectrosnab LLC following the meeting of the intergovernmental commission.

Speaking about the **expansion of interregional cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan**, so far the tone has been set by the capitals Minsk and Bishkek, which signed an agreement on economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation back in 1997 and established twinning relations in 2008. In the language of figures, this interregional co-operation looks as follows: "The growth rate of trade turnover of Minsk enterprises with Kyrgyzstan in January-June 2017 to the level of the same period of 2016 was 306%, exports of goods - 393.7%, exports of services - 176.1%"<sup>287</sup>. At the same time, tractors, paving slabs, radiators, air heaters, refrigerators, and medicines were supplied to Kyrgyz partners. New goods exported from Minsk were dairy products, chipboard, and tools. In the future, cooperation between the two capitals in the development of public transport may become very promising. After all, Bishkek plans to buy about 400 large-capacity buses. And the authorities of the Kyrgyz capital are studying the market of suppliers. It should be assumed that Minsk manufacturers of transport equipment have good chances to become participants in the implementation of this project. After all, back in 2009 Minsk Belkommunmash delivered 20 trolleybuses to Bishkek, and later won a tender for the export of another 30 units of electric transport.

At the 9th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission in Minsk, the agreement on co-operation in trade and economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian and cultural spheres was signed by the Gomel Regional Executive Committee and the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan in Chui Oblast. Although this agreement is the first for the Belarusian region with Kyrgyz partners, even before that, the enterprises of Homiel region were already present in the market of the Central Asian country. Suffice it to say that in 2019, the region's trade turnover with Kyrgyzstan exceeded ten million dollars. "At the same time, exports totalled \$8.5 million. 26 enterprises of the region supplied their goods, including OJSC "Gomselmash", IPUP "Multipak", OJSC "Mozyrsol", manufacturers of doors, wallpaper. The

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9. Vladimir Kukharev: Belarusian electric buses may appear on the streets of Bishkek [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9293>

<sup>287</sup> Matveeva, N. Bishkek plans to buy equipment from Minsk enterprises for the development of public transport / N. Matveeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruet-zakupit-u-minskih-predpriyatij-tehniku-dlja-razvitiya-obschestvennogo-transporta-265609-2017/>



promotion of products of the Turov Dairy Plant, in particular, soft cheeses, to the Kyrgyz market has begun"<sup>288</sup>.

It should be noted that in 2021, Belarus's trade turnover with Kyrgyzstan totalled almost \$100 million, including Belarusian exports of over \$86 million. The balance was positive in the amount of \$75.4 million. "Last year [2021], the nomenclature of goods supplied by Belarus totalled 749 commodity items (for comparison, in 2020 - 620). In January-June this year, bilateral trade turnover totalled \$56.4 million, up 44.3% compared to the same period in 2021, including Belarusian exports of \$42.8 million (up 24.8%)."<sup>289</sup>. The main Belarusian export commodities to Kyrgyzstan are fresh or chilled beef, sugar, poultry meat, medicines, finished meat products, carpets and other textile products, fibre optic cables, cheese and cottage cheese, diagnostic reagents, and chicken eggs. And there are reasons to believe that Belarusian enterprises have every chance not only to consolidate and increase their presence in the Kyrgyz market in terms of products already supplied, but also to expand the list of export items. In particular, Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural, passenger and municipal machinery have prospects for increasing supplies to Kyrgyzstan.

Another interesting component of exports from Belarus to this Central Asian country is medical products. "Belarusian pharmaceutical companies are active in the Kyrgyz market. Thus, in 2021, the volume of exports of medicines to Kyrgyzstan totalled \$4.3 million"<sup>290</sup>. In April 2022, Belarusian manufacturers took an active part in the 16th International Specialised Healthcare Exhibition MedExpo Kyrgyzstan-2022 in Bishkek. Their well-known and well-established drugs, as well as new products that have no analogues in the Kyrgyz market, were presented by LLC "Technology and Medicine 2030", RUE "Belmedpreparaty", OJSC "Borisov Plant of Medical Preparations", UE "Minskintercaps", OJSC "Exon", SE "Akadempharm" and NP LLC "Medbiotech". In particular, "JSC Exon presented a line of VITAX vitamins, haematogen with new flavours (apple, apple with cinnamon, cranberry)"<sup>291</sup>. As a result, the Belarusian companies

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<sup>288</sup> Gomel region will develop co-operation with the Chui region of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-region-budet-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-chujskoj-oblastiju-kyrgyzstana-381123-2020>

<sup>289</sup> NCM told about the prospects of promoting Belarusian goods and services in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ntsm-rasskazal-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-kyrgyzstan-519484-2022/>

<sup>290</sup> Belarusian enterprises presented their products at the exhibition of health care [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-predprijatija-predstavili-produktsiju-na-vystavke-zdravooohranenija-v-bishkeke-494393-2022/>

<sup>291</sup> Pharmaceutical companies of Belarus plan to expand the range and volume of drug supplies to Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/farmpredprijatija-belarusi-planirujut-rasshirit-assortiment-i-objemy-postavok-lekarstv-v-kyrgyzstan-494553-2022/>

signed contracts for the supply of products and planned to organise training seminars for medical representatives to promote medicines in Kyrgyzstan.

In the second half of 2022 - in September - the 10th meeting of the intergovernmental commission was held in the city of Osh, during which it was stated that a promising direction for the development of Kyrgyz-Belarusian cooperation is to increase production potential, capacity to produce products with high added value, as well as the creation of joint ventures in all industrial sectors. "Currently, there are 54 representative offices of entities of the commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian enterprises in the country, including the assembly production of tractors of the joint-stock company Minsk Tractor Plant"<sup>292</sup>. The Kyrgyz side is also interested in attracting investment in such areas as information technology, agriculture, and tourism.

