

IDEOLOGY OF PRAGMATISM

In 2023, Belarus' free economic zones (FEZs) confidently confirmed the status of key investment attraction centers, which provide not only unique conditions for the functioning of resident enterprises, but also effective development of regions, and form one fifth of the main national indicators - investment, exports, and production. As of January 1, 2024, 425 organizations were registered as residents of these zones. At the same time, last year 30 new companies came to the FEZ, which plan to implement projects in logistics, food industry, furniture production, electrical equipment, metalworking and which will create more than 1,300 jobs. In addition, in 2023, the procedure for registration of business entities as FEZ residents was simplified. The administrations of these entities were authorized to develop detailed plans for the development of the territories. Seven large engineering and transportation infrastructure facilities were also built. In 2024, FEZs of Belarus will show a lot of new projects to create innovative production and increase the export potential of the whole country. How they will be realized is discussed in this paper.



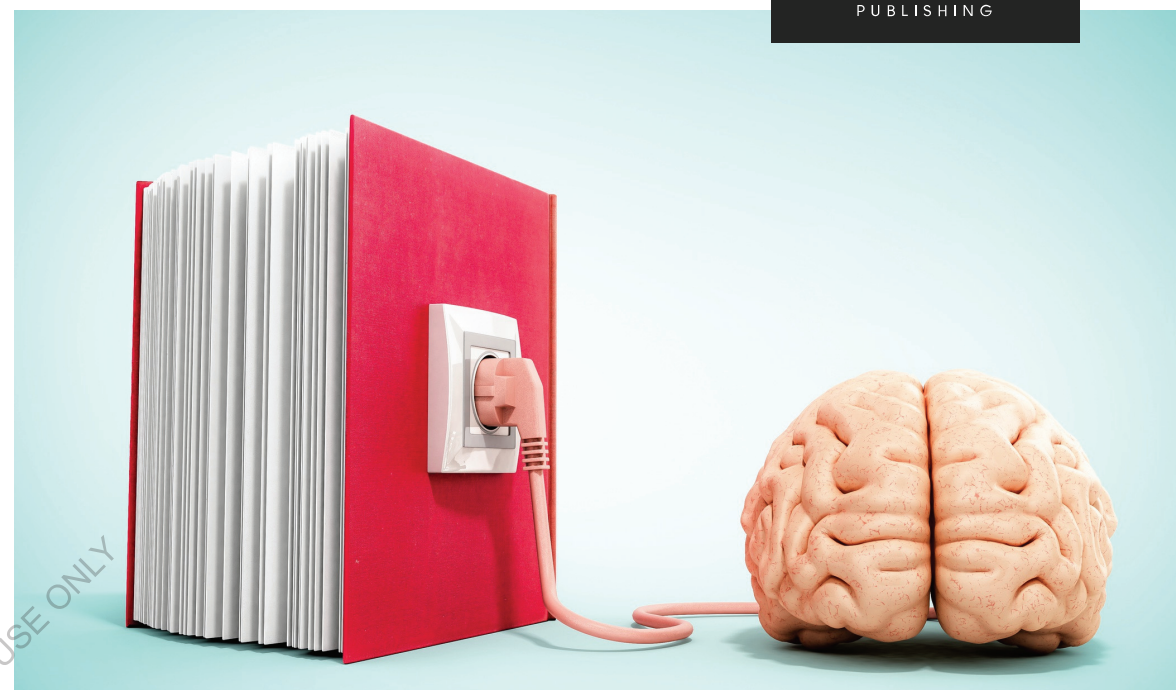
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FEZ in Belarus

Boris Zalessky



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*Peculiarities of partnership in the Belarusian economy:
internal and external segments*

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Cover image: www.ingimage.com

This book is a translation from the original published under ISBN 978-620-7-46935-2.

Publisher:

Scienza Scripts

is a trademark of

Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd. and OmniScriptum S.R.L publishing group

120 High Road, East Finchley, London, N2 9ED, United Kingdom

Str. Armeneasca 28/1, office 1, Chisinau MD-2012, Republic of Moldova, Europe

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-620-7-33820-7

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Facilitate the realisation of new projects

Free Economic Zones (FEZs) in Belarus are an effective tool for increasing Belarusian exports, attracting foreign investment and increasing profits. At the same time, the successful operation of FEZs attracts not only tax preferences and benefits, but also "reduced time for document processing, simplified administrative procedures for investors, simplified procedures for allocation of land plots within FEZs and demolition of unused buildings"¹. In 2023, FEZs confidently confirmed the status of key centres of attraction for investment, which provide not only unique conditions for the functioning of resident enterprises, but also effective development of the regions, and form one fifth of the main national indicators - investment, exports and production.

Suffice it to say that as of 1 January 2024, 425 organisations were registered as FEZ residents, which "have already invested a total of about \$12.5 billion in the implementation of the announced projects"². At the same time, 30 new companies came to the FEZ last year, which planned to implement projects in logistics, food industry, furniture production, electrical equipment, metalworking and which will create more than 1300 jobs. In addition, in 2023, the procedure for registration of business entities as FEZ residents was simplified. The administrations of these formations were authorised to develop detailed plans for the development of the territories. "Also, 7 large engineering and transport infrastructure facilities were built for a total amount of more than Br130 million"³.

For reference, 13 new infrastructure facilities were commissioned in the FEZ in 2022. The availability of ready infrastructure allowed FEZ residents to complete the construction of modern enterprises in 2023 and subsequently set up the production of new export-oriented products. In particular, a woodworking plant was put into operation in Svisloch district, and also allowed "in Grodno - to open the production of glass containers using innovative energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies, in Minsk district - to build a plant of unique X-ray

¹ Golovchenko: an oasis of the most demanded business environment is created for investors in FEZ [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-dlja-investorov-v-sez-sozdaetsja-oazis-naibolee-vostrebovannyj-biznes-sredy-588296-2023/>

² Chebotar: since the beginning of the year FEZ attracted 26 residents with a total investment volume of \$157 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-s-nachala-goda-sez-privlekali-26-rezidentov-s-obschim-objemom-investitsij-157-mln-606717-2023/>

³ In 2023, 30 new companies received the status of FEZ resident [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-2023-godu-status-rezidenta-sez-poluchili-30-novyh-kompanij-616460-2024/>

equipment, in Minsk - to complete the construction of an aircraft repair plant, in Gomel - to establish the production of medical products"⁴.

One of the most powerful zones in Belarus is FEZ Minsk, whose share in the industrial production of all Belarusian FEZs reaches almost 20 per cent. In 2023, among the main tasks to be implemented in this zone are: "1) attraction of new investors; 2) intensification of foreign economic activity; 3) use of new innovative technologies; 4) stimulation of business activity; 5) efficient use of resources; 6) expansion of import-substituting production capacities"⁵. As of mid-December 2023, 105 enterprises with Belarusian and foreign investments were already operating here. Over a quarter of a century, the residents of the zone have built "43 modern factories, 16 factories are under construction (taking into account stages and queues), 10 - at the design stage"⁶. Last year, new residents came to the FEZ with interesting investment projects in various industries.

For example, in February 2023, the company Carvalio LLC was registered in FEZ "Minsk", which undertook the implementation of an investment project to create the production of furniture and its elements, wooden, metal building structures and joinery. "Modern furniture production will ensure the complex and rational use of wood and production of demanded products on the territory of FEZ "Minsk". The project implementation provides for the construction of the facility on a 1.5 hectare land plot near Fanipol (Minsk region)"⁷. More than 50 jobs will be created at the new enterprise, and the share of export supplies will be at least 80 per cent.

In March 2023, another - 100th resident - Modul-Online LLC was registered in the FEZ, which planned to "implement an investment project for the production of furniture parts based on laminated chipboard. Investment costs will be spent on the purchase of new production equipment and modernisation of its own production facilities on the territory of the free economic zone"⁸. About one hundred jobs will be created at the enterprise. Apparently, the production will be

⁴ In 2022, 25 projects were successfully completed in free economic zones [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-2022-godu-v-svobodnyh-ekonomicheskikh-zonah-uspeshno-zaversheno-25-proektov-556389-2023>

⁵ Zaleskii, B. Export growth strategy. Opportunities and challenges of open economy in modern conditions / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 51.

⁶ Enterprises of FEZ "Minsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezminsk.by/residenty/predpriyatiya-sez-minsk/>

⁷ The new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will produce furniture and building structures [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-budet-proizvodit-mebel-i-stroitelnye-konstruktsii-550914-2023>

⁸ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will produce furniture parts based on laminated chipboard [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-budet-proizvodit-mebelnye-detali-na-osnove-laminirovannogo-dsp-558219-2023/>

a synthesis of a high-tech production process, a large potential of skilled workers, technologists, designers and management specialists. At the same time, more than 60 per cent of production is planned to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as far abroad.

In the second half of 2023, five more new residents appeared in the FEZ in five months. In July - two companies. The first is Gualapak BiWay LLC, which was founded by a leading multinational flexible packaging group for food and non-food products headquartered in Italy, operating on four continents through 11 production facilities and selling its products worldwide. The implementation of the investment project of the new FEZ resident "will contribute to achieving the task set by the programme of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus to ensure environmentally safe living conditions for the population, improve environmental protection and efficient use of natural resources"⁹. It is planned that at least two thirds of the production volume will be exported. The second resident is Albus Group LLC with an investment project on creation of production of chemical additives for various industries. The main idea of the project is to create a new production complex on the territory of the FEZ to produce emulsion additive and other chemical products. "The first import-substituting product, which is planned to be put into production, is AKB glue, used for processing paper products"¹⁰. The fact is that so far there are no producers of this glue in Belarus, for this reason the existing demand of the Belarusian market is fully covered by imported supplies. So, hopefully, the new resident will be able to significantly strengthen its position in the market, expand the product range, reduce the cost of production and increase sales volumes.

The next new FEZ resident - in October 2023 - is the company with Turkish capital "Diligent Company", which plans an investment project on "organising the production of ABS and polypropylene plastic products (travel suitcases). The project envisages creation of 60 new jobs"¹¹. And in early December, Holz Inc. came to the FEZ, one of the founders of which is the TMC group of companies engaged in the construction of warehouses, hangars and production buildings, as well as the development of pre-project documentation. The new resident will

⁹ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will be engaged in the production of flexible packaging [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-gibkoj-upakovki-577745-2023/>

¹⁰ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will create the production of chemical additives for industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-himicheskikh-dobavok-dlja-otraslej-promyshlennosti-577985-2023/>

¹¹ The company with Turkish capital "Diligent Company" became a new resident of FEZ "Minsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novym-rezidentom-sez-minsk-stala-kompanija-s-turetskim-kapitalom-diligent-kompani-594996-2023/>

implement a project for the production of furniture and blanks, "will be engaged in the construction of a production and warehouse complex of 10 thousand square metres with all necessary facilities and its equipping with technological equipment"¹². This will be a high-tech and highly profitable production facility with significant export potential.

In mid-December, the 105th resident of FEZ Minsk became the company Manrosti LLC, which plans to implement an investment project to organise high-tech production of coffee products with its own research base. This will ensure "the needs of domestic and foreign enterprises in quality products, increase the growth of export potential, create high-tech jobs"¹³. An important fact: the company has already allocated a third of its jobs to workers with disabilities who are directly involved in the production of the products. In the last days of 2023, the resident became KUP "Department of Road and Bridge Construction and Improvement of Minsk City Executive Committee" with an investment project for the construction of a hot-dip galvanising plant. It is expected that this enterprise will become one of the largest in Belarus in this field and will provide services in hot-dip galvanising of metal structures of various shapes and sizes to both Belarusian and foreign companies. Sixty new jobs will be created here. "The plant's production capacity is to process products with a total weight of 24,000 tonnes per year. The start of production activities under the project is scheduled for 2026"¹⁴. As a result, imports of galvanising services will be reduced in the country by more than six million dollars annually.

An important event in the development of this FEZ in December 2023 was the opening of a significant energy infrastructure facility for the region - the Cherkasy substation. The fact is that today on this territory "in the area of Fanipol 12 residents work with a total amount of attracted investments in fixed assets \$183.9 million, created 1725 new jobs. FEZ enterprises on this territory have produced products worth \$1.93 billion"¹⁵. In 2022, the gas supply pipeline was commissioned here, and last year an on-site gas pipeline string with a length of

¹² A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will be engaged in furniture production [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-mebeli-602938-2023/>

¹³ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" realises an investment project for the production of coffee products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-realizuet-investproekt-po-proizvodstvu-kofejnyh-produktov-605440-2023/>

¹⁴ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will take up an investment project for the construction of a hot-dip galvanising plant [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-investproektom-po-stroitelstvu-zavoda-gorjachego-tsinkovanija-607216-2023/>

¹⁵ Gas pipeline put into operation in FEZ "Minsk" in the area of Fanipol [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gazoprovod-vveli-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-sez-minsk-v-rajone-fanipolja-607767-2023/>

over two kilometres was built. The launch of this infrastructure facility increases the attractiveness of this territory, provides gas supply to new, modern, high-tech-based enterprises of FEZ residents, and will also make it possible to attract a significant amount of investment and create more than 500 new jobs.

In January 2024, three more companies with interesting projects appeared in the FEZ. Firstly, BAZtyub LLC, which manufactures cold-deformed pipe products in Zhodzina, is a unique enterprise. There are no more such enterprises in Belarus. The new resident "will build a plant for the production of metal pipes and machining of metal products with a capacity of 4 thousand tonnes per year"¹⁶. This project, where at least 100 jobs will be created, will increase production volume and meet the steady demand for these products, as the manufacture of pipes from sheet metal is widely used in various fields - from construction to transport and industry. Secondly, MetalBelMash LLC, which will organise the production of hot-rolled coil sheet, which will allow producing high-quality import-substituting products for Belarusian economic entities. After all, hot-rolled metal products occupy a large niche among all rolled products and are used in a wide range of construction, machine building, as well as in the automotive industry, shipbuilding, bridge construction, and fencing.

Thirdly, Dansibel LLC, which is implementing an investment project to organise the production of sanitary and hygienic products for seven years. Production areas will be modernised and the necessary equipment will be installed - several lines, which are characterised by high productivity and allow for the production of a wide range of products. These "production capacities will allow to produce more than 1.5 million packs of products per year. The declared volume of investments in fixed assets under the project will amount to about 1 million euros"¹⁷. It is to be expected that the new resident will be able to quickly develop new markets in order to increase the range of high quality products.