In this regard, the Kyrgyz-Belarusian Business Forum was also held in Osh in September 2022, which demonstrated the growing interest of Belarusian businesses in developing bilateral business contacts with Kyrgyzstan. Representatives of the Belarusian side - the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Belgospisheprom concern, and the Belkommunmash holding company - presented to the forum participants opportunities for co-operation with Belarusian agricultural, food, and industrial enterprises. A business contacts exchange was organised at the forum. "Meetings were held between Belarusian and Kyrgyz enterprises working in the food sector, mechanical engineering, health care and economy. As a result of the business forum, bilateral contracts totalling \$900 thousand were signed"<sup>293</sup>.

The international universal exhibition "South Expo-2022" was also held in Osh, where the Belarusian exposition was represented by the concern "Belgospisheprom" and its 16 enterprises, which combined export goods - "confectionery, snacks, instant food, food concentrates, baby food, strong alcoholic beverages - gaist, tinctures and balms on Belarusian herbs, distillates, whiskey of full cycle production from Belarusian grain, products from fruits and berries...."<sup>294</sup>. The world-famous Belarusian brands Gomselmash, MTZ and MAZ were represented at the exhibition by the local dealer AUTOMASH-RADIATOR.

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<sup>292</sup> Within the framework of the 10th meeting of the Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Belarusian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation in Osh a business forum was held [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://cis.minsk.by/news/24072/v\\_ramkah\\_10-go\\_zasedanija\\_mezhpravitelstvennoj\\_kyrgyzsko-belorusskoj\\_komissii\\_po\\_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu\\_sotrudnichestvu\\_v\\_oshe\\_sostojalsja\\_biznes-forum](https://cis.minsk.by/news/24072/v_ramkah_10-go_zasedanija_mezhpravitelstvennoj_kyrgyzsko-belorusskoj_komissii_po_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu_sotrudnichestvu_v_oshe_sostojalsja_biznes-forum)

<sup>293</sup> Contracts for \$900 thousand signed as a result of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kontrakty-na-900-tys-podpisany-po-itogam-belorussko-kyrgyzskogo-biznes-foruma-523912-2022/>

<sup>294</sup> 16 enterprises of Belgospisheprom presented their products at the exhibition "Yug Expo" in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/produtsitsiju-na-vystavke-jug-ekspo-v-kyrgyzstane-predstavili-16-predpriyatij-belgospisheproma-523807-2022>

Among the exhibitors were other Belarusian enterprises: one of the largest European manufacturers of electrical equipment - V.I. Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant OJSC, leading medical institutions - N.N. Aleksandrov RNPC Oncology and Medical Radiology (OMR) and Cardiology RNPC, as well as a manufacturer of veterinary medicines - Belzoovetsnabprom OJSC. In particular, at the stand of RNPC MPA Kyrgyz specialists were offered educational services in radiology, surgery and ultrasound diagnostics. As a result of negotiations between the RNPC MPA and Osh State University, "a cooperation agreement was prepared, providing for the exchange of experience between the staff of the institutions on educational programmes of advanced training and internships; organisation of conferences, seminars, symposiums, round tables"<sup>295</sup>

All these facts confirm that Belarus and Kyrgyzstan intend to realise the potential of bilateral relations in all areas of cooperation and especially accelerate interaction in the economic sphere, including partnerships in industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, transport, as well as in a variety of issues on the cultural, humanitarian and regional agenda.

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<sup>295</sup> 6th International Universal Exhibition-Fair "Yug Expo-2022". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://omr.by/news/news-main/6-ya-mezhdunarodnaya-universalnaya-vystavka-yarmarka-yug-ekspo-2022>

## **Belarus - Tajikistan: from the decisions of the commission - to the priorities of the roadmap**

Belarus and Tajikistan have traditionally enjoyed close relations, and the countries have been consistently strengthening their mutually beneficial strategic partnership. The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (IGC), established back in 1999, plays a key role in the development of effective Belarusian-Tajik bilateral interaction. The scope of its interests "touches upon such priority areas as: supply of machine-building products on the basis of new leasing schemes; cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and energy sector; participation in joint economic projects; creation of a network of joint production enterprises in both countries"<sup>296</sup>.

In April 2021, the 14th meeting of the IGC was held in Dushanbe to discuss topical issues of interaction in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, healthcare and education, investment and information technologies. At the same time, an exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, a business forum Belarus-Tajikistan-Afghanistan, and a forum TajBelAgro were organised in the capital of Tajikistan. All these events once again demonstrated that "despite the crisis phenomena in the world, the Belarusian-Tajik trade and economic cooperation shows a positive and dynamic character. Since 2016, mutual trade turnover has grown 5.5 times and totalled \$111.7 million in 2020"<sup>297</sup>. At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Tajik market increased more than sixfold over the same period of time and reached almost \$110 million, while the positive balance totalled \$107.5 million due to supplies from Belarus of cars, sugar, tractors and tractor-trailers, flour, meat by-products and fish, stationery made of paper and cardboard, chipboard.

Among the major joint projects implemented recently is the shipment to Afghanistan of the first batch of Belarusian tractors assembled at Agrotekhservis in the Tajik city of Gissar, where it is planned not only to produce modern machinery for the agro-industrial complex - forage harvesters, attachments, and expand the model range of assembled tractors, but also to create more than a hundred more qualified jobs, taking into account the further development of this

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<sup>296</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 211.

<sup>297</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan need to more actively implement projects in agriculture - Krupko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-proekty-v-selskom-hozjajstve-krupko-435795-2021/>

project. In this regard, within the framework of the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, an agreement on the expansion of assembly production through the development of tractor semi-trailers PST-9 at the site in Gissar was signed by JSC "UKH Bobruiskagromash" and JSC "Agrotekhservis". "In addition, the companies signed a contract for the supply of the first batch of machine kits, the shipment of which is scheduled for the second quarter of 2021"<sup>298</sup>. It should be recalled that in Gissar, with Belarusian assistance, "a training centre is also functioning to train specialists for efficient operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment working in the fields of Tajikistan"<sup>299</sup>. The contract for the delivery of one hundred Belarusian autonomous trolleybuses to Dushanbe is in its final stages.

Belarusian-Tajik co-operation in agriculture was also very dynamic in 2020. Suffice it to say that the volume of mutual trade in agricultural products and foodstuffs between the two former Soviet republics reached almost ten million dollars. An important detail is that "Belarusian food exports to this country increased 1.4 times to \$9.5 million <...>. In January 2021, domestic agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$775 thousand were supplied to Tajikistan (a sevenfold increase over the same period last year)"<sup>300</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this positive trend will continue in the medium term. Bellegprom Concern is also working out the possibilities of supplying flax to this Central Asian country, which is of great interest to Tajik business circles. In particular, the IGC discussed "the issue of supplying products of Orsha Flax Factory and flax-containing fabrics of Kamvol to the Tajik market"<sup>301</sup>.

The exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, which took place in Dushanbe in 2021, was also designed to promote the growth of exports from Belarus to Tajikistan. It showcased the products of 40 domestic companies from key industries: Agrofood - agriculture and food products; TechMach - engineering and technology; Wood - woodworking and furniture products; Health - healthcare and pharmaceuticals; and FMCG - consumer goods. Tajik partners

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<sup>298</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" will expand assembly production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-rasshirit-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-v-tadzhikistane-436621-2021/>

<sup>299</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation and industrial co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiju-436006-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiju-436006-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiju-436006-2021/)

<sup>300</sup> Export of Belarusian agricultural products to Tajikistan in 2020 increased 1.4 times [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-v-14-raza-434869-2021/>

<sup>301</sup> "Bellegprom" is working on the possibility of supplying flax to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-prorabatvayet-vozmozhnosti-postavok-lna-v-tadzhikistan-435980-2021/>

were also able to learn about the export opportunities of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex and prospects for bilateral cooperation in crop and livestock farming at the TajBelAgro agricultural forum, where they discussed not only the conclusion of contracts for mutual supplies of agricultural products and machinery, but also the elaboration of cooperation options. Finally, within the framework of the business forum "Tajikistan-Belarus-Afghanistan", which was attended by more than two hundred enterprises from the three countries, "eight documents were signed on the development of partnership in the spheres of industry, education, food and beverage supplies"<sup>302</sup>, which indicates the growing dynamics of partnership in this trilateral format as well.

It should be noted that in June 2022, Minsk hosted the 15th meeting of the IGC, where the parties noted the most significant areas of bilateral interaction: investment, industry, agriculture, transport, social, cultural and scientific-technical spheres. Recall that "in 2021, Belarus' trade turnover with Tajikistan totalled more than \$126 million and increased by 12.6% compared to 2020, exports - just over \$122 million (up 11.1%), imports - \$4 million (up 90.5%)"<sup>303</sup>. Today, the two countries are mutually interested in expanding areas of cooperation, which could include the development of assembly production of Belarusian lifts in Tajikistan, the establishment of a joint venture to produce carpets, supplies of Belarusian passenger, quarry and construction equipment, as well as pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection, and increasing exports of food products, including those certified according to Halal standards. Belarus, in turn, is interested in importing raw materials for the Belarusian light industry from Tajikistan, as well as in continuing co-operation in education, culture, and sports.

In this context, it is important that in Tajikistan 2022-2026 are declared the years of industrial development. "During this period, it is planned to ensure average annual economic development at the level of at least 7 per cent and double GDP per capita, create more than 500,000 new jobs and reduce poverty to 15 per cent. Belarusian companies were invited to take an active part in solving these tasks. A separate wish was expressed to continue training Tajik specialists in Minsk for different areas of the economy"<sup>304</sup>. In this regard, the Belarusian side is ready to provide Tajik partners with any types of engineering machinery,

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<sup>302</sup> Belarus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed 8 documents on partnership development at the business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-tadzhikistan-i-afghanistan-podpisali-na-biznes-forume-8-dokumentov-o-razvitii-partnerstva-435998-2021/>

<sup>303</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan are interested in expanding areas of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-zainteresovany-v-rasshirenii-napravlenij-sotrudnichestva-506166-2022>

<sup>304</sup> Pivovar, E. Krutoy stated about the readiness of Belarus to provide Tajikistan with any types of engineering equipment / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krutoj-zajavil-o-gotovnosti-belarusi-obespechit-tadzhikistan-ljubymi-vidami-mashinostroitelnoj-tehniki-523859-2022/>

primarily quarry and road machinery, for the implementation of infrastructure projects in the country's mining and electric power industries. There is a possibility to significantly increase supplies of new models of Belarusian buses, trucks, woodworking, petrochemical and metallurgical products to the Tajik market, as well as to open joint production facilities for assembling lifts, household appliances and furniture.