Finally, already in February this year, another resident - Ampera Group LLC - was registered in FEZ Minsk, which will start producing charging stations for electric vehicles as early as 2024 and will become a new player in this market segment. "The technological novelty of the investment project lies in the possibility of producing charging stations with a capacity of up to 750 kW, weldless construction, liquid cooling of charging cables. The company's

¹⁶ New residents of FEZ "Minsk" will engage in the production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/novye-rezidenty-sez-minsk-zajmutsja-proizvodstvom-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-609600-2024/>

¹⁷ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will be engaged in the production of sanitary-hygienic means [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-sredstv-sanitarno-gigienicheskogo-naznachenija-611393-2024/>

production capacity allows it to produce up to 1,200 charging stations per year"¹⁸. More than 15 jobs will be created.

In general, in 2023, FEZ "Minsk" enterprises attracted investments in fixed capital of about 250 million Belarusian rubles, which is 1.2 times more than in 2022. "Despite a number of restrictive measures, foreign business is interested in investing in the development of enterprises. The inflow of foreign direct investment was about \$207 million, which is 7 per cent more than in 2022"¹⁹.

In 2024, FEZ Minsk plans to involve even more organisations and use all available territories. After all, this FEZ "was designed to give businesses a boost to development in key industries"²⁰. And a number of countries are already interested in investment co-operation with this FEZ. For example, in August 2023, the Turkish Association of Independent Industrialists and Entrepreneurs MUSIAD, which includes more than 60 thousand Turkish companies, said that it was "interested in launching production in Belarus in the chemical industry, as well as ready to consider other areas of business"²¹ in partnership with the FEZ "Minsk". In September 2023, the capital's FEZ expanded its interaction with partners from Tajikistan, when three agreements on cooperation with the FEZ - Sughd, Kulyab, and Dangara - were signed at once on the margins of the Belarusian-Tajik business forum. "The documents are aimed at developing bilateral relations, as well as cooperation in the field of research and implementation of international practices of investment project implementation"²². And in October 2023, during the Iran-Belarus Business Forum, FEZ Minsk signed a memorandum of cooperation with Iran's FEZ Maku, in which the parties emphasised "the expansion of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, including participation in joint projects, business events, trade and investment

¹⁸ A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will be engaged in the production of charging stations for electric cars [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-zarjadnyh-stantsij-dlja-elektromobilej-618320-2024/>

¹⁹ Foreign business is interested in investing in the development of enterprises [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezminsk.by/news/inostrannyj-biznes-zainteresovan-investirovat-v-razvitiye-predpriyatiy/>

²⁰ Kartun: more organisations should be involved in FEZ 'Minsk' [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kartun-v-sez-minsk-neobhodimo-vovlekat-bolshe-organizatsij-562537-2023/>

²¹ Turkish investors intend to launch production in the chemical industry in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turetskie-investory-namereny-zapustit-v-belarusi-proizvodstvo-v-sfere-himicheskoy-promyshlennosti-583837-2023/>

²² FEZ "Minsk" will expand cooperation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-minsk-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-tadzhikistanom-590824-2023/>

missions"²³. Finally, in December 2023, delegations from China and India visited the capital's FEZ and considered prospects for expanding contacts and implementing investment projects.

So, in 2024, FEZ Minsk and its residents will show many more new projects and creative ideas to create innovative industries and increase the export potential of the capital region and the entire republic. The main measures that will increase the efficiency of companies in the development of exports are modernisation and technical re-equipment of existing production facilities, introduction of modern technologies, reduction of production costs, including through the full application of benefits at the enterprises of the free economic zone, increasing the production of high-tech, innovative and export-oriented products, development and mastering of new profitable types of products, as well as preserving the positions of enterprises of the free economic zone.

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²³ FEZ "Minsk" and Iranian FEZ "Maku" signed a memorandum of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. -URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sez-minsk-i-iranskaja-sez-maku-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-594179-2023/>

Effective 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"²⁴. 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"²⁵. 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"²⁶. 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

²⁴ 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/>

²⁵ Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 6.

²⁶ 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>

has already mastered the production of blue mould cheese. In a few years, production of cheese with white mould will be mastered.

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."²⁷. 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. Kobryn 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 "Berezastryumaterialy" 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"²⁸.

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-

²⁷ 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-veterinarnyh-preparatov-i-kormov-514311-2022>

²⁸ Vakulchik: Brest region enterprises actively involved in the work on import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vakulchik-predpriyatija-breestskoj-oblasti-aktivno-vkljuchilis-v-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-514809-2022>

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 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"²⁹. 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. Production of hydraulic valves and expansion of the hydraulic cylinder range will be organised at SALEO-Kobrin, and Kobrin Tool Plant SITOMO will set up production of chrome-plated hydraulic cylinder rods.

In the **Mogilev region**, there is an interesting experience in import substitution in BelEmsa LLC, which is located on the territory of the 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"³⁰. 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

²⁹ 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>

³⁰ 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/>

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.

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"³¹. 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, where more than 80 new jobs have already been created. 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

³¹ 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-etom-godu-namereny-proizvesti-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-na-560572-2023/>

country's medical institutions with the possibility to refuse imported analogues"³². 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 "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"³³. 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 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"³⁴. 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 Vitebskshchina: a vaccine plant with reconstruction of the existing production in the village of Dolzha - BelVitunifarm OJSC; a plant of innovative veterinary drugs - Belkarolin LLC; production of

³² 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/>

³³ 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/>

³⁴ 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/>

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.

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 Ispizhovich - 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"³⁵. 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"³⁶. 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"³⁷. In addition, the positive dynamics of import-substituting products output will be largely ensured by developing and

³⁵ 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/>

³⁶ Head of Belgospishcheprom: 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/>

³⁷ 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-minprom-a-v-2024-godu-planirujut-uvelichit-objem-vypuska-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-606535-2023/>

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 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"³⁸. 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 assemblies, including those based on 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"³⁹. 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.

³⁸ BELAZ's investments 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/>

³⁹ Belenergoremnaladka OJSC produced import-substituting products for \$3.5 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/oao-belenergoremnaladka-vypustilo-importozameshajuschej-produktsii-na-35-mln-606481-2023/>

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"⁴⁰. This indicates that a large number of enterprises in the whole country - in sectors and 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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⁴⁰ 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-cto-v-etom-godu-objem-vypuska-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-sostavit-29-mlrd-605441-2023/>

To ensure high growth dynamics in the volume and number of transactions

In 2023, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) interacted very efficiently with foreign companies, both from the countries of the "far arc" and the near abroad. In particular, 660 exporters and importers from **Asian** countries operated on the Belarusian exchange platform last year. **China** was the leader in terms of the number of traders and volumes of transactions on this continent. Suffice it to say that during this period 46 new Chinese residents came to BUTB, and the amount of exchange transactions increased 2.7 times and totalled more than 80 million dollars. In 2024, a new wave of activity of participants from Asian countries, including **South Korea, Singapore, Mongolia, Turkey, Pakistan** and the **United Arab Emirates**, is expected on BUTB.

For example, at the end of 2023, the first deal for the sale of sawn timber products to the **Republic of Korea** was concluded on the BUTB, when an importing company from this Asian country purchased a trial batch of 400 cubic metres of edged hardwood sawn timber from one of the Belarusian forestry enterprises. And the geography of exchange exports of these products of the domestic woodworking industry expanded to 17 countries. In this regard, the entry of the Republic of Korea to the BUTB trades opens new opportunities for Belarusian producers. "At that, we are talking not only about sawn timber, but also about dairy products, which are in high demand in this country. In particular, imports of milk powder and butter amount to hundreds of millions of dollars"⁴¹. So the pilot deal on lumber purchase may become a starting point for regular transactions of Korean businessmen at BUTB on a wide range of commodity nomenclature.

Singapore is another participant of interaction with the Belarusian exchange platform. As of the beginning of 2023, nine companies from this Southeast Asian country were accredited on the BUTB. Previously, Singaporean companies participated in the exchange trading only as buyers. Singaporean companies mainly bought Belarusian skimmed milk powder, while recently there has also been an increased demand for wood products. In particular, "in 2022, exchange-traded exports of sawn timber to Singapore totalled \$9.3 million, which

⁴¹ The supply of sawn timber to the Republic of Korea started via BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherez-butb-nachalis-postavki-pilomaterialov-v-respubliku-koreja-602882-2023/>

is an order of magnitude higher than in 2021"⁴². In 2023, the development of the Singaporean direction began to pay special attention. At the end of January, the goods of Singapore manufacturers were presented for the first time at the BUTB auction. It was about the sale of high-tech industrial equipment on the BUTB import substitution platform. Laser equipment manufacturers from Singapore, interested in working in the domestic market, were attracted under the bid placed by one of the Belarusian industrial flagships. For this purpose, two new Singaporean companies were accredited at the stock exchange. And then the first bids for sale were placed. Even then it was expected that placing bids for the sale of import-substituting goods produced in Singapore in the BUTB trading system would contribute to the formation of a favourable competitive environment and reduce the costs of Belarusian enterprises purchasing at the exchange trading. In the future, this made it possible to develop exchange trade with this state, which is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, even more actively.

And already at the end of 2023, Singapore has joined the list of eight countries that have launched the exchange-targeted transactions mechanism, which became available on BUTB from 22 June 2023. "The main feature of such transactions is that they can be entered into directly with foreign buyers, but the selling price of the goods must not be lower than the current exchange quotation for that commodity, generated by exchange trading. In addition, since targeted transactions are registered on the exchange, their participants are entitled to use all risk insurance instruments available on the BUTB"⁴³. It remains to add that Singapore, along with China, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Russia, became one of the five largest buyers of Belarusian sawn timber products in 2023 on BUTB, having increased the purchase of these products almost two and a half times and managed to reach the mark of 120 thousand cubic metres. In February 2024, the first Singaporean brokerage company - Vooking Pro Pte. Ltd., which had been working on the BUTB as a trade visitor for more than two years. In the status of a professional participant, the new broker "plans to attract buyers of forest products from the Asian region to the exchange platform, contributing to the further expansion of the geography of exchange exports"⁴⁴. After all, accreditation of the broker in Singapore is the next stage in the development of

⁴² Goods of Singaporean manufacturers will be presented for the first time at the BUTB auction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovary-singapurskih-proizvoditelej-budut-vpervye-predstavleny-na-torgah-butb-547522-2023/>

⁴³ Targeted deals on BUTB are made by companies from eight countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/adresnye-sdelki-na-butb-zakljuchajut-kompanii-iz-vosmi-stran-599332-2023/>

⁴⁴ BUTB accredits the first broker in Singapore [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervogo-brokera-v-singapore-613819-2024>

exchange trade with this country to help increase the pool of buyers from Asian countries, including the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, where exchange deliveries of Belarusian sawn timber have already been organised. In addition, the broker usually takes care of transport and logistics issues, which, of course, contributes to increasing the attractiveness of the exchange mechanism for foreign companies. This is especially true for the countries of the "far arc".

Speaking about **Mongolia**, the first broker from this country - United Meres Machinery - was accredited to BUTB in September 2023 and planned to start its activities with high-demand commodities - ferrous metals and coal, as well as petrochemical and agro-industrial products. And in January 2024, with the help of the first Mongolian broker, the first deal for white granulated sugar - 312 tonnes - was processed. "Given the high demand for sugar in Mongolia, we can assume that this product area can become one of the promising markets in Asia. Moreover, after the successful fulfilment of the first contract, Mongolian partners are already expecting an increase in export volumes from Belarus"⁴⁵.

BUTB also demonstrated high positive dynamics of trade turnover with **Turkey** in 2023. In particular, "the amount of transactions concluded by Turkish bidders in January-August was 31% higher than in the whole of 2022. The key drivers of growth were active purchases of Belarusian sawn timber, including through the use of a targeted mechanism, as well as exports of ferrous and non-ferrous metal scrap to Turkey"⁴⁶. Last year, 18 new Turkish residents came to BUTB. And as of mid-September 2023, 50 companies from this country, including one stockbroker, were already represented at the auction. And in the same September, a major Turkish producer of synthetic and natural yarns, threads and fibres sold its products - 40 tonnes of viscose yarn - for the first time to a Belarusian textile industry enterprise on the BUTB Industrial and Consumer Goods Marketplace. This fact made it possible to expand the geography of foreign suppliers of textile raw materials using this trading platform to work on the Belarusian market to four countries. The first three are Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The priority areas of BUTB's cooperation with **Pakistan** in 2024 are: on the Pakistani side, imports of sawn timber, milk powder, sugar, vegetable oils; on the Belarusian side, purchases of rice, cereals, yarn, and non-ferrous metals. In

⁴⁵ Zalessky, B. On the course of co-operation. Specifics of Belarus' interaction with Asian countries / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 38.

⁴⁶ Supplies of textile raw materials from Turkey began to be realised through the BUTB platform [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-tekstilnogo-syrja-iz-turtsii-nachali-realizovyatsja-cherez-ploschadku-butb-588124-2023/>

addition, it is logistics, which "will make it possible to optimise transport costs and make the products sold by Belarusian exchange traders more attractive in price for Pakistani buyers"⁴⁷. BUTB is also planning to expand the geography of producers of import-substituting products, presented on the exchange platform, at the expense of Pakistani companies interested in setting up trade or manufacturing businesses in Belarus. In particular, the Pakistani holding Afil Industries "is studying the possibility of implementing an investment project for the production of food products in Belarus, and also intends to establish regular wholesale deliveries of Pakistani products in demand in the Belarusian market"⁴⁸. First of all, we are talking about specific goods - various types of rice, footballs, gloves, belts, as well as such a specific product as Himalayan salt.

Finally, this year BUTB plans to intensify cooperation with the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), an international trade hub with a powerful transport, logistics and financial infrastructure. For reference, we note that "as of 1 April 2023, 14 companies from the UAE were accredited with BUTB. The main volume of transactions in 2022-2023 fell on woodworking and petrochemical products"⁴⁹. The Emirati side believes that BUTB's interaction with companies from the UAE will open wide opportunities to promote Belarusian goods to North Africa and Asia, as this is a very promising export destination for bidders from Belarus. In the near future, the parties intend to take new concrete steps to attract representatives of Emirati businesses to the Belarusian stock exchange to establish long-term trade relations.