In the agro-industrial sector, Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery and meat and dairy products. In particular, significant work is underway on the shipment of agricultural machinery from Belarus, which is badly needed by the Tajik agrarian sector. "In 2021, 411 units of tractors of various brands and more than 124 agricultural machines were delivered to Tajikistan"<sup>305</sup>. At the same time, the Tajik side expresses interest in continuing co-operation in this area. In addition, partners from Tajikistan plan to expand the range of supplies of beef meat products, dairy products and raw materials. Within the framework of the 15th IGC meeting, the parties also noted "the potential for growth in supplies of pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection and the possibility to provide Tajik agrarians with highly productive, balanced mixed fodder and admixtures"<sup>306</sup>.

The topic of co-operation between the regions of Belarus and Tajikistan is also developing successfully in 2022. In particular, on the agenda is the development of cooperation between the capitals of the two countries in a number of areas, including technology, production of pharmaceuticals, and education. Recall that in 2019 Minsk implemented a large project to provide Dushanbe with Belkommunmash trolleybuses. And today these cars are already decorating the Tajik capital. Another project is being implemented in the field of dairy production - cooperation of Tajik partners with Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. There are plans to develop co-operative ties and create a joint production of municipal machinery. As for the educational sphere, about 600 Tajik students are currently studying in Belarus. They mainly choose Minsk and technical universities for their studies. Many of them study at the Academy of Aviation and various faculties of the Belarusian State University. In addition, there are four joint faculties of Belarusian and Tajik universities. So the two capitals are developing

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<sup>305</sup> Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian meat and dairy products and agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-uvlichenii-postavok-belorusskoj-mjaso-molochnoj-produktsii-i-506657-2022/>

<sup>306</sup> Belarus is ready to supply halal products to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-postavljat-v-tadzhikistan-haljalnuju-produktsiju-506619-2022/>

many mechanisms of co-operation. And "in the future, a document will be signed to regulate further development of relations between Minsk and Dushanbe"<sup>307</sup>.

Another example of regional cooperation is the Homiel and Khatlon regions, which intend to develop co-operation in agriculture and industry. Thus, Gomel specialists are ready to build turnkey farms in the Tajik region. Partners from Khatlon region have "intentions in purchasing mineral fertilisers, timber, cattle, as well as fodder for poultry farms"<sup>308</sup>. Khatlon Oblast is a large region of Tajikistan, where 48 to 78 per cent of the total republican volume is grown for some agricultural products. These include vegetables, early fruits, melons, and citrus fruits.

Another important document was signed by Belarus and Tajikistan in Dushanbe in October 2022 - a roadmap for 2022-2026. In the context of implementing the accelerated industrial development programme of this Central Asian country, Tajik partners are interested in developing cooperation with the Belarusian side in the light, food, pharmaceutical, chemical, and mining industries. In addition, "the agrarian sector in the sphere of industrial cooperation and interregional cooperation were identified as priority areas of economic interaction"<sup>309</sup>. In addition, the two republics adopted a number of important bilateral documents. These include intergovernmental agreements on a system of mutual trade facilitation and on co-operation in the field of youth policy. The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus and the Agency for State Financial Control and Anti-Corruption of Tajikistan adopted a document on cooperation in combating corruption. The Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus and the Committee for Tourism Development under the Government of Tajikistan agreed to develop co-operation in the tourism sector. The National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of Belarus and the Agency for Export under the Government of Tajikistan also signed an agreement on cooperation. The National Academies of Sciences of the two countries agreed to train personnel in virology, microbiology, molecular biology, epidemiology, biotechnology and pharmacology. In addition, an action plan for the development of trade, economic and humanitarian co-operation between the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Dushanbe City

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<sup>307</sup> Co-operation between Belarus and Tajikistan was discussed in Minsk city executive committee [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-obsudili-v-mingorispolkome-525441-2022/>

<sup>308</sup> Gomel and Khatlon regions intend to develop co-operation in agro-industrial complex and industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-hatlonskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promyshlennosti-507131-2022/>

<sup>309</sup> Rakhmon outlined priority areas of co-operation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/rahmon-oboznachil-prioritetnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-528619-2022/>



Executive Body for 2023-2024 was approved. Mahiliou district established twinning ties with Spitamen district of Sughd region of Tajikistan..."<sup>310</sup>

During these October days, a Tajik-Belarusian business forum was also held in Dushanbe, attended by representatives of 73 enterprises from Belarus, almost fifty of which showed their products at the Made in Belarus exhibition. "Almost all sectors of the Belarusian economy were represented at the business forum: machine building, metallurgy, foodstuffs, woodworking, light industry. The total amount of contracts signed was about \$46 million. In addition, another \$2 million was secured during online negotiations"<sup>311</sup>.

In particular, Minsk Tractor Plant signed contracts with Tajik companies for \$11 million. "Thus, 170 units of BELARUS tractor equipment worth about \$4 million will be delivered to Madadi Tursunzoda. A trade agreement was signed with Agrotekhservis for the delivery of 320 tractors worth more than \$7 million"<sup>312</sup>. It should be noted that about 370 Belarusian tractors have already been delivered to Tajikistan in the first three quarters of this year. This is more than in January-September 2021 by almost 50 per cent. For reference: in November 2017, an assembly facility for BELARUS tractors was opened in the city of Hissar and contracts were signed for the production of seven models.

Another fact: Minsk Automobile Plant will supply 14 units of motor vehicles to the Tajik market for almost \$500,000. The contract within the framework of the Tajik-Belarusian business forum was signed by MAZ and CJSC Obi Zulol - "the largest producer of bottled water, carbonated beverages and natural juices in Tajikistan". In 2019, MAZ supplied the company with 18 units of machinery, including road trains and flatbed trucks with trailers"<sup>313</sup>.