Now let us dwell on the development of cooperation between the Belarusian stock exchange and **African** countries. First, we note that our country plans to increase exports to this continent by at least 2.5 times in 2024. At the same time, it is necessary to "emphasise products that are less dependent on the world market conditions. <...> And focus on promotion, actively using effective tools of merchandising, quality service, as well as e-commerce opportunities"⁵⁰. So for BUTB, clear objectives have already been formulated to use the exchange

⁴⁷ BUTB aims to increase the number of accredited companies from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-namerena-uvlichit-kolichestvo-akkreditovannyh-kompanij-iz-pakistana-578951-2023/>

⁴⁸ BUTB expects to attract suppliers from Pakistan to the import substitution platform [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-privlech-naploschadku-importozameschenija-postavschikov-iz-pakistana-571569-2023/>

⁴⁹ UAE Embassy will assist BUTB in developing exchange trade with Middle East countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posolstvo-oae-okazhet-sodejstvие-butb-v-razviti-birzhevoj-torgovli-so-stranami-blizhnego-vostoka-559908-2023/>

⁵⁰ Belarus plans to increase exports to Africa at least 2.5 times in 2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-v-2024-godu-narastit-eksport-v-strany-afriki-ne-menee-chem-v-25-raza-602900-2023/>

mechanism to intensify mutual trade and increase trade turnover this year with African partners, including those from **Egypt, Nigeria and Ethiopia**.

In particular, back in August 2021, BUTB signed a memorandum of understanding with the Egyptian Commodity Exchange (EMX), which was established by the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade of **Egypt** in 2020. In November last year, the parties addressed the issues of improving e-commerce technologies, exchanging analytical data, organising trade in new commodity items and ensuring favourable conditions for effective trade partnership between economic entities of Belarus and Egypt. "The main efforts are planned to focus on measures that will contribute to the growth of bilateral trade volumes and the expansion of the application of the exchange mechanism in export-import activities. In this regard, BUTB and EMX intend to work out the possibility of mutual participation of Belarusian and Egyptian companies in exchange trading on both platforms"⁵¹. All this will not only give impetus to the development of exchange trade between the two countries, but will also enhance the efficiency of joint projects in other areas. In particular, the entry of Egyptian companies to the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform will promote industrial cooperation between the two countries, as well as the solution of import substitution issues.

As for **Nigeria**, a business forum "Belarus-Nigeria: Direct Dialogue" was held in Minsk in February 2024 to discuss promising areas of cooperation between BUTB and the business community of this country, which is interested in buying Belarusian products, including rapeseed oil and milk powder. For reference: products of the oil and dairy industries are among the most demanded commodity items by foreign participants of the Belarusian exchange platform, "and the Nigerian market, given its capacity and purchasing power, is of significant interest to Belarusian exporters"⁵². It seems that the accreditation of Nigerian companies on the BUTB will allow Belarusian producers to expand the geography of exports and establish regular supplies to this promising market without additional costs in the near future.

Speaking about BUTB's partnership with **Ethiopia**, it should be recalled that back in 2023 the parties outlined promising commodity positions that could be traded on the stock exchange in 2024 as part of export-import transactions

⁵¹ Commodity exchanges of Belarus and Egypt agreed to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarnye-birzhi-belarusi-i-egipta-dogovorilis-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-599879-2023/>

⁵² BUTB plans to supply Belarusian agricultural products to Nigeria [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-postavki-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-nigeriju-615084-2024/>

between Belarusian and Ethiopian companies. "If we talk about imports from Ethiopia, it is, of course, first of all, agricultural products - coffee, soya beans and cereals. <...> In terms of exports of Belarusian goods to Ethiopia, it would be advisable to focus on dairy products - milk powder and whey"⁵³. It only remains to add that Ethiopian residents have not yet participated in exchange trading on the BUTB, but African partners are interested in this topic. And this year it will definitely manifest itself.

In 2023, among the foreign participants of the BUTB from the **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, which significantly increased interest in Belarusian exchange trading and showed high growth dynamics in the volume and number of transactions, it is necessary to mention the enterprises of **Uzbekistan**. While in 2022 only six Uzbek companies regularly participated in exchange trading sessions, in 2023 there were 29 of them. And the amount of transactions at the end of last year increased 17 times - "from just over \$1 million in 2022 to almost \$18 million in 2023"⁵⁴. At the same time, the commodity nomenclature of mutual trade has expanded. In particular, now, in addition to sawn timber, residents of Uzbekistan also began to buy Belarusian sugar at the exchange. This happened in May 2023, when the first such transaction was registered on the BUTB. "The seller was one of the domestic sugar mills, and the buyer was a brokerage company accredited at BUTB and the Uzbek Republican Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange (URTSB). The volume of the pilot purchase was 134 tonnes"⁵⁵. This fact is interesting for another reason. This is the first practical result of the joint project of BUTB and UZRTSB on mutual accreditation of brokers. The fact is that back in April 2023, within the framework of the agreement on strategic partnership between the two exchanges, seven broker organisations from each side received mutual access to the exchange trading platforms of Belarus and Uzbekistan after appropriate certification. On the Belarusian side, "JSC Belresursy - the managing company of Belresursy Holding, ChTUP Belresursbrot, RUE Beltamozhservice, CJSC BirZhex, IE Sokol Lubov Leontievna, LLC StatusBrot, as well as LLC Centre for Brokerage Services"

⁵³ BUTB presented exchange trading opportunities to the Ethiopian business community [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predstavila-vozmozhnosti-birzhevoj-torgovli-delovym-krugam-efiopii-575836-2023/>

⁵⁴ Exchange trade turnover of Belarus and Uzbekistan in 2023 increased 17 times Korea [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhevoj-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-v-2023-godu-vyros-v-17-raz-611161-2024/>

⁵⁵ BUTB registered the first transaction on sale of sugar to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-zaregistrovala-pervuju-sdelku-po-realizatsii-sahara-v-uzbekistan-566927-2023/>

became exchange brokers"⁵⁶, which together with Uzbek partners will allow to expand the range of trading participants much faster.

As for the plans for the development of exchange trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan in 2024, woodworking, agriculture, metallurgy and light industry are among the main areas identified, which will be able to bring the partnership between the two countries to a qualitatively new level. For this purpose, the exchange mechanism for the supply of Uzbek-made goods to Belarus will be more actively used. In this regard, the possibilities of the BUTB platform for industrial and consumer goods will be utilised. It should be recalled that in 2023, Uzbek producers used the Belarusian import substitution platform for the first time to sell cotton yarn. In August last year, "two trial transactions totalling 140 tonnes were made. In both cases, the buyer was one of the leading domestic textile enterprises"⁵⁷. Thus, the exchange platform provided the Belarusian company with direct access to the direct producers of raw materials it needed and ensured full support of the purchase procedure. The total amount of transactions totalled more than one million dollars. As part of the development of exchange imports in 2024, it is planned not only to increase the volume of sales in this commodity item, but also to bring to the auction other types of import-substituting products manufactured in this country. We would like to add that "as of 1 February 2024, 101 companies from Uzbekistan <...> are accredited on BUTB. In January, the amount of transactions of Uzbek participants totalled \$5.2 million. In January 2023, this indicator was equal to \$60 thousand"⁵⁸.

In 2024, the Belarusian exchange platform plans to noticeably intensify joint events on trade topics for business representatives of **Kyrgyzstan**. The fact is that at the end of 2023, "the amount of transactions of exchange traders from Kyrgyzstan increased almost one and a half times, mainly due to a significant increase in purchases of Belarusian sugar and sawn timber"⁵⁹. At the same time, Kyrgyz companies almost did not use the exchange's export opportunities, although this Central Asian country has a well-developed agricultural sector and

⁵⁶ Seven BUTB brokers accredited at the Uzbek Republican Commodity Exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sem-brokerov-butb-akkreditovalis-na-uzbekskoj-respublikanskoj-tovarno-syrjevoj-birzhe-561922-2023/>

⁵⁷ Uzbek yarn producers concluded the first deals on the BUTB platform [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekskie-proizvoditeli-prjazhi-zakljuchili-pervye-sdelki-na-ploschadke-butb-585558-2023/>

⁵⁸ Metallurgy, agriculture and light industry. BUTB outlined the directions of co-operation with Uzbek business [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/metallurgija-selskoe-hozjajstvo-i-legprom-butb-oboznachila-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-s-uzbekskim-614003-2024>

⁵⁹ BUTB and Kyrgyz embassies agreed on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-posolstvo-kyrgyzstana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-609545-2024/>

can expand the geography of agricultural exports, including in Belarus. In January this year, BUTB agreed to co-operate with the National Investment Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The parties specifically identified priority commodity positions for the development of mutual exchange trade. For this purpose, Belarus will attract suppliers of raw materials and cotton yarn from Kyrgyzstan. After all, these products are in demand among Belarusian traders, and the growth of their sales will have a positive impact on the dynamics of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz exchange trade turnover. As for Belarusian supplies, "the main attention will be paid to products of the sugar industry and timber industry. In 2023, these groups of goods accounted for almost the entire volume of Belarusian exports to Kyrgyzstan via BUTB. In addition, the National Investment Agency expressed its readiness to help accredit the first broker from Kyrgyzstan to BUTB"⁶⁰, which will expand the pool of Kyrgyz clients of the exchange, the number of which reached 25 by the beginning of this year.

As for BUTB's co-operation with **Azerbaijan**, we would like to remind you that in 2023, this South Caucasus country was among the top-3 sellers of Belarusian goods, and in terms of timber purchases it ranked second, second only to China. In addition, the transactions were regular and their amount was gradually growing. "As a result, compared to January-September of last [2022] year, supplies of wood products to Azerbaijan increased in natural terms by 4.3 times to 218 thousand cubic metres"⁶¹. Azerbaijani companies thus accounted for about a quarter of the total volume of sawn timber products exported through BUTB. At the international exhibition BakuBuild, held in October 2023 in the Azerbaijani capital, the Belarusian exchange platform attracted potential buyers from Azerbaijan interested in importing products for the construction industry. And there is every reason to believe that in 2024 there will be new interesting opportunities to continue co-operation with the business of this post-Soviet country.

Speaking about BUTB's partnership with **Moldova**, it should be noted that in 2023, the first stock exchange transactions for the sale of white granulated sugar and material for the textile sector were carried out. In the first case, the pilot purchase amounted to 210 tonnes, which was purchased by a company that is the largest importer of sugar to Moldova. And there is a probability that "the pilot

⁶⁰ BUTB and the National Investment Agency of Kyrgyzstan agreed on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-natsionalnoe-agentstvo-po-investitsijam-kyrgyzstana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-612497-2024/>

⁶¹ Export opportunities of BUTB presented at the international construction exhibition in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksportnye-vozmozhnosti-butb-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-stroitelnoj-vystavke-v-azerbajdzhane-594979-2023/>

transaction will become a starting point for regular supplies of Belarusian sugar to this country, since the same algorithm was used earlier to build up work with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which are the main buyers of Belarusian sugar at stock exchange trades"⁶². Moreover, the Moldovan market is promising for the export of sugar mills from Belarus, as this country annually consumes more than 80 thousand tonnes of this product, and the exchange platform provides direct access to producers along with low risks and transparent market pricing. In the second case, the transaction between Belarusian and Moldovan business entities was registered on the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform, within the framework of which the import substitution service operates. "The subject of the purchase made by one of the domestic textile industry enterprises was a membrane for fabric lamination worth Br845 thousand"⁶³. This suggests that the circle of countries, whose residents use this exchange platform to sell goods on the Belarusian market, has been enlarged by Moldova. We should assume that this deal with Moldovan partners will be the beginning of a new interesting experience in Belarusian-Moldovan e-commerce.

In the same year 2023, the first transaction for the purchase of products from a company resident in **Tajikistan** was registered on the BUTB import substitution platform, when "in the course of exchange trading, a domestic light industry enterprise purchased 40 tonnes of carded yarn - one of the most demanded raw materials in the knitwear industry - from a Tajik trading organisation"⁶⁴. In this case, too, the stock exchange helped the Belarusian company to meet its demand for foreign raw materials. It is curious that the last time companies from this Central Asian country used the exchange mechanism to work in the Belarusian market 16 years ago - in 2008. Let's hope that new deals with Tajikistan's businessmen on the BUTB are not "just around the corner".

There is one more interesting fact about the cooperation of the Belarusian exchange platform with partners from the CIS. In November last year, BUTB agreed to develop co-operation in 2024 with one of the leading electronic trading platforms of **Kazakhstan** - ETS-Tender - in the field of corporate procurement. It is planned that "the interaction between the parties will be of a purely practical

⁶² Belarusian sugar for the first time sold to Moldova through the stock exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-sahar-vpervye-prodan-v-moldovu-cherez-birzhu-573850-2023/>

⁶³ The company from Moldova for the first time concluded a deal on the platform of industrial and consumer goods BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kompanija-iz-moldovy-vpervye-zakljuchila-sdelku-na-ploschadke-promyshlennyh-i-potrebitelskih-tovarov-578041-2023/>

⁶⁴ Procurement of import-substituting products in Tajikistan for the first time through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zakupku-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-v-tadzhikistane-vpervye-proveli-cherez-butb-560416-2023/>

nature and will contribute to intensifying the participation of manufacturers and suppliers from Kazakhstan in the procurement procedures of Belarusian enterprises, as well as to increase the share of Belarusian products in the procurement of Kazakh companies in the public and private sectors"⁶⁵ . Kazakhstan's partners were very interested in BUTB's experience in organising exchange trading in industrial and consumer goods. In particular, we are talking about a separate digital platform that allows for round-the-clock procurement of a wide range of products in demand in various sectors of the economy: from light industry and agriculture to energy and machine building. In addition, in 2022 the import substitution service was introduced on BUTB, thanks to which Belarusian enterprises were able to promptly purchase analogues of imported goods and increase sales of their own products. So, with the assistance of ETS-Tender in 2024 it is planned to attract many more manufacturers from Kazakhstan to BUTB auctions.

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⁶⁵ BUTB and Kazakhstan platform ETS-Tender intend to cooperate in the field of electronic procurement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kazahstanskaja-ploschadka-ets-tender-namereny-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-elektronnyh-zakupok-602493-2023/>

Joint initiatives build cooperation 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"⁶⁶. 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"⁶⁷. 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"⁶⁸. 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

⁶⁶ 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-naraschivanie-tovarooborota-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-520574-2022/>

⁶⁷ Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 23.

⁶⁸ 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"⁶⁹. 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 for the creation of an efficient and safe system of public electric transport: from the construction of the necessary infrastructure to the supply of 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"⁷⁰. 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 for the production of medical drugs in non-overlapping items. 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

⁶⁹ Industrial cooperation, machinery supplies, woodworking. Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed mutual cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsiya-postavki-tehniki-derevoobrabotka-belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-vzaimnoe-520492-2022/>

⁷⁰ 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/>

universities on the basis of Belarusian and foreign positive experience. "Recruitment is planned to be carried out in the specialities of "practical psychology", "preschool education", "psychology", and "economics""⁷¹. 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"⁷². The institute in Bukhara is a major educational and scientific centre in Uzbekistan. Education is conducted 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"⁷³. 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"⁷⁴. 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

⁷¹ 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>

⁷² BRSTU will co-operate with Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-budet-sotrudnicat-s-buharskim-inzhenerno-tekhnologicheskim-institutom-514381-2022/>

⁷³ 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/>

⁷⁴ 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-soglasheniye-s-hokimijatom-kashkadarjinskoy-527596-2022/>

Institute of Engineering and Economics, as well as between the P.M. Masherov Vitebsk State University and the Karshi State University. Memorandums were 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"⁷⁵ .

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"⁷⁶ . 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

⁷⁵ Enterprises of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions signed contracts for \$3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-vitebskoj-i-kashkadarjinskoj-oblastej-podpisali-kontrakty-na-3-mln-529745-2022/>

⁷⁶ 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/>

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, chemical threads, dairy products, agricultural machinery, furniture..."⁷⁷. 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"⁷⁸. 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. Moreover, 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 Belgospishcheprom presented the products of confectionery factories Kommunarka, Spartak and Krasny Izhevsk, 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

⁷⁷ 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/>

⁷⁸ 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-kombajnostroeniya-doturizma-gomelskaja-i-ferganskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-549242-2023/>

various versions, sausages, meat semi-finished products. In particular, the Grodno meat processing plant demonstrated new products, which brought to Uzbekistan 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"⁷⁹. 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"⁸⁰. Bellakt 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

⁷⁹ 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/>

⁸⁰ Belarusian enterprises intend to increase supplies to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predprijatija-namereny-narastit-postavki-v-uzbekistan-559267-2023/>

March 2023, within the framework of the international exhibition "Agriculture - 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"⁸¹. 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"⁸².

Another important reserve for 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"⁸³. Among the most demanded products of

⁸¹ Uzbekistan is interested in supplies of agricultural machinery "Bobruiskagromash" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-postavkah-selskhozajstvvennoj-tehniki-bobruiskagromasha-556555-2023/>

⁸² 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-tsentralnaja-azija-v-tashkente-557617-2023/>

⁸³ Industrial co-operation and access to new markets. General Director of FEZ "Navoi" about the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

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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Growth points - industry, agriculture, healthcare, regions

In December 2023, Samarkand hosted the 10th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission (IGC) on bilateral cooperation, during which the parties discussed the state and prospects of trade and economic interaction, paying special attention to the areas of industry, agriculture, and healthcare in order to fill the economic component of the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan with new practical content and ensure timely implementation of investment projects and trade contracts. It should be noted that bilateral trade between Minsk and Tashkent is currently showing good dynamics. "In the first 10 months of this [2023] year, mutual trade turnover has increased by more than 20 per cent and has already exceeded \$500 million"⁸⁴. Nevertheless, it was noted at the IGC meeting that the sides still have significant untapped potential to multiply trade volumes by expanding mutual supplies of products in demand in the markets of the two countries.

Let's take the development of **industrial co-operation**. Since 2019, the number of enterprises from Belarus has quadrupled in Uzbekistan. And today, "there are 186 enterprises with Belarusian capital operating in the country, but there are all prerequisites for increasing this figure"⁸⁵. Suffice it to say that in the first seven months of 2023, 33 enterprises from Belarus were established in the territory of the Central Asian republic. And a total of 84 organisations with Uzbek capital were established in our country. In addition, companies in the field of international transport, software development, production of medicines and veterinary drugs have already "opened representative offices in Uzbekistan. In 2022, a joint venture for the production of dairy products was opened in Tashkent"⁸⁶.

In this regard, the participants of the 10th IGC meeting proposed to further strengthen the substantive part of the draft joint roadmap for the development of bilateral cooperation for 2024-2025 in order to move towards mutual investment and the creation of joint productions. And in this regard, the Belarusian side is

⁸⁴ Aripov: Uzbek-Belarusian co-operation has reached a new level [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aripov-uzbeksko-belorusskoe-sotrudnichestvo-vyshlo-na-novyyi-uroven-603582-2023/>

⁸⁵ Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan: we are interested in increasing the number of joint ventures [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predsedatel-tpp-uzbekistana-my-zainteresovany-v-uvlichenii-kolichestva-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-603524-2023/>

⁸⁶ Cherviakov: among our partner countries Uzbekistan is in the top ten in terms of trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-sredi-nashih-stran-partnerov-uzbekistan-vhodit-v-desjatku-po-objemu-tovarooborota-586551-2023/>

already implementing projects to assemble specialised machinery and produce agricultural machinery for soil and cotton cultivation. In 2023, "the first Belarusian-Uzbek enterprise for the production of dry milk mixtures was launched, which will sell products made on the basis of Belarusian raw materials both to producers and processors in Uzbekistan and supply them to neighbouring countries. In the city of Karshi there is a joint venture with the Belarusian manufacturer Marko for the production of footwear"⁸⁷. There are also significant prospects for organising production on Uzbek soil of Belarus tractors, diesel-generator and compressor units, medicines, woodworking and furniture production.

In general, Belarus has a lot to offer its Uzbek partners: machine-building products, food products, services, and the latest scientific and technical developments. Suffice it to say that exports of enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry to this Central Asian country almost doubled in the first three quarters of 2023, "trade turnover increased by more than 90% <...> over this period. Exports to Uzbekistan were based on the supply of tractors, refrigerators and freezers, automotive equipment, metal products, engines, hardware products, electrical transformers, as well as mowers, starters, potato diggers, oil pumps..."⁸⁸. In particular, JSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" is planning to increase the volume of supplies of agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan in the near future, because "in Central Asian republics the most demanded models of agricultural machinery are tractor trailers for transporting cotton, tillage equipment, machines for applying organic fertilisers and forage harvesting equipment"⁸⁹. In addition to tractors, cooperation between the two countries in the field of industry will expand significantly, as "cooperation on cargo and passenger equipment, household appliances, and lift equipment is being discussed and developed quite extensively"⁹⁰. Another example: the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom", which are very familiar to the Uzbek market. In the first nine months of 2023, "exports of woodworking products, including

⁸⁷ Golovchenko: Uzbekistan for us is one of the main trading partners in the region of Central Asia and the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-uzbekistan-dlja-nas-javljaetsja-odnim-iz-osnovnyh-torgovyh-partnerov-v-regione-tsentralnoj-603540-2023/>

⁸⁸ Ministry of Industry: export of our products to Uzbekistan in January-September doubled [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-eksport-nashej-produksii-v-uzbekistan-za-janvar-sentjabr-vyros-vdvoe-603475-2023/>

⁸⁹ "Bobruiskagromash" plans to increase the supply of agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-planiruet-narastit-postavki-selhoztehniki-v-uzbekistan-582084-2023/>

⁹⁰ Tractors, lifts, cargo equipment. How Belarus and Uzbekistan will co-operate in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/traktory-lifty-gruzovaja-tehnika-kak-belarus-i-uzbekistan-budut-sotrudnicat-v-promyshlennosti-596490-2023/>

furniture and pulp, increased by almost 24% compared to January-September last year <...>. The Concern is now working on the creation of a commodity distribution network entity in Uzbekistan, which will open up new opportunities for supplies to this country"⁹¹.

All these facts show that Belarus and Uzbekistan are successfully contributing to the formation of a developed structure of co-operative ties in order to make full use of the available production, scientific, technical, and innovation potential to fulfil the urgent and ambitious task of increasing trade turnover to one billion dollars. For more systematic work in general, the Belarusian side proposed to develop a programme of bilateral economic cooperation within the framework of the 10th IGC meeting, while in certain sectors of the economy - to expand the formats of interaction to find new areas of partnership and pay attention to the functioning of sectoral working groups. For reference, we would like to remind that "meetings of the working group in the field of agriculture, as well as the mixed commission in the transport sector are held on a regular basis. It would be advisable to organise the work of groups in the fields of industry, medicine and pharmaceuticals, construction, light industry, woodworking, forestry and water management, which will be working bodies of the intergovernmental commission"⁹². In addition, other new formats of co-operation are being successfully implemented.

Among them is the **Women's Business Forum**, which was held for the first time in Minsk in September 2023 and brought together participants from the two countries in various areas: light and heavy industry, science and education, and mechanical engineering. Let us say at once that by the end of the plenary session, the participants of this meeting signed "14 memorandums and agreements on co-operation, including an agreement on the establishment of a joint leather and footwear production. 15 contracts worth Br93.5 million, or 350 billion Uzbek soums"⁹³. In particular, light industry enterprises of Belarus and Uzbekistan have signed contracts worth more than two and a half million dollars. Thus, an agreement on the intention to create a joint venture for dressing sheepskin-fur, karakulo-fur, fur-fur raw materials was signed between Furskins Company and

⁹¹ Export of enterprises "Bellesbumprom" to Uzbekistan for 9 months increased by almost a quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predpriyatij-bellesbumproma-v-uzbekistan-za-9-mesjatsev-vyros-pochti-na-chetvert-603583-2023/>

⁹² Leonid Zayats on the results of the meeting in Samarkand: The decisions taken will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10747>

⁹³ During the First Belarusian-Uzbek Women's Business Forum contracts for Br93.5 million were concluded [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vo-vremja-pervogo-belorussko-uzbekskogo-zhenskogo-biznes-foruma-zakljucheno-kontraktov-na-br935-mln-586641-2023/>

"Marko". "Agreements on cooperation between Uztektstilprom Association and Kamvol Design Centre have been reached. A memorandum of intentions was signed for the purchase of worsted fabrics for school assortment of Charog'on Tekstil LLC. A contract was also signed between Kalinka CJSC and Chichik Mega Bizness LLC for the supply of denim clothes"⁹⁴ .

It should be noted that Bellegprom Concern's enterprises have been successfully cooperating with Uzbek partners since 2018. Marco Holding is working within the framework of a joint venture to re-stitch shoes. About 250 thousand pairs have already been produced, but this is not the limit. The goal is to increase the output to millions of pairs of shoes. "And since sheepskin is in demand in Belarus for making linings and insoles for winter shoes, but we [in Belarus] do not have this type of raw material, it is very important to enter into industrial co-operation in order to motivate both sides in terms of quality, technical component and business"⁹⁵ . Another example: "Milavitsa has been working on lingerie alterations with a company in Tashkent since January 2023. And in Smorgon, together with the Uzbek side, a business project is being implemented to create a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton yarn products. "This is the first enterprise that will make a finished product in Belarus from raw materials obtained in Uzbekistan"⁹⁶ .

Within the framework of the section "Expanding Industrial Cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan" of the Women's Business Forum, the Belarusian side presented opportunities for expanding industrial co-operation. In particular, "metropolitan enterprises [in Minsk] are interested in finding new partners to sell their products in the market of the region [Uzbekistan]"⁹⁷ . And they are already co-operating effectively with their Uzbek colleagues. For example, Minsk Automobile Plant acts on the market of this Central Asian country as an independent exporter on the basis of an existing joint production facility. In particular, in September 2023, "Minsk Automobile Plant and FE MAZ-TASHKENT LLC signed a contract for the supply of MAZ machinery worth \$1

⁹⁴ The enterprises of light industry of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed contracts for more than \$2.5 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-legproma-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-25-mln-586396-2023/>

⁹⁵ Lugina told about the prospects of cooperation between the enterprises "Bellegprom" and companies from Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/lugina-rasskazala-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-predpriyatij-belleproma-i-kompanij-iz-uzbekistana-586553-2023/>

⁹⁶ Belarus and Uzbekistan realise joint projects in the field of pharmaceuticals and light industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-realizujut-sovmestnye-proekty-v-oblasti-farmatsevtiki-i-legproma-592648-2023/>

⁹⁷ Lazarevich: capital enterprises effectively co-operate with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/lazarevich-stolichnyie-predpriyatija-effektivno-vzaimodejstvujut-s-uzbekistanom-586603-2023/>

million"⁹⁸ and agreed to expand co-operation ties. As for Minsk Tractor Plant, it will supply about 500 BELARUS machines to Uzbek TEXAGRO-KLASTER LLC. "The sum of the deal exceeds \$8 million"⁹⁹.

As for pharmaceuticals, it was noted at the Women's Business Forum that the Belarusian side is building an enterprise on Uzbek soil to produce probiotics, which are not produced in Uzbekistan at all. Belarus is ready to supply its pharmaceutical products, and also to propose to the health authorities of our countries to work out the possibility of setting up production facilities in Uzbekistan for bulk medicines, antibiotics, anti-tumour drugs..."¹⁰⁰. So, let us hope that this forum has indeed established useful contacts and made it possible to create additional conditions for attracting investment resources to the promising projects that were worked out at this Belarusian-Uzbek meeting.

And in November 2023, a three-day **medical forum** "Days of Health Care and Medical Education "Uzbekistan - Belarus" was held in Minsk, which touched upon almost all areas of medical activity: high technologies, problems of primary care, personnel training, the work of the pharmaceutical industry, and the production of medical equipment. During these days, almost 120 agreements were signed, as well as a "road map, in which, according to all the principles of the target planning programme, tasks, deadlines, resources and responsible executor will be defined"¹⁰¹. The day before, Belarusian cardiac surgeons, oncologists, and paediatric surgeons travelled to Uzbekistan as part of medical teams, where they "performed more than 100 operations and provided more than 250 consultations in various regions of the country"¹⁰². And about 30 specialists from various hospitals in Uzbekistan have already undergone internships at the Minsk Scientific and Practical Centre for Surgery, Transplantology and Haematology, and have also proposed an initiative to establish a Minsk centre in Tashkent. We also note that "46 patients from Uzbekistan have received high-tech medical care

⁹⁸ MAZ signed a contract on delivery of machinery to Uzbekistan for \$1 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-zakljuchil-dogovor-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-586570-2023/>

⁹⁹ MTZ will supply about 500 tractors to Uzbekistan for more than \$8 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-okolo-500-traktorov-v-uzbekistan-na-bolee-chem-8-mln-586567-2023/>

¹⁰⁰ Chervjakov: Belarus and Uzbekistan have created an impressive groundwork for further development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-belarus-i-uzbekistan-sozdali-vnushitelnyj-zadel-na-dalnejshee-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-586639-2023>

¹⁰¹ Ministers of Health of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed agreements on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministry-zdravoohranenija-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-dogovory-o-sotrudnichestve-602477-2023/>

¹⁰² Minister of Health of Uzbekistan: Belarusian specialists performed more than 100 operations in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministr-zdravoohranenija-uzbekistana-belorusskie-spetsialisty-proveli-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-operatsij-602505-2023/>

at the MNPC of Surgery, Transplantology and Haematology. Including 3 liver transplants and 10 kidney transplants. The potential for further joint work in this area is quite large"¹⁰³.