Another participant in the Tajik-Belarusian business forum was the Belgospischeprom concern, eight enterprises of which took part in the Made in Belarus exhibition and even signed a number of contracts with Tajik partners for the supply of sugar, brewing malt and confectionery products. By the way,

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<sup>310</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan signed a road map for 2022-2026 and several other important documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-na-2022-2026-gody-i-esche-neskolko-vaznyh-dokumentov-528597-2022/>

<sup>311</sup> Tajik-Belarusian business forum is held in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/fotofakt-tadzhiksko-belorusskij-biznes-forum-prohodit-v-dushanbe-528500-2022/>

<sup>312</sup> MTW signed contracts with companies from Tajikistan for \$11 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zakljuchil-kontrakty-s-kompanijami-iz-tadzhikistana-na-11-mln-528650-2022/>

<sup>313</sup> MAZ will supply machinery to Tajikistan for almost \$500 th. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-tehniku-v-tadzhikistan-pochti-na-500-tys-528637-2022/>

"Tajikistan ranks first among the Concern's trading partner countries in Central Asia and the Middle East in terms of exports this year"<sup>314</sup>.

Representatives of Bellegprom Concern explored the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan as part of a business forum. The heads of the Orsha Flax Mill and the Baranovich Cotton Production Association, who visited Dushanbe, held talks on possible imports of cotton yarn and fibre, as the price of cotton yarn has become more acceptable for Belarusian producers in Tajikistan in recent years. Note that there are other interests in light industry co-operation between the two countries. "This [2022] year, the Belarusian company Mogotex supplied Tajikistan with its products for the first time. The exports included technical fabrics, with the transaction amounting to \$250,000. The Mogilev residents have agreed to supply Tajikistan in 2023 as well. <...> "Mogotex" will supply technical fabrics for \$300 thousand"<sup>315</sup>.

Vitebsk Carpets Holding, which is setting up a joint production facility in Khujand, Sughd Region, with Tajik partners, will also be represented on the Tajik market. Interestingly, in mid-April 2022, this city hosted the official opening ceremony of the joint Belarusian-Tajik assembly plant of lifts of OJSC "Mogilevliftmash", with Khujandtorgmash as a partner. The new lift production shop provided jobs for 50 residents of Khujand, where "using modern equipment and technologies, production of different types of lifts will be carried out - passenger lifts for high-rise buildings, production enterprises, as well as health care institutions"<sup>316</sup>.

As for cooperation in education and science, at the forum of rectors of universities of Belarus and Tajikistan held in October 2022, the parties saw great potential in the innovation sphere, in the implementation of joint educational programmes, and in the training of Tajik students in Belarusian universities and institutes. In particular, the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) signed a number of co-operation agreements with Tajik universities. These include the Dangara State University and the Tajik Agrarian University, the Tajik National University and the Technological University of Tajikistan, as well as the Mining and Metallurgical Institute of Tajikistan. Belarusian and Tajik partners already see a number of joint points for co-operation. "Interaction with the named

<sup>314</sup> Zhidkov: Tajikistan is one of the key partners for Belgospisheprom in the Central Asian market [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zhidkov-tadzhikistan-odin-iz-kljuchevyh-partnerov-dlja-belgospisheproma-na-tsentralnoaziatskom-rynke-528642-2022/>

<sup>315</sup> Belarus is studying the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-izuchaet-vozmozhnost-investirovaniya-v-proizvodstvo-hlopka-v-tadzhikistane-528489-2022>

<sup>316</sup> Emomali Rahmon took part in the opening of the assembly production of lifts "Mogilevliftmash" in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/emomali-rahmon-prinjal-uchastie-v-otkrytii-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-liftov-mogilevliftmash-v-496483-2022/>

universities is a new level of entering the Tajik market of educational services. <...> Opening new horizons of co-operation..."<sup>317</sup>. As a result, the parties believe that innovative interaction is the key to the creation of new joint ventures on the territory of Tajikistan and Belarus. And in general, all these facts "show the growing interest of the two former Soviet republics in fruitful co-operation in a wide variety of areas"<sup>318</sup>, which are reaching a new level in the form of comprehensive measures of the Road Map of Belarus and Tajikistan for 2022-2026.

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<sup>317</sup> BNTU and universities of Tajikistan to cooperate in the field of science, education and innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bntu-i-vuzy-tadzhikistana-budut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-nauki-obrazovanija-i-innovatsij-528871-2022>

<sup>318</sup> Zalessky, B. International relations and media. Features of multi-vector international co-operation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 129.

## Belarus: an efficient driver of industrial production

Import substitution is one of the key priorities for the development of the Republic of Belarus in the near future. Back in December 2021, the Belarusian government defined strategic areas of work and developed specific tasks in this direction. These include using the opportunities of such integration entities as the Eurasian Economic Union, "increasing localisation in conjunction with support measures, implementation of sectoral import substitution programmes, development of cooperation both within the country and with friendly countries, use of local raw materials, active involvement of scientific developments in the real sector of the economy"<sup>319</sup>. In 2022, import substitution has become the most important task of every import-related enterprise to work ahead of the curve. In this regard, strenuous tasks have been communicated to all regions of Belarus. The measures that encourage Belarusian enterprises to substitute imports are "increased localisation, development of technological chains, processing of local raw materials, involvement of small and medium-sized businesses"<sup>320</sup>. Interesting experience in this context has already been accumulated in a number of Belarusian regions and departments.