A separate topic of the medical forum is the training of medical personnel. Belarus and Uzbekistan today see prospects for intensifying bilateral cooperation in such key areas as cardiology, oncology, transplantation, children's surgery, maternal and child health care, as well as in the pharmaceutical industry and supplies of medical devices. From January 2024, by agreement of the parties, joint educational programmes of network training will be organised in eight specialties of higher education and all areas of sub-specialties of clinical residency, and there are plans to introduce a system of training 150 sub-specialists under the internship programme. And one more thing: for the first time since January of this year training of nurses in six directions of the joint educational programme according to international standards will start. The fact is that Uzbekistan's healthcare sector pays special attention to the training of nurses. And they are well aware of the Belarusian experience in this subject. After all, 74 medical colleges are already functioning in Belarus and about 100 thousand nurses are trained in seven directions. In particular, the Vitebsk State Medical University (VSMU) and the college, which plan to accept students, interns and doctors from this Central Asian country, will help the Uzbek partners in this matter. "So far VSMU has no more than a dozen students from Uzbekistan, who come to Vitebsk on their own and enrol in specialties that are attractive to them"¹⁰⁴. But the first steps have already been made towards co-operation of VSMU, for example, with Samarkand State Medical University and Bukhara State Medical Institute. And within the framework of the Medical Forum, four more agreements between VSMU and Uzbek universities were signed.

A new form of interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the field of education was the **Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions**, which met for the first time in October 2023 in Minsk - at the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics. This structure brought together "more than 30 heads of Belarusian and Uzbek universities, who actively engaged in dialogue, discussing topical issues of development of higher education systems of the two

¹⁰³ Petrishenko: the most important task is to do everything to improve the well-being of the peoples of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/petrishenko-vazhnejshaja-zadacha-sdelat-vse-dlja-povysheniya-blagopoluchija-narodov-belarusi-i-602449-2023/>

¹⁰⁴ Pushnyakova, A. In what Uzbek universities and colleges see cooperation with VSMU / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-chem-uzbekskie-vuzy-i-kolledzhi-vidjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-vsmu-602248-2023/>

countries"¹⁰⁵ and signed a roadmap for cooperation, where, taking into account the trends in the educational market of Uzbekistan, a number of Belarusian universities will work out the issue of opening branches or joint faculties. Among the leaders in this context is the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), which currently implements 75 joint educational programmes with partner universities from Uzbekistan. One of the brightest examples of cooperation is the interaction between BNTU and Tashkent State Technical Transport University. "We are talking about the first joint educational programme "2+2". From 2019 to 2023, similar programmes have also been prepared and created with Islam Karimov Tashkent State Technical University, Karshi Engineering and Economic Institute, Tashkent Architecture and Construction University, Samarkand State Architecture and Construction University"¹⁰⁶. The idea of the programme is that Uzbek students study the first two years at home and the next two at BNTU, so that graduates receive two diplomas at once - in Uzbekistan and in Belarus. And so in June 2023, the first graduation of diploma holders of the 2+2 programme took place.

And another interesting format of co-operation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was mentioned within the framework of the 10th IGC meeting - it is the **Forum of Regions, which** should be given importance and "is planned to be held in Belarus"¹⁰⁷. Recall that the First Forum of Regions of the two countries was already held in Minsk in 2019. As of April 2023, "the parties have already signed 15 interregional agreements, <...> The practice of developing roadmaps for the implementation of interregional agreements has proved effective"¹⁰⁸. For this reason, it is necessary to continue to find partners for long-term co-operation in the regions.

The Fergana Region and the Bellesbumprom Concern provide an interesting example in this regard. The fact is that Belarusian-Uzbek co-operation in the furniture, woodworking, and pulp and paper industries is now actively developing. "The result of the work with Uzbek colleagues was the opening of the

¹⁰⁵ The roadmap of co-operation signed by the heads of the Councils of Rectors of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-rukovoditeli-sovetov-rektorov-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-595530-2023/>

¹⁰⁶ BNTU awarded diplomas to the first graduates of joint educational programmes of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-bntu-vruchili-diplomy-pervym-vypusknikam-sovmestnyh-obrazovatelnyh-programm-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-574797-2023/>

¹⁰⁷ Aripov: Uzbek-Belarusian co-operation has reached a new level [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aripov-uzbekska-belorusskoe-sotrudnichestvo-vyshlo-na-novyj-uroven-603582-2023/>

¹⁰⁸ Zalessky, B. With a focus on results. Perspectives of an integrated approach to new partnership opportunities / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 16.

furniture house "Belarus" in Fergana. Now the products of three domestic factories are presented here - OFO "FanDOC", Yelsk furniture factory (a branch of OJSC "Mozyr DOK") and RUE "Newsprint Plant" (a branch of house building)¹⁰⁹. The parties plan to expand the assortment, as well as to increase the number of Belarusian brands represented in the furniture house. Another interesting idea is to create a showroom in the under-construction residential complex "Eco City" in Fergana, where products from Belarus, which are in demand in construction and arrangement of residential premises, will be presented: thermo-insulating panels, wallpapers, interior doors, furniture. And in the sanatorium-resort zone in Buvaydinsky district of Fergana region, supplies of wooden houses, saunas, gazebos produced by the house-building branch of the Newsprint Plant RUE have been agreed upon.

Hrodna Region, which has agreements with three Uzbek regions, is among the active participants in interregional cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan. And now this Central Asian country ranks third in Hrodna's trade turnover with foreign countries. At the same time, a significant growth of mutual trade was registered in 2022 - 1.7 times. In 2023, the trade turnover increased by another 11 per cent. "Grodno region supplies Uzbekistan with foodstuffs, woodworking products, petrochemicals, buys foodstuffs, yarn, fabrics, textiles in Uzbekistan, which is very much in demand by local light industry enterprises"¹¹⁰. Cooperation is also developing in the educational sphere: in 2023, 160 Uzbek students received higher education on the basis of Grodno universities. And the parties have already outlined prospects for further development, including in the field of investment on the basis of the Grodnoinvest free economic zone.

Finally, let us consider another important tool for increasing Belarusian-Uzbek trade and economic interaction - **sectoral exhibitions**. In 2024, Belarus intends to participate in many international exhibition events in Uzbekistan, where major sectoral forums in agriculture, food, machinery and technologies for agro-industrial complex, industrial technologies, food and light industry, and scientific and technical achievements will be held. In particular, in March this year, the Belarusian exposition will be organised in Tashkent at the 23rd international exhibition UzFood, in April - at the industrial forum Innoprom. Central Asia", in October - at the 8th textile exhibition UzTextileExpo Autumn, and in November

¹⁰⁹ New showrooms and furniture supplies. "Bellesbumprom" on the development of co-operation with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novye-shourumy-i-postavki-mebeli-bellesbumprom-o-razviti-sotrudnichestva-s-uzbekistanom-561977-2023/>

¹¹⁰ Trade turnover of Grodno region with Uzbekistan in 2023 increased by 11% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-grodnenskoj-oblasti-s-uzbekistanom-v-2023-godu-uvelichilsja-na-11-594414-2023/>

- at the 18th food forum UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo. Traditionally, Belarusian participants in these business events always attract great interest of visitors not only from Uzbekistan, but also from other Central Asian countries.

For example, in April 2023, at the forum "Innoprom. Central Asia", where about 300 companies took part, Belarus was represented by "leading enterprises from various industrial sectors and scientific and educational institutions, each of which presents its unique products and technologies at the exhibition, demonstrating the potential and opportunities for cooperation and promotion of manufactured products, scientific and technical developments and services"¹¹¹. Thus, BELAZ OJSC, the managing company of the BELAZ-HOLDING holding company, presented at the exhibition its promising areas of development. In particular, the BELAZ-7558H dump truck with a payload capacity of 90 tonnes. Minsk Tractor Plant, among other things, demonstrated a specialised tractor BELARUS-80X, developed with due regard to the peculiarities of agricultural crops cultivation. And OJSC BMZ - the managing company of BMK Holding showed hot-rolled metal products for automotive and other industries. The stand of the Ministry of Education of Belarus presented more than 50 scientific and technical developments of six universities and organisations of the department, including new technologies and software complexes intended for use in industrial and scientific developments, as well as technologies, equipment and materials for the chemical and oil refining industries, machine building, and foundry production.

Also in April 2023, the International Exhibition "Healthcare / TIHE 2023" was held in Tashkent, where more than 250 companies from 13 countries took part and where a wide range of materials and technologies for laboratory and functional diagnostics, therapy and surgery, rehabilitation equipment, means of automation of medicine, and equipment of medical institutions were presented. The visitors also got acquainted with the presented therapeutic and health-improving preparations, orthopaedic means meeting all modern demands of the industry. Our country was represented at this exhibition forum by the Belarusian Prosthetic and Orthopedic Rehabilitation Centre, which showed "technical rehabilitation equipment of its own production: products for children (with cerebral palsy, dysplasia) and women after mastectomy (bodices, swimming

¹¹¹ Belarus presents its exposition at the exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia" in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavljaet-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-innoprom-tsentralnaja-azija-v-tashkente-563204-2023/>

costumes), active wheelchair, orthopedic insoles, table for mechanotherapy and others, in total - more than 20 items"¹¹².

Belarus is also a traditional participant of the UzTextileExpo Autumn international exhibition, which was held for the 7th time in October 2023 in the Uzbek capital and where 183 companies from eight countries, including China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, participated. "The Belarusian exposition this time was represented by major petrochemical exporters, including companies such as Naftan, Mogilevkhimvolokno and Svetlogorskikhimvolokno. The companies brought with them a rich range of products in demand among Uzbek and regional consumers"¹¹³. "Naftan" introduced visitors to acrylic fibres of its own production - a durable material widely used in the textile industry. "Mogilevkhimvolokno" presented polyester fibre for the production of fabrics, insulation, syntepon, non-woven fabrics. Polyethylene terephthalate, a high-strength plastic used in the production of containers, was also among the products presented. "Svetlogorskikhimvolokno demonstrated high-strength nonwovens, polyester textile yarns, knitted fabrics in various designs - dyed, lacquered, bleached, tufted, embossed and many others.

Finally, in November 2023, the Belarusian exposition Belarus - the Taste of Nature was presented at the leading agricultural and food exhibitions UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo, where "more than 120 companies from Uzbekistan, Austria, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Cyprus. China, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, South Korea, Russia, USA, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Czech Republic..."¹¹⁴. In particular, the Belarusian company - Postavy Dairy Plant - presented its well-known products, including Cheddar Red, Parmesan Grand and Maasdam cheeses, which have already become a kind of classic. These products arouse the greatest interest among potential partners from Uzbekistan. Another Belarusian participant, Bretta, took part in the exhibition for the first time and expected successful contacts and fruitful results. The company showed a range of dry dairy products produced by the Luninets Dairy Plant, where among the products stood out milk powder under the brand name "Molochnaya Kapelka", which is made from skimmed pasteurised milk. This product can be used for

¹¹² Belarusian technical means of rehabilitation will be presented at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-tehnicheskie-sredstva-reabilitatsii-predstavjat-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-560954-2023>

¹¹³ Belarusian exposition is presented at the textile exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-ekspozitsija-predstavlena-na-tekstilnoj-vystavke-v-tashkente-594563-2023/>

¹¹⁴ Belarus presents its food products at the exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavljaet-svoju-prodovolstvennuju-produktsiju-na-vystavkah-v-tashkente-601144-2023/>

preparation of non-caloric yoghurts, ice-cream, shakes, infant formulae. As for Slutsk Cheese Factory, it demonstrated in Tashkent an expanded line of its lactose-free products, including a novelty - lactose-free sweet cream butter "Mozhno" and milk "Mozhno A2". In addition, the assortment included glazed cheese, cottage cheese, milk with extended shelf life, sweet cream butter, chocolate butter and processed cheese. Finally, the Gomel Meat Processing Plant brought to the Uzbek market products complying with halal standards, which included Beef sausage, raw smoked beef product Santorini Prestige, poultry chips, raw smoked chicken product Fileichka, as well as cooked-smoked beef products, including Filey Firm. In addition, the meat processing plant presented its latest innovations, including such products as "Exquisite" tenderloin and "Gourmet" beef. Also new for the Uzbek market was the low-calorie sausage "Black Pearl" made from beef and poultry meat. Of course, the exposition of Belarus - the Taste of Nature aroused high interest on the part of visitors, including representatives of Uzbek business, government agencies and the media.

Returning to the 10th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation, we note that Uzbekistan is Belarus's key partner in Central Asia. The two former Soviet republics celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2023. And today, based on numerous facts, we can assert that the interaction between Minsk and Tashkent is experiencing a period of a peculiar flourishing, which is reaching a qualitatively new level and seeking to find and expand new joint forms of cooperation to realise the objectives of strategic cooperation.

Forum of Hopes and Prospects

In February 2024, the II Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan took place in Tashkent, attended by more than 150 representatives of Belarusian regions and the business community. And over the course of two days, they and their Uzbek partners discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral interregional interaction - from investment and industrial cooperation to strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties. As a result, the parties "came to a package of bilateral documents (45 documents), which includes interdepartmental, interregional agreements, a number of contracts, the total value of which is about \$150 million"¹¹⁵. In particular, they signed: an intergovernmental agreement on the application of electronic systems of certification of origin of goods; an agreement between the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade of Belarus and the Committee for the Development of Competition and Consumer Protection of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the development of competition, consumer protection and regulation of the advertising market; a protocol on cooperation in the field of intellectual property. The parties also "signed an agreement on scientific and production cooperation, a roadmap for the development of cooperation in the agro-industrial complex for 2024-2026, a plan of joint measures to develop cooperation in the integration of information systems in the field of plant quarantine"¹¹⁶. Cooperation programmes have been adopted in the spheres of culture and art, sports and tourism, and education. Minsk and Tashkent signed an agreement on establishing twinning ties and developing multifaceted co-operation. In addition, in order to organise systematic mutual supplies, a joint foreign trade company will be established in Minsk and Tashkent; mechanisms of export support and electronic system of goods certification will be introduced; favourable conditions for cargo transportation will be created and multimodal corridors in the direction of South Asian markets will be used. The parties also "intend to implement projects in the agro-industrial complex, electrical engineering and textiles, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, urban development, and

¹¹⁵ The Belarusian delegation in Tashkent reached agreements for \$150 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-delegatsija-v-tashkente-dostigla-dogovorennostej-na-150-mln-614453-2024>

¹¹⁶ Belarus and Uzbekistan signed a road map of cooperation for 2024-2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-podpisali-dorozhnyju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2024-2025-gody-614308-2024>

public utilities. Roadmaps will be adopted and working groups will be set up in each direction"¹¹⁷.

It should be noted that the parties have signed 70 documents over 30 years of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction, and the scope of the February agreements confirms the strategic nature of the relations between the two former post-Soviet republics. Moreover, this package of bilateral documents is crowned by the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation for 2024-2025, which envisages the implementation of export and investment projects worth one billion dollars. For reference, let us clarify: in 2018-2022, trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased 3.2 times. In 2023, the volume of mutual trade grew by another 12 per cent and exceeded \$565 million. The roadmap for 2024-2025 deals with such areas of interaction as "industrial cooperation, agriculture, processing industry, humanitarian issues, education issues, cooperation in sports and tourism, training of personnel for the forestry industry, urban development, housing and utilities - a wide range of issues. They are sealed by 99 documents totalling \$1.054 billion"¹¹⁸.

In their joint statement in February 2024, the leaders of Belarus and Uzbekistan stressed that the priority direction of Belarusian-Uzbek relations would be further expansion of mutually beneficial trade and economic interaction and building up the volume of mutual trade and expanding its nomenclature, including in the **industrial sector**. Recall that exports of the Belarusian Industry Ministry's enterprises to this Central Asian country increased by almost 45 per cent in 2023. At the same time, "industrial cooperation is not limited to mutual deliveries of products. Industrial cooperation is traditionally one of the priority areas of interaction"¹¹⁹.

For example, PA Energokomplekt together with YES LLC are working to localise the production of cable and wire products in Uzbekistan. Since 2018, Minsk Automobile Plant has been cooperating with Krantas Group LLC for the production of special-purpose machinery in Uzbekistan. During the period of cooperation, more than 200 units of special vehicles - tank trucks, in particular, petrol and water tankers, rubbish trucks, crane equipment - have been jointly

¹¹⁷ Mirziyoyev: Belarus and Uzbekistan will create a joint foreign trade company [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mirzieev-belarus-i-uzbekistan-sozdadut-sovmestnuju-vneshnetorgovuju-kompaniju-614250-2024/>

¹¹⁸ Belarus and Uzbekistan will implement projects for more than \$1 billion in 2024-2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-v-2024-2025-godah-realizujut-proekty-bolee-chem-na-1-mlrd-613960-2024/>

¹¹⁹ Export of enterprises of the Ministry of Industry to Uzbekistan in 2023 increased by almost 45% [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predpriyatij-minprom-a-v-uzbekistan-v-2023-godu-vozros-pochti-na-45-614029-2024/>

produced and sold to Uzbek consumers. In its turn, the Uzbek company, within the framework of co-operation, supplies crane booms to Belarus to the Mogilevtransmash plant for the subsequent production of hoisting cranes. And work is underway to conclude new contracts for 2024. At the end of 2023, a new cooperation project to organise assembly production of diesel-generator sets and compressor stations in Uzbekistan has been launched. The project involves Minsk Motor Plant and the Uzbek company PLANETA SERVIS LLC.

In 2024, it is envisaged to start practical implementation of the tractor construction project with this partner. The fact is that "a pilot project will be launched this year - Belarus and Uzbekistan are creating an assembly production of a cotton tractor. At the first stage, 500 tractor sets will be supplied. Uzbekistan is going in the direction of developing its production base"¹²⁰. Licence agreements have already been signed with Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) to organise assembly production of Belarus machinery. Work is underway to resolve localisation issues. "The relevance of the project is confirmed by the unabated demand for Belarusian tractors from Uzbek agrarians. In 2023 alone, MTZ increased exports of tractors to Uzbekistan by 1.6 times compared to 2022"¹²¹. To be more precise, more than four thousand tractors were supplied from Belarus last year. This is a record for recent years.

The parties have great potential for the development of mutually beneficial co-operation in the creation of joint production of dump trucks. After all, "Uzbekistan is a leader among the CIS countries in copper production and gold mining. It is the mining industry that has priority and it is the locomotive of Uzbekistan's economy"¹²². For this reason, the Uzbek side is ready not only to organise large-scale assembly of Belarusian dump trucks, but is also ready to manufacture the necessary parts and components to transport ore to processing plants where rare-earth metals will be produced. It should also be noted for reference that following the II Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, more than ten enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry signed contracts worth about \$45 million.

¹²⁰ Belarus and Uzbekistan create assembly production of cotton tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-sozdajut-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-hlopkovodcheskih-tractorov-613951-2024/>

¹²¹ Ministers of Industry of Belarus and Uzbekistan familiarised themselves with the production sites of partner companies [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministry-promyshlennosti-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-oznakomilis-s-proizvodstvennymi-ploschadkami-kompanij-614578-2024/>

¹²² Belarus and Uzbekistan will work out the creation of joint production of dump trucks [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-prorabotajut-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-samosvalov-614810-2024/>

In recent years, co-operation between the countries **in the forestry, woodworking and pulp and paper industries has been** developing very dynamically. Statistics show that "in the last three years there has been an annual increase in supplies to Uzbekistan - on average twofold, which indicates a constantly growing demand <...>. In 2023, the growth rate of exports of woodworking and pulp and paper products was over 150 per cent. In Uzbekistan, the enterprises of the industry supply almost the entire range of products manufactured in Belarus"¹²³. And the organisations of the Ministry of Forestry were able to increase exports to Uzbekistan in 2023 even five times. And this year "we plan to increase shipments two times more"¹²⁴, including at the expense of house sets produced by forestry enterprises. And that is not all. Belarusian woodworking products are currently being actively traded on the Uzbek market through the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB). Of course, there are contracts for other commodity items, but so far sawn timber from Belarus is in the lead. In general, "for a month and a half of the current [2024] year, the exchange [BUTB] has already sold and purchased \$7 million worth of products with the participation of Uzbek business. More than 100 Uzbek companies are registered at the exchange"¹²⁵.

At the II Forum of Regions, several woodworking and pulp and paper enterprises also signed contracts to supply Uzbekistan with their products. Thus, Svetlogorsk Pulp and Paper Mill signed agreements with two Uzbek companies for the supply of bleached softwood pulp. Newsprint Plant RUE signed a contract for supply of offset and sack paper. The total amount of the contracts is \$17 million. The newsprint plant also signed a letter of intent to sell sawn timber to Uzbekistan. And woodworking enterprise FanDOC will produce furniture in Uzbekistan. It is planned to open a joint company to produce furniture in Tashkent region. A road map has already been prepared for this purpose. Uzbek partners undertake to build a building according to the requirements of FanDOC, they buy equipment according to the requirements of the Belarusian company, and FanDOC comes in with its raw material base. "Thus, Belarus will not just sell raw materials to Uzbekistan, but will produce and sell a product with high added value

¹²³ Enterprises of woodworking and pulp and paper industry concluded contracts on delivery of products to Uzbekistan for \$17 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-zakljuchili-kontrakty-po-postavke-produktsii-v-uzbekistan-na-17-mln-614132-2024/>

¹²⁴ Organisations of the Ministry of Forestry at the end of 2023 increased exports to Uzbekistan five times [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/organizatsii-minleshoza-po-itogam-2023-goda-narastili-eksport-v-uzbekistan-v-pjat-raz-614577-2024/>

¹²⁵ BUTB proposes to build direct sales of Uzbek enterprises for buyers in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predlagaet-vystraivat-prjamyje-prodazhi-uzbeksikh-predpriyatij-dlja-pokupatelej-v-belarusi-616373-2024/>

on the local market. The parties will own the enterprise 50/50¹²⁶. In addition, a roadmap for further expansion of co-operation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the woodworking industry was signed on the margins of the forum.

As for the interaction between the two countries in **agriculture**, joint production facilities will be set up in Uzbekistan in the near future. Belarus will build a poultry farm in Tashkent and a dairy plant in Samarkand. For this purpose, "a project has been worked out to build a poultry farm to raise broilers of about 70-75 thousand tonnes per year. The implementation of this project has already begun: a feed mill has been purchased, land has been obtained. We even have a brand already - "Jozha" ("Chicken")"¹²⁷. In Samarkand, Savushkin Product will act as a partner, where not only Belarusian but also local raw materials will be processed, and then the finished products will be marketed in third countries, for example, Afghanistan. Another direction in this regard is the export of veterinary drugs. In February 2024, a contract was signed under which "supplies will grow by almost 2.5 times. This shows the demand for our [Belarusian] veterinary drugs in the Uzbek market"¹²⁸. In addition, Uzbekistan plans to test Belarusian potatoes and has already ordered the first batch - 20 tonnes. The fact is that Uzbek potatoes are grown in the fields of this Central Asian country with yields several times lower than in Belarus. "Further co-operation in this area will depend on the result. But in general, the demand for potatoes in Uzbekistan is not covered by about half"¹²⁹.

Another important trend in Belarusian-Uzbek relations: in 2024, the two post-Soviet countries will noticeably strengthen co-operation in the **textile and clothing industries**. Within the framework of industrial cooperation, there are plans for mutual supplies of cotton yarn, cloth, and fabrics for Belarusian enterprises, as well as chemical fibres, linen raw materials, and blended ready-made fabrics for Uzbek enterprises. Projects will be worked out to sew ready-made garments on the territory of Uzbekistan according to the orders of Belarusian brands, as Belarus lacks its own seamstresses. For this reason, a

¹²⁶ "FanDOC" will engage in furniture production in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/fandok-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-mebeli-v-uzbekistane-614380-2024/>

¹²⁷ Belarus will build a poultry farm in Tashkent and a dairy plant in Samarkand [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postroit-v-tashkente-ptitsefabriku-a-v-samarkande-molochnyj-kombinat-614367-2024/>

¹²⁸ Belarus will increase supplies of veterinary drugs to Uzbekistan by 2.5 times [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-v-25-raza-narastit-postavki-vetpreparatov-v-uzbekistan-616324-2024>

¹²⁹ Uzbekistan wants to test Belarusian potatoes, the yield of its own potatoes is several times lower [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-hochet-ispytat-belorusskij-kartofel-urozhajnost-svoego-v-neskolko-raz-nizhe-614368-2024/>

number of enterprises from Belarus - "Svitanak, Slavyanka, Kalinka, and Orsha Flax Factory - already have experience in placing their orders with Uzbek enterprises"¹³⁰. Strategically, the Belarusian side decided as follows: labour-intensive products - suit and dress, coat groups, some complex elements - will be produced in Belarus; other assortment items - in Uzbekistan - under Belarusian trademarks, with fabrics and fabrics from our republic. Besides, "the key aspect of cooperation will be in the field of education and professional development. Uzbek specialists, including seamstresses, technologists and designers, will be sent to Belarusian enterprises for internships, and Belarusian technologists will be engaged for managerial work at Uzbek enterprises"¹³¹. By the way, it should be noted that the number of students from Uzbekistan studying in Belarus has grown significantly over the past five years. If five years ago, 14 citizens of Uzbekistan were educated in Belarus, now there are about 1,200. "And in total, about 4,000 students are studying under joint educational programmes. There is a great interest to train specialists in Belarus in those specialities that will be in demand in the real sector of the economy"¹³².

In 2024, Belarus and Uzbekistan intend to develop co-operation in the **healthcare sector at an** accelerated pace and have outlined more than ten areas of co-operation in this regard. For example, in the field of child health care, the Mother and Child Republican Scientific and Practical Medical Centre of the Ministry of Health of Belarus will provide advanced training in neonatology for doctors of the Republican Specialized Scientific and Practical Medical Centre for Mother and Child Health of Uzbekistan, as well as develop joint educational programmes for master's and clinical residency and cooperation on neonatal resuscitation. Internships and professional development of Uzbek medical, teaching and scientific staff will also be organised in cardiac surgery, cardiac anaesthesiology, functional diagnostics of patients with congenital heart defects, online consultations on problem patients, exchange of specialists in radiology, targeting, molecular genetic therapy. A separate block of partnerships includes training in Belarus of medical physicists and oncology engineers, specialists for the transplantology service of Uzbekistan, cooperation in orthopaedics and arthroscopy through exchange of experience, training and joint operations.

¹³⁰ Belarus will more actively attract Uzbek enterprises to the production of clothes [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-budet-aktivnee-privlekat-k-proizvodstvu-odezhdy-uzbekskie-predpriyatija-613968-2024/>

¹³¹ Belarus and Uzbekistan will strengthen co-operation in the textile and clothing industries [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-ukrepjat-sotrudnichestvo-v-tekstilnoj-i-shvejnoj-otrasljah-614106-2024/>

¹³² Ambassador of Uzbekistan: there is a great interest in training students in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/society/view/posol-uzbekistana-est-bolshaja-zainteresovannost-v-obuchenii-studentov-v-belarusi-616364-2024>

Speaking about cooperation between the sanitary and epidemiological services of Belarus and Uzbekistan, the parties agreed "to carry out joint work and research in the field of prevention and treatment of infectious and non-infectious diseases, including immunisation and pandemic control programmes"¹³³.

The Belarusian side is also considering the possibility of entering the Uzbek market with high-quality, low-cost **pharmaceuticals** that are essential for the healthcare needs of that country. All the more so because at present, Belfarmprom Holding companies have 136 registration certificates for medicines in Uzbekistan. In 2023, the supply of medicines to this country increased by 120 per cent. In February 2024, commercial contracts worth more than five million dollars were signed, which will significantly increase these supplies. A memorandum of understanding was also adopted between Belfarmprom Holding and the Agency for the Development of the Pharmaceutical Industry under the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, on the basis of which the first contracts have already been signed and practical work has begun to expand not only direct supplies, but also the development of new types of medicines. The Belarusian side offered a list of 12 items that can be jointly mastered at Uzbek enterprises. And "now Belpharm, which is located in Tashkent, and Nesvizh Medical Preparations Plant are working on the possibility of starting production of infusion solutions for the needs of the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan. The Belarusian plant acts as a technical partner, which implies readiness to transfer technologies and train specialists"¹³⁴. All this suggests that Belarus considers Uzbekistan as one of the most promising platforms for joint work to bring joint products to the markets of third countries. One more fact: the Belarusian side has submitted documents for registration of about 20 new medicines in this Central Asian country and 27 for re-registration. At the same time, the possibility of entering the Uzbek market with a range of oncological drugs from Belarus, which are two to three times cheaper than imported analogues, is being considered.