The topic of import substitution is very relevant in **Minsk region**. Manufacturers of Minsk region "only in this [2022] year plan to master the production of import-substituting products in 154 nomenclature items. This is over \$1.5 billion. At the same time, it is planned to export import-substituting products worth \$1 billion"<sup>321</sup>. Thus, "Slutsk Cheese Factory" has implemented a project to produce instant milk powder. This is a product from which whole milk can be obtained at home using drinking water. Taking into account the situation with food shortages in some countries, instant milk may be in demand in Asia and Africa as well. In the Kopyl district, the Dzerzhinsky agro-industrial complex has implemented a large-scale turkey meat production project. The enterprise will produce more than 6 thousand tonnes of turkey meat per year. The Minsk region has already mastered the production of blue mould cheese. In a few years, production of cheese with white mould will be mastered.

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<sup>319</sup> Golovchenko: import substitution is one of the engines of the economy, designed to resist the sanctions pressure [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-importozameschenie-odin-iz-dvigatelej-ekonomiki-prizvannyj-protivostojat-sanktsionnomu-542135-2022/>

<sup>320</sup> Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 6.

<sup>321</sup> Kurlenko: this year Minsk region plans to export import-substituting products for \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kurlenko-v-etom-godu-minskaja-oblast-planiruet-eksportirovat-importozameschajuschuju-produktsiju-na-1-514181-2022>

Special attention is paid to import substitution issues at OJSC Belakotekhnika, which is located in the village of Svisloch, Pukhovichi district. The company produces more than 100 items of veterinary drugs and more than 60 fodders and feed additives based on unique recipes. At the same time, Belakotekhnika is constantly expanding its assortment. Its own development department registers six to eight new product names every year. "In 2022, a new production site specialising exclusively in veterinary preparations was put into operation. It comprises four production areas: a physico-chemical laboratory, a development department laboratory, raw material warehouses and finished product warehouses."<sup>322</sup> . With the commissioning of the new production site, the production and sales volumes have increased by 30 per cent. The company's products are cheaper than their European counterparts, while their quality is not inferior.

**Brest Oblast** enterprises have also actively engaged in import substitution. In particular, the Zhabinka fodder factory will soon launch a new line for the production of fish and animal feed, which used to be purchased abroad. Kobrin butter and cheese factory together with the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Oncology and Medical Radiology is completing the production of food for cancer patients. The Pinsk district is working on the issue of extraction and processing of basalt, a raw material for the glass industry, which was mainly imported. OJSC "Berezastroymaterialy" is thinking about the development of clay deposit in Stolin district in order to replace the part of raw materials purchased abroad. An important detail: "In January-May [2022], 267 new commercial organisations and 1,334 individual entrepreneurs were registered in the region. Private structures have also reoriented themselves to produce import-substituting products and are retooling their production facilities. And the work to ensure import substitution continues"<sup>323</sup> .

In 2022, the Southwest region produced nearly \$900 million worth of such products, while introducing new types of goods. For example, the production of batteries and components was increased. In Kobryn district, capacities for the production of mushroom compost were put into operation. The Brest Radio-Technical Plant mastered the production of temperature indicators for the needs of "Brestgazoapparat". The enterprises that produce equipment for the processing industry also joined this work. Thus, KOMPO mastered the production of a line

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<sup>322</sup> Voropai, A. How "Belekotekhnika" provides import substitution of veterinary drugs and feed / A. Voropai // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/reportazh-kak-belekotekhnika-obespechivaet-importozameschenie-veterinarnykh-preparatov-i-kormov-514311-2022>

<sup>323</sup> Vakulchik: Brest region enterprises actively involved in the work on import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vakulchik-predpriyatija-brestskoj-oblasti-aktivno-vkluchilis-v-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-514809-2022>

for sausage making, while AgroPischeProm produced meat processing equipment.

In 2023 Brest region aims to produce more than \$900 million worth of import-substituting products, of which more than \$530 million worth of goods will be exported. At the moment, work is underway on 146 items, including 14 new ones. "In particular, the region's enterprises have taken up the manufacture of radiosurgical instruments, construction parts made of plastics, planters and seedling planters, and zip lock packaging. A farm in Ivanovo district grows bulbs of Dutch varieties of tulips. One of the enterprises in the region has mastered the production of low-protein bakery and confectionery products"<sup>324</sup>. In addition, Kuzlitmash in Pinsk is working on a new line of mechanical presses for precision stamping. Zubr Energy has started production of batteries using AGM technology. "Silicon Materials will produce ingots of monocrystalline silicon. The production of hydraulic valves and expansion of the hydraulic cylinder range will be organised at SALEO-Kobrin, and the Kobrin tool factory SITOMO will set up production of chrome-plated hydraulic cylinder rods.

**Mogilev region** has an interesting experience in import substitution in BelEmsa LLC, which is located on the territory of Mogilev district and is an enterprise-resident of a free economic zone with Turkish-Belarusian private capital. Since the beginning of 2022, the share of import substitution at BelEmsa has increased to 80 per cent. "More than 150 products are produced here, including nappies for children and adults, wet toilet paper, wet wipes and wipes with antibacterial effect. The production of medical masks reaches a record high of over 100 million pieces per month, and of baby nappy panties over 20 million pieces per month. These volumes are sufficient to fully cover the needs of the domestic market and the territory of the neighbouring countries"<sup>325</sup>. Soon a new line will be launched at the company, which will increase the production of adult nappies three times - up to 18 million pieces per month, while the capacity of the existing line is more than six million. In the near future, along with economy and middle class baby nappies, premium products produced by BelEms, the quality of which is not inferior to Japanese and European analogues, will appear on the shelves. Thus, the company will fully cover the entire price range.