Speaking about the results of the II Forum of the Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan in terms of Belarusian regions, we can note interesting results from Hrodna, Brest, Vitebsk, and Minsk. For example, the **Grodno Oblast Executive Committee** signed memoranda of co-operation with Surkhandarya Oblast and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and agreements on trade and economic, scientific

¹³³ Staff training and joint operations. What cooperation between the Ministries of Health of Belarus and Uzbekistan looks like [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/podgotovka-kadrov-i-sovmestnye-operatsii-kakim-viditsja-sotrudnichestvo-minzdravov-belarusi-i-614005-2024/>

¹³⁴ Belarus plans to organise supplies of medicines for oncology treatment to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/society/view/belarus-planiruet-organizovat-postavki-v-uzbekistan-lekarstv-dlja-lechenija-onkologii-616347-2024>

and technical, environmental, social and humanitarian, and cultural co-operation were concluded with Samarkand and Andijan Oblasts. At the same time, the emphasis in partnership ties with Uzbek colleagues is on co-operation, the creation of joint productions and mutual investments. "There is interest on the part of Uzbek business to invest in the economy of Grodno region <...>. There is an interest on the part of our [Grodno] producers to engage not only in supplying finished products, but also to organise joint ventures and produce products there"¹³⁵. In the same days of February, Grodno State University (GrSU) "signed cooperation agreements with Urgench Innovation University and Tashkent State Technical University"¹³⁶, as well as with Nizami State Pedagogical University in Tashkent. In addition, GrSU representatives at the Tashkent Institute of Chemical Technology outlined plans for further development of a joint educational programme for undergraduates, and at the Tashkent State Transport University discussed prospects for developing mutually beneficial ties.

As for **Brest region**, which has increased the growth of trade turnover and export volumes in the Uzbek market by the end of 2023, it identified clear priorities for cooperation with Uzbek partners at the forum - textile production, road construction, production of bricks, ceramic stones and blocks, as well as cooperation in agriculture and in organising mutual supplies of food products - peanuts, sultanas, apricots, prunes, spices. Brest region enterprises "not only supply their products to Uzbekistan and import Uzbek goods, but are also investors. Thus, Kobrin "Polesie", specialising in the production of children's toys, invested in the construction of a similar plant in Tashkent"¹³⁷. For this reason, the Brest Regional Executive Committee at the forum signed action plans for 2024-2025 to implement interregional agreements on trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with the Syrdarya and Bukhara regions, which were concluded at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan. In addition, the following agreements were signed at the Second Forum: a cooperation agreement between the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital

¹³⁵ Karanik: in co-operation with Uzbekistan the emphasis is placed on the creation of joint productions and mutual investments [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/karanik-v-sotrudnichestve-s-uzbekistanom-upor-delaetsja-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-proizvodstv-i-vzaimnye-614485-2024/>

¹³⁶ Three agreements with universities of Uzbekistan will complete the portfolio of international cooperation of GrSU [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tridogovora-s-vuzami-uzbekistana-dopolnjat-portfel-mezhdunarodnogo-sotrudnichestva-grgu-614135-2024/>

¹³⁷ Brest region will conclude new co-operation agreements at the Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novye-dogovory-o-sotrudnichestve-zakljuchit-brestskaja-oblast-na-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-613850-2024/>

and the Bukhara Regional Multidisciplinary Medical Centre and a protocol of intent between the cities of Brest and Bukhara.

On the margins of the II Forum of Regions, **Vitebsk Region** signed road maps for 2024-2025 with Namangan and Kashkadarya regions. In the second one, representatives of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions also agreed "on co-operation in the spheres of oncology, children's surgery, transplantology and endocrinology..."¹³⁸, and also discussed issues related to co-operation in economy, tourism, information technologies and sports. Finally, as mentioned above, at the second forum **Minsk** and Tashkent signed an agreement on establishing twinning ties and an action plan for the implementation of the agreement between the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Tashkent Hokimiyat on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation for 2024-2025. The parties determined the main task in this matter - "to realise all plans in the shortest possible time"¹³⁹.

Summing up, it should be noted that today the interaction between the two former post-Soviet republics "is experiencing a period of a peculiar flourishing, which is reaching a qualitatively new level and striving to search for and expand new joint forms to realise the objectives of strategic cooperation"¹⁴⁰. In this context, the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan showed the parties' confident course for further effective partnership, and the priority direction of Belarusian-Uzbek relations remains the expansion and deepening of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation: from industrial cooperation and agriculture to scientific and technological, cultural, humanitarian and regional interaction.

¹³⁸ Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions plan cooperation in oncology and children's surgery [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-i-kashkadarjinskaja-oblasti-planirujut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sferah-onkologii-i-detskoj-hirurgii-613865-2024/>

¹³⁹ Delegation from Minsk participates in the II Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsija-iz-minska-uchastvuet-v-ii-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-613836-2024/>

¹⁴⁰ Zalesky, B. Address of partnership - Uzbekistan. Chronicle of co-operative interaction / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 61.

On a foundation of new ideas

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee (IGC) was held, which formed a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China and created unique opportunities and mechanisms for deepening practical cooperation across the whole range of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that "our common goal should be a new point of growth in trade turnover of at least 120 per cent compared to the last [2022] year"¹⁴¹. To be more specific about the most important areas of Belarus-China economic co-operation, four key issues should be highlighted in this regard.

First, increasing and diversifying trade, systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers, and launching procurement channels for important goods through Chinese operators. Second, increasing rail container traffic to deliver Belarusian goods to China and Chinese equipment to Belarus, ensuring the operation of green railway corridors, and organising subsidised reverse trains from Belarus to major logistics centres in China and back. Thirdly, "deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed automobile manufacturing, assembly of electric cars, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, development of bio- and digital technologies"¹⁴². Fourth, financing of strategic investment projects within the framework of China's favourable credit lines, their effective implementation, building up credit, financial, technical and economic cooperation, including the purchase of necessary equipment. Recall that "at the end of 2022, the countries [Belarus and China] reached a record volume of \$5.8 billion in goods turnover. Five months of this year were marked by a 1.5-fold increase in trade turnover. Exports of Belarusian goods to China are growing at a record pace: 1.8 times in 2022 and 1.6 times in the first five months of 2023"¹⁴³.

At the fifth meeting of the IGC, the parties agreed to focus their efforts on the implementation of major development and co-operation projects, including

¹⁴¹ Snopkov: a new model of strategic partnership between Belarus and China has been formed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-sformirovana-novaja-model-strategicheskogo-partnerstva-belarusi-i-kitaja-576417-2023/>

¹⁴² Chervjakov singled out important areas of cooperation to strengthen the relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-vydjelil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlja-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

¹⁴³ Snopkov: Belarus and China demonstrates to the whole world an exemplary example of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-belarus-i-kitaj-demonstrirujut-vsemu-miru-obraztsovyj-primer-sotrudnichestva-576412-2023/>

grant aid from the Chinese government. In this context, it should be emphasised that Belarus has already implemented 15 important socially oriented projects worth more than one and a half billion Chinese yuan. "About a dozen of new strategic projects are in the works, including infrastructure development of the Great Stone industrial park, supply of necessary technological equipment with the total amount of financing of over 900 million Chinese yuan"¹⁴⁴. The parties plan to accelerate the implementation of these projects, including two international-class sports facilities - a stadium and a swimming pool - by September 2024.

As for other production and cooperation projects, in July 2023, the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese corporation China National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach) signed an action plan to develop cooperation "on priority areas of cooperation in the production of agricultural and municipal machinery, machine tools, as well as the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises"¹⁴⁵ and even discussed the creation of individual models of agricultural machinery, the possibility of organising

In July 2023, the Chinese company Baimen and JSC Slutsk Cheese Factory signed a strategic commercial agreement on the establishment of a joint venture to produce dairy products already this year in Shenyang, the administrative centre of Liaoning Province. It should be noted that this Chinese company is a major exporter of "Belarusian dairy products (about \$50 million worth of products exported in 2022). It is implementing a project to process colostrum and produce whey protein at the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"¹⁴⁶. By establishing a joint venture in Shenyang, Baimen and Slutsk Cheese Factory intend to further scale up the project, systematically increasing the range of dairy products produced for Chinese customers.

And one more interesting fact. In the same July 2023, OJSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" held negotiations with YTO Group Corporation - a Chinese manufacturer of agricultural and construction machinery, part of the Sinomach complex machine-building conglomerate - "to organise joint production of self-propelled mowers, municipal machines, and also discussed

¹⁴⁴ Belarus and China have agreed to implement major projects in the field of development and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-dogovorilis-o-realizatsii-krupnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiya-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

¹⁴⁵ The Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese company Sinomach signed an action plan for the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-sinomach-podpisali-plan-meroprijatij-po-razvitiyu-576228-2023/>

¹⁴⁶ Belarusian-Chinese enterprise for the production of dairy products will be established in China this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-kitajskoe-predpriyatje-po-proizvodstvu-molochnoj-produktsii-sozdatut-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

issues of supplying components for Bobruiskagromash machinery from China"¹⁴⁷. In the near future, the parties will prepare the necessary documents on this project.

A separate conversation in this context is about the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone industrial park. Let us recall that 2023 marks ten years since the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which marked a new era in the economic relations of states and united more than a hundred countries across the planet. Among the first participants of this megaproject was the Republic of Belarus, where the Great Stone Park is actively developing. It plays the role of a nodal platform of this initiative and already unites more than a hundred residents from 15 countries. Suffice it to say that "the volume of actual investments of the park has already exceeded \$830 million, and the volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.34 billion"¹⁴⁸. And in the first quarter of 2023 alone, 11 new companies with investment projects in logistics, e-commerce, medicine, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development have already registered here. More specifically, "the number of residents of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park has now reached 108 <...>. The volume of production [for the three months of 2023] has increased 1.3 times, revenue from the sale of goods - 1.8 times, export of goods - 1.2 times, foreign direct investment on a net basis - 2 times, tax payments - 3.5 times"¹⁴⁹.

One of the priority areas of Veliky Kamen today is mechanical engineering. It should be reminded that the cluster of enterprises working in this area is the largest in the park and has more than 20 projects. In particular, there are joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprises producing internal combustion engines, gearboxes for passenger and freight transport. One of the Chinese residents produces construction machinery based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant, and a Belarusian resident produces glass for all types of land transport, which is in great demand in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Another topical area of Veliky Kamen is high-tech and competitive production -

¹⁴⁷ "Bobruiskagromash" and Chinese company YTO Group Corporation discussed the prospects of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-yto-group-corporation-obsudili-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-575895-2023/>

¹⁴⁸ Declared investments of the residents of "Great Stone" are estimated at more than \$1.3 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajavlennye-investitsii-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-otsenivajutsja-bolee-chem-v-13-mlrd-568784-2023/>

¹⁴⁹ Ministry of Economy: 11 new companies were registered in the "Great Stone" in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minekonomiki-za-i-kvartal-v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrovano-11-novyh-kompanij-567541-2023/>

companies carrying out research and development. Now there are already more than 25 such companies registered in the park.

Speaking of new residents, in March 2023, another company was registered in the Velikiy Kamen industrial park - IRBI LLC, whose investment project has an innovative import-substituting character. "The park resident will produce monoblocks, mini-computers for offices and industrial computers, as well as computer hardware components. In addition to production, the company will implement its own application software complexes"¹⁵⁰. These products will be intended for the domestic market of Belarus, as well as exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In April 2023, another resident was registered in the industrial park - SinoBelMedica LLC, initiated by the Chinese company Shanghai Electric Medical Group, which is part of the structure of the largest manufacturer of power and industrial equipment Shanghai Electric Group Company Limited. The new resident "will implement a project to create a modern high-tech production of X-ray tubes on the territory of the industrial park. The sale of products on the Belarusian market will contribute to import substitution"¹⁵¹.

In May 2023, at the talks between the park's management and a delegation from Gansu Province, the issues of traditional Chinese medicine development in Belarus were discussed, and "the possibility of establishing a centre of traditional Chinese medicine and developing pharmaceutical production in the territory of the park was discussed"¹⁵². And in June 2023 an agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei was reached to work out "the issue of creating a biotechnology cluster for the production of medicines, vaccines, insulin, CAR-T technologies <...> in the Great Stone Industrial Park. Work is underway to determine the prospects for localising the nomenclature of Jifei's pharmaceuticals"¹⁵³.

¹⁵⁰ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce computers and components [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompjutery-i-komplektujuschie-558151-2023/>

¹⁵¹ The new resident of "Great Stone" plans to produce X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskih-trubok-560903-2023/>

¹⁵² Delegation of the Chinese province of Gansu will study the possibility of development of pharmaceutical production in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsija-kitajskoj-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiya-farmproizvodstv-v-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>

¹⁵³ Ministry of Health and Chinese pharmaceutical company "Jifei" intend to write a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-dzhifej-namereny-podpisat-soglashenie-o-sotrudnicestve-569796-2023/>

And in June 2023, the Belarusian and Chinese sides said that they would continue to attract investors with large projects to the Great Stone Industrial Park, with special attention being paid to the development of traditional Chinese medicine at the park's site. Also, "the Ministries of Economy of the two countries and the largest shareholder companies of the Industrial Park Development Company agreed to continue active work to attract anchor investors with major projects to Velikiy Kamen, to organise new demanded production facilities, in particular in the field of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, to increase localisation of existing production facilities of residents"¹⁵⁴. The parties will pragmatically improve the investment environment on a systematic basis, consistently eliminate emerging development risks and bring the park to a new qualitative level of development, strengthening its position as a central Belarusian-Chinese project and an international industrial cluster with an eye on the Eurasian Economic Union market.

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

It should be noted that as of today more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have already been signed between the educational institutions of Belarus and China, which is about 10 per cent of the total number of existing inter-university agreements of Belarusian higher education institutions. "There are also 9 joint educational and scientific structures (3 laboratories, 4 centres and 2 institutes) functioning on the basis of educational institutions of the two countries, 40 joint educational programmes are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed in the last two years, the implementation of 6 of them started in the 2022/2023 academic year. The possibility of implementing 20 more joint

¹⁵⁴ Belarus and China will continue to attract anchor investors with large projects to the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-prodolzhat-privlekat-v-velikij-kamen-jakornyh-investorov-s-krupnymi-proektami-569986-2023/>

educational programmes and organising joint training of personnel of higher scientific qualification is being worked out"¹⁵⁵. In autumn this year, the educational departments of the two countries plan to approve a plan for the development of academic and scientific exchanges for 2023-2025, within the framework of which new concrete steps will be taken for constructive interaction between Belarusian universities and Chinese partners.

The Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) is among the active participants of this co-operation. Back in April 2023, the Belarusian university discussed promising areas of partnership with members of the Guangdong Union for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, BSTU signed an agreement on co-operation and establishment of a joint laboratory of applied technologies with Guangdong Vocational College of Light Industry. "The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, summer schools, discussed the prospect of contacts in the field of polymers, functional coatings, paper production technology and other areas"¹⁵⁶. They also signed documents on the implementation of joint educational programmes with Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce, Guangdong Vocational College of Communications. And a bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was concluded with the Ningbo International Research and Innovation Centre to jointly develop modern polymer composite materials, elastomers and plastic masses, and additive technologies.