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<sup>324</sup> Brest region enterprises plan to produce import-substituting products for more than \$900 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-brestskoj-oblasti-planirujut-proizvesti-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-bolee-chem-na-561252-2023>

<sup>325</sup> The share of import substitution at "BelEmsa" increased from the beginning of the year to 80% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dolja-importozameschenija-na-belemsa-vozroslo-s-nachala-goda-do-80-514471-2022/>

In general, in 2022 Mogilev region produced import-substituting products worth more than \$820 million, and "more than 60% of manufactured products worth more than \$500 million were exported. The share of small and medium-sized businesses accounts for more than half of import-substituting products in the region"<sup>326</sup>. For reference, it should be noted that last year 113 economic entities in Mogilev region produced import-substituting products in 191 commodity items. Among them is the branch "Yelizovo" of OJSC "Grodno Glass Plant", where the modernisation of the glass container shop has been completed. Now the project on installation of the line of sorting and processing of glass waste is being worked out there. PTUP "Krasny esudovik-Slavgorod" organised an innovative production of confectionery products, which has already created more than 80 new jobs. OJSC Babushkina Krynka, the managing company of the holding company Dairy Company Babushkina Krynka, is implementing a project to create new lactose-free dairy products using an innovative membrane technology method. The project is included in the State Programme of Innovative Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025. UCHNPPP "Technolit" implements a project to organise the production of components for meat processing plants, flax factories, petrochemical enterprises, within the framework of which more than 300 units of spare parts for flax factories and meat processing plants have already been produced. One more thing: the enterprises of Mogilev region plan to produce import-substituting products worth \$870 million in 2023.

As for the enterprises of **Gomel region**, which are actively working to replace imported products, the region produced import-substituting products worth more than \$860 million in 2022. At the same time, more than 70 per cent of such products were exported. Among the most effective import-substituting projects is the Medplast enterprise, where an innovative production of vacuum tubes for venous blood collection was launched in December 2021. Now 55 types of tubes of different sizes, volumes and fillings are produced here. These products are fully compliant with the level of world standards. "Over 14.4 million tubes were produced last year [2022], and plans for 2023 include 20 million tubes. In the long term, this production will make it possible to fully meet the needs of the country's medical institutions with the possibility to refuse imported analogues"<sup>327</sup>. The total demand in Belarus is 20-25 million tubes per year. Another example of work on import substitution in Gomel region is the enterprise

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<sup>326</sup> This year the enterprises of Mogilev region intend to produce import-substituting products for \$870 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-mogilevskoj-oblasti-v-otom-godu-namereny-proizvesti-importozameschajuschej-produksii-na-560572-2023/>

<sup>327</sup> From tubes to hydraulic blocks: import substitution has been activated in Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-probirok-do-gidroblokov-v-gomelskoj-oblasti-aktivirovali-importozameschenie-558557-2023/>

"SvetlogorskKhimvolokno", where last year "import-substituting production of nitrile and latex gloves for medical and food spheres was launched. The design capacity of the production - 200 million pieces of gloves per year - completely covers the demand of the republic, including for surgical purposes"<sup>328</sup>. At the same time, more than 180 new jobs have been created. Another interesting fact is the "Saleo-Gomel" enterprise, which provided a significant increase in the supply of new import-substituting hydraulic blocks and hydraulic equipment for the head conveyors of the machine-building holdings "MTZ" and "Gomselmash".

Systematic work in this respect is also shown by **Vitebsk region**, where "the volume of import substitution for the half-year [2023] is more than \$500 million, by the end of the year this amount is expected to double"<sup>329</sup>. The region has organised the production and supply of high-pressure hoses, filter hoses and wipes, fasteners to machine-building enterprises, and fusion sealing tape. There are also 147 production projects and 124 infrastructure projects planned in the region. The Orsha Flax Mill was modernising and expanding its production. The Polotsk district mastered the technology of metal structures manufacturing with multi-system integration of processes based on the Industry 4.0 concept. In Vitebsk, a factory of truck cranes with a lifting capacity of up to 100 tonnes was under construction, and in Ushach district, a workshop for processing raw materials and producing protein and vitamin supplements was built. Construction of 6 MW wind turbines is being completed in the Senno district, and a project to produce cross-laminated panels is being implemented in the Tolochinsky district. Besides, the Verkhnedvinsk butter and cheese factory is planning to produce mozzarella, the creation of a multi-profile fruit and vegetable processing centre is underway in Sharkovshchina, and the construction of a delayed coking unit for oil residues at Naftan OJSC has been completed. Finally, we should mention several more import-substituting projects in Vitebsk region: a vaccine plant with reconstruction of the existing production in the village of Dolzha - BelVituFarm OJSC; a plant of innovative veterinary drugs - Belkarolin LLC; production of universal cable for laying in land, water and air - in Energokomplekt LLC; production of metal-cutting and auxiliary tools with the introduction of innovative technological processes - in Orsha Tool Plant OJSC. So, in 2024, Vitebsk region, apparently, should significantly update the indicators on the volume of products that will replace imported supplies.

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<sup>328</sup> Krupko: enterprises of Gomel region are actively working on the replacement of imported products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/krupko-predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-aktivno-rabotajut-nad-zamescheniem-importnoj-produktsii-557802-2023/>

<sup>329</sup> Subbotin: the volume of import substitution in Vitebsk region for the half-year totalled more than \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/subbotin-objem-importozameschenija-v-vitebskoj-oblasti-za-polugodie-sostavil-bolee-500-mln-589817-2023/>



Speaking about the sectoral tasks in terms of import substitution, the enterprises of **Belgospischeprom Concern**, which ensure the substitution of similar products with their own production, look good against the background of the reduction in imports of consumer goods. In particular, within the framework of the state programme of innovative development of Belarus for 2021-2025, the implementation of the project "Organisation of innovative production of confectionery products with the installation of a line at the enterprise "Krasny Ispizhovik - Slavgorod" has been completed. "The company specialises in the production of various types of chewy marmalade, sunflower, rapeseed, flower and whipped cream honey, as well as innovative types of healthy candies. Such a wide range of products will provide Belarusians with tasty and healthy confectionery products"<sup>330</sup>. About 100 new jobs have been created at the enterprise. In general, "in the first nine months of 2023, the concern produced an import-substituting range of products worth \$425 million. All these products are now on the shelves of Belarusian shops"<sup>331</sup>. The main part in the production of these products fell on the confectionery and canning industry, in particular, those engaged in the production of tinned fruit and vegetable products, including those for infants and school meals.

One more fact concerning this topic. For 2023, organisations of the **Ministry of Industry** system will produce import-substituting products worth almost six billion dollars, and in 2024 this volume should increase by another 200 million dollars. "The increase will occur in such groups as trucks, buses, minibuses, trailers for trucks, grain and forage harvesting machinery, diesel engines, rolled metal products, TV sets"<sup>332</sup>. In addition, the positive dynamics of import-substituting products output will be largely ensured by developing and organising the production of innovative products. In this regard, the experience of the Belarusian Automobile Plant, which at its holding site in Orsha is creating a high-tech production facility to manufacture heavy-duty dump trucks and mastering new types of products, is interesting. "The introduced rolling technology will make it possible to produce high-quality blanks of solid rolled and profiled rings from steels of various grades with an outer diameter of up to 3 m and a weight of up to 3 tonnes with high quality and minimum allowance for

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<sup>330</sup> Enterprises of "Belgospischeprom" supply products to 36 countries of the world [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belgospischeproma-postavljajut-produktsiju-v-36-stran-mira-513896-2022/>

<sup>331</sup> Head of Belgospischeprom: the concern has produced \$425 million worth of import-substituting products for nine months [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glava-belgospischeproma-za-devjat-mesjatsev-kontsern-proizvel-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-na-425-599446-2023/>

<sup>332</sup> Enterprises of the Ministry of Industry in 2024 plan to increase the output of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-minproma-v-2024-godu-planirujut-uvelichit-objem-vypuska-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-606535-2023/>

subsequent processing. They will be used to produce bearings, crown gears of planetary gears, flanges and other types of products. Currently such blanks are not produced in Belarus"<sup>333</sup>. These high-tech products are used in machine building, aircraft and engine building, nuclear power engineering, shipbuilding. For this reason, the implementation of this investment project with high export potential will not only lead to the creation of our own high-tech production of rolling rings, but will also ensure their full import substitution both for the needs of the Belarusian Automobile Plant and other enterprises of our country.

In the **energy sector**, Belenergoremnaladka has accumulated extensive experience in the production of import-substituting products. This is the largest organisation in Belarus specialising in repair, installation, adjustment, diagnostics and maintenance of power equipment - from small CHPPs to the Belarusian NPP, as well as production of spare parts and units, including unique technologies. In 2022, this enterprise produced "import-substituting products worth \$2 million, or 53% more than in 2021, and this year - already worth \$3.5 million, with the annual plan of \$2.8 million"<sup>334</sup>. In addition, Belenergoremnaladka commissioned a mobile workstation based on a high-precision 3D scanner with computer equipment and licensed software. The company's own design and engineering bureau and accredited metal and welding control laboratory allow it to provide services for the development of a full set of design documentation to produce a product according to the sample. In 2024, the company will perform maintenance and repair of equipment of both power units, including controlled access zones, at the Belarusian NPP. In the future, a branch office will be opened here so that the work can be performed with the least involvement of third-party organisations.

Recall that in late December 2022 at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, it was noted that in 2023 import substitution will become an even more effective driver of Belarusian industrial production, where special attention will be paid to increasing localisation. For reference, it should be noted that two years ago the amount of these products in Belarus was about \$27 billion, and already "in the current [2023] year the volume of import-substituting products will amount to about \$29 billion"<sup>335</sup>. This indicates that a large number of enterprises in the whole country - in sectors and

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<sup>333</sup> Investments of BELAZ in the creation of a modern ring rolling complex will amount to almost Br200 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-belaza-v-sozdanie-sovremennogo-kompleksa-koltseraskatki-sostavjat-pochti-br200-mln-605545-2023/>

<sup>334</sup> Belenergoremnaladka OJSC produced import-substituting products for \$3.5 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/oao-belenergoremnaladka-vypustilo-importozameschajushej-produktsii-na-35-mln-606481-2023/>

<sup>335</sup> Golovchenko: we expect that this year the output of import-substituting products will amount to \$29 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-ozhidaem-chno-v-etom-godu-objem-vypuska-importozameschajushej-produktsii-sostavit-29-mlrd-605441-2023/>

regions - are already involved in the implementation of import-substitution programmes in all areas, from trucks and buses to TV sets, furniture and the simplest consumer goods. And in 2024, import substitution, cooperation between enterprises and increasing the level of localisation of production will be effective ways of increasing industrial output and strengthening cooperation between the business sector and large state holdings.

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