In May 2023, BSTU signed a cooperation agreement with Kunshan Institute of Industrial Technology to establish joint Belarusian-Chinese transfer centres in the field of high technologies and 3D modelling. The agreement stipulates that "every year the Belarusian side will select at least 10 projects to be financed by the PRC in order to develop co-operation in the field of high technologies"¹⁵⁷. In addition, the parties agreed to create a joint university "Kunshan-Minsk" on the basis of the Belarusian State Technical University so that students could study part of the time in China and part of the time in Belarus, and eventually receive two diplomas. And one more interesting idea: together

¹⁵⁵ Bakhanovich: education provides intellectual, cultural and linguistic rapprochement between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bakhanovich-obrazovanie-obspechivaet-intellektualnoe-kulturnoe-i-jazykovoe-sblizhenie-belarusi-i-kitaja-576391-2023/>

¹⁵⁶ Educational and scientific potential of BSTU presented in the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obrazovatelnyj-i-nauchnyj-potentsial-bgtu-prezentovan-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-563887-2023/>

¹⁵⁷ Investments, creation of a joint university and biomedicine centre. Kunshan delegation visited BSTU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-universiteta-i-tsentra-biomeditsiny-delegatsija-kunshanja-posetila-569539-2023/>

with Chinese companies, a biomedicine centre will be created in Minsk City Technopark, where they will develop testing technologies and drugs to treat human and various animal diseases. In short, an agro-industrial complex related to vaccines will be developed.

Another Belarusian university that continues close co-operation with Chinese partners in 2023 is the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR). In July this year, BSUIR opened a Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory of external electromagnetic influences in Minsk together with the North China Research Institute of Electromagnetic Protection. One of the key tasks of the new laboratory is to develop a finished product of practical interest and in demand in the global technology market, "to conduct fundamental and applied research, implement its results, promote training and professional development, internships for engineering staff and researchers of BSUIR and the partner institute"¹⁵⁸, as well as to strengthen international co-operation of scientists and specialists for joint research within the framework of the implementation of China's initiative.

As for Chinese universities, Liaoning University, which became a partner of the Pushkin Brest State University and Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) in July 2023, is highly interested in co-operation with Belarusian partners. In particular, the agreement between BrSTU and Liaoning University "provides for academic exchanges, joint educational programmes, implementation of scientific projects and social and cultural interaction. We plan to fill the agreement with real activities, and in the future to develop a roadmap"¹⁵⁹. For example, to train Chinese students in the speciality "Smart Transport" on the basis of the Faculties of Mechanical Engineering and Information Technologies.

Returning to the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Co-operation, it should be noted that the participants in this discussion proposed to bring scientific and technical co-operation to a new level and considered the possibility of setting up joint high-tech production facilities in a number of areas. "Such directions <...> could be robotics, electric transport, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, laser technology"¹⁶⁰. By creating a full

¹⁵⁸ Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory opened in BSUIR [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-kitajskaja-nauchno-issledovatel'skaja-laboratorija-otkrylas-v-bguir-576810-2023/>

¹⁵⁹ Universities of Brest signed co-operation agreements with Liaoning University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzuzy-bresta-podpisali-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-s-liaoninskim-universitetom-576902-2023/>

¹⁶⁰ Shlychkov: the implementation of joint projects with China will allow to reach the creation of new high-tech industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

innovation cycle - from the idea to the production of high-tech products, the parties will expand promising areas of partnership, interacting on the educational foundation of new ideas, which ensures intellectual rapprochement between Belarus and China. In addition, all these facts show that the new model of strategic, including trade and economic, scientific, technical, and educational, partnership between the two countries formed at the fifth meeting of the IGC on Cooperation is beginning to take concrete innovative shape for the benefit of the two peoples.

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Regional co-operation reaches a new level

In March 2023, in Beijing, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted at the highest level a joint statement on the basic principles of developing exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era. At the same time the parties signed the plan of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China for 2023. This document "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives to attract at least \$150 million of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026"¹⁶¹. In September 2023, the third meeting of the working group on interregional trade and economic cooperation of the commission on trade and economic cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee took place in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where they discussed topical issues of interaction between the regions of the two countries and prospects for its development. The parties noted that certain economic indicators of cooperation between Belarus and China have reached a fairly high level. "In the first half of 2023, mutual trade turnover exceeded \$4 billion, with Belarusian exports approaching the landmark mark of \$1 billion."¹⁶².

Minsk Region is one of the active participants in deepening trade and economic, scientific and technical, and socio-cultural cooperation between the regions of the two countries. In 2022, the trade turnover of the Belarusian capital region with the Chinese side exceeded two billion dollars, with exports of the Minsk Region totalling almost one billion dollars. At the beginning of 2023, the list of items of Minsk region's products supplied to the Celestial Empire has already exceeded the mark of more than a hundred. "Products of milk processing enterprises and other municipal enterprises of the region are especially in demand. All milk processing enterprises of the holding "Minoblmyasomolprom", as well as Slutsk and Stolbtsy meat processing plants have an export licence"¹⁶³. And for five months of the current year the capital region has already provided export supplies to China for more than five hundred million dollars.

¹⁶¹ Zaleskii, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilisation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 13.

¹⁶² Chebotar: Belarus aims to expand trade and economic cooperation with the regions of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-belarus-natselena-na-rasshirenie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-regionami-kr-590444-2023/>

¹⁶³ What production of Minsk region in the near future can appear in the market of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mlyn.by/01032023/kakaya-produkciya-minskoj-oblasti-v-blizhajshee-vremya-mozhet-poyavitsya-na-rynke-kitaya/>

Among the interesting partners of Minskshchina among Chinese regions we should mention **Guangdong province**, which is home to more than 127 million people and is attractive not only as a part of the market for products, but also as a supplier of technologies in the field of mechanical engineering and agriculture. After all, the province is one of the most developed provinces in China, with strong machinery and processing companies. In 2022, the parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the co-operation agreement. In May 2023, the Belarusian region and the Chinese province agreed on the prospects of cooperation. And now the roadmap for the development of bilateral relations is already being supplemented and updated. Note that "in the first half of 2023, trade turnover between the regions increased by 20%. Exports reached Br646.2 million. Poultry meat, beef, flax fibre are supplied to China from Minsk region. The main imports are machines for automatic information processing, textile products, auto parts"¹⁶⁴. In addition, the parties are discussing the issue of attracting investments from Guangdong Province into the economy of Minsk Region, as well as options for cooperation between major companies producing household appliances and cars, including electric cars, at production sites that are located in preferential zones of Minsk Region, such as the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where "12 new residents were added in the first nine months of 2023"¹⁶⁵.

As for another partner of Minsk Region in China - **Zhejiang Province**, the parties intend to expand co-operation in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. As is known, a relevant centre has been set up on the basis of Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital. In June 2023, during the talks between the delegations of the Zhejiang Provincial Health Committee and the Main Health Department of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, they discussed the development of this centre, "the supply of medicines from China, and the possibility of training doctors of the capital region in new methods. The Belarusian side also proposed to consider the issue of organising joint production of biologically active additives and herbal medicines"¹⁶⁶. In addition, there is a task to expand the capabilities of the above-mentioned Centre of Traditional Chinese Medicine, where such

¹⁶⁴ Minsk Regional Executive Committee discussed the road map of cooperation with the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskom-oblispolkome-obsudili-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-guandun-583608-2023/>

¹⁶⁵ The Minoblispolkom told what the Chinese province of Guangdong is interesting for the economy of the region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minoblispolkome-rasskazali-chem-dlja-ekonomiki-oblasti-interesna-kitajskaja-provintsija-guandun-593552-2023/>

¹⁶⁶ Minsk region and Zhejiang province intend to develop cooperation in the field of traditional medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-chzhetszjan-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-traditsionnoj-574675-2023/>

procedures as acupuncture, manual therapy and massage are already performed on its basis.

Finally, one of the promising partners of Minsk Oblast among the Chinese regions is the **city of Chongqing** - the only municipality of central subordination in China, which is also the economic centre of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, where more than 32 million people live. This city is the stronghold of China's development strategy in the western part of the Middle Kingdom and the hub of the Belt and Road project. Logistics hubs, ports and customs infrastructure are being built here to participate in the logistics development of the China-Europe Express. Chongqing is China's modern manufacturing base, with a full chain of electronic information industry and automobile manufacturing. Suffice it to say that in 2022, car production here totalled more than two million vehicles and 284,000 units were exported.

As for interregional ties, Chongqing and Minsk Region established twinning relations in 2017. With the launch of the regular service of the Chongqing-Minsk China Railway Express, the trade turnover between the two sides has been growing every year. "In 2022, imports and exports between Chongqing and Belarus exceeded 500 million yuan, up 54.8% year-on-year. Belarus is an important supplier of meat products and butter to Chongqing. Belarusian dairy products and confectionery products are highly popular among the city's residents"¹⁶⁷. In 2023, the parties are taking new concrete steps to further deepen trade and economic co-operation, establish humanitarian and cultural contacts. In particular, within the framework of the Exhibition of Chinese Goods and Services - 2023, which took place in late June - early July this year in the industrial park "Velikiy Kamen", where about 180 Chinese companies presented their products, the thematic exposition of the Exhibition Pavilion of Export Goods of Chongqing was also shown. More than 20 city enterprises on an area of about 300 square metres displayed engineering products, including cars, motorbikes and components. In addition, official representatives of Minsk Region and Chongqing "discussed co-operation in mechanical engineering, supplies of food products to the Chinese region, and logistics"¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁷ More than 20 enterprises from Chongqing will take part in the Exhibition of Chinese goods and services in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bole-20-predpriyatij-iz-chuntsina-primut-uchastie-v-vystavke-kitajskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-velikom-kamne-573747-2023/>

¹⁶⁸ Machine building, medicine, tourism: Minsk region and Chongqing discussed areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-meditsina-turizm-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-574541-2023/>

Vitebsk Region is also among the active participants in the Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation. In 2022, it almost doubled the volume of supplies to China, which totalled over USD 55 million. But back in 2006, the basis of the Belarusian region's exports to the Celestial Empire was represented by only 12 consolidated items, of which 97 per cent was a bundle of synthetic yarns. "But at the end of 2021, the export basket of Vitebshchina expanded to 28 items, and its basis began to be formed by supplies of agricultural products (meat, milk and dairy products) - about 70 per cent"¹⁶⁹. Today, these supplies also include dry confectionery, rapeseed oil, polyethylene, acrylic tourniquets, glass fabrics, flax processing and woodworking products, peat, and alcoholic beverages.

But recently the interaction between Vitebsk region and China has gone beyond buying and selling, as the parties are moving "to the next level - exchange of technologies, assistance in their refinement, in their research, in the development of new types of products"¹⁷⁰, to enter the plane of attracting investors, investing Vitebsk funds on the Chinese territory and mastering new technologies. Besides, the emphasis in the development is placed on educational, scientific and cultural segments. It should be reminded that Vitebsk region has signed eight bilateral documents - agreements, protocols, programmes - on cooperation, established and maintained regular contacts at the level of executive authorities, organisations and companies with four provinces and one city of China. In addition, 19 bilateral documents on co-operation between Vitebsk cities and districts and Chinese partners have been concluded.

The Belarusian northern region has the most intensive interaction with **Heilongjiang Province**, which is located in the north of China, where rice is grown and agriculture is generally very developed. Over the past 18 years, the parties have created a good legal framework of mutual relations: 1) Agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific-technical, humanitarian-cultural and other spheres (2005); 2) Agreement on the establishment of twinning relations (2011); 3) Cooperation Development Programme for 2016-2020. "Twinning agreements with the cities of this region of the Celestial Empire were once concluded by Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Vitebsk"¹⁷¹. In May 2023 at the XI

¹⁶⁹ Mishin, A. What are the prospects of co-operation between Vitebsk region and the provinces of China? / A. Mishin // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/analitik_obyasnit_kakovy_perspektivy_sotrudnichestva_vitebskoy_oblasti_i_provintsiy_kitaya/

¹⁷⁰ Subbotin: cooperation with China goes beyond buying and selling, into the plane of investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitaem-vyhodit-za-ramki-kupli-prodazhi-v-ploskost-investproektov-598640-2023/>

¹⁷¹ Pushnyakova, A. Food products, MDF boards: Vitebsk region will present in June in Harbin the potential of the region / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

International Economic Forum "Innovation. Investments. Prospects" in Vitebsk, enterprises from Heilongjiang Province expressed interest in partnership ties with Vitebsk producers of meat products, as well as "expect to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with Orsha and Dubrovensk flax processors in the near future, to share their experience and discuss the possibility of supplying modern equipment"¹⁷². In June this year, at the international trade and economic exhibition in Harbin, the administrative centre of Heilongjiang, a memorandum of intentions on establishing friendly ties was already signed between the Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and an enterprise from the city of Suihua from the same province. In addition, the Belarusian side is interested in co-operation in the production of electrical equipment and instrumentation, as the Chinese partners have great competences in this area. So, new promising projects in this regional interaction may appear in the near future.

Another new partner of Vitebsk Region in China is **Jiangxi Province**, with which the Belarusian region signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, logistics, investment, economy, education, healthcare, sports and tourism in October 2022. "As another practical step, it was decided to establish direct interaction between FEZ Vitebsk and special economic zones of Jiangxi province and their residents in order to work out the creation of joint production facilities in Belarus and the use of cross-border trade mechanisms by Belarusian exporters to China"¹⁷³. They also discussed the expansion of supplies of Belarusian products to China by the reverse container train Orsha-Nanchang and the exchange of practical experience in the investment sphere. Indeed, the city of Orsha has established cooperation with the administrative centre of this province - Nanchang - in the field of innovative and traditional medicine at the level of individual medical institutions. In December 2022, the document of intentions on cooperation was signed by the city hospital No. 2 of Orsha Central Polyclinic and the Hongdu Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which "provides for the exchange of practical and scientific experience, medical technologies, mutual internships and advanced training of medical workers, as well as the implementation of projects in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, including

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/prodovolstvvennye-tovary-mdf-plity-vitebskaja-oblast-predstavit-v-ijune-v-harbine-potentsial-regiona-567209-2023/>

¹⁷² Pushnyakova, A. Chinese industrialists intend to establish co-operation with the enterprises of Vitebsk region / A Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskie-promyshlenniki-namereny-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-s-predpriyatijami-vitebskoj-oblasti-567149-2023/>

¹⁷³ FEZ "Vitebsk" and special economic zones of Jiangxi province will establish direct interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-osobyje-ekonomicheskie-zony-provintsii-tszjansi-naladjat-prjamoe-vzaimodejstvie-566987-2023/>

physiotherapy, reflexology, electro-acupuncture, acupuncture, qigong on the basis of Orsha Central Polyclinic"¹⁷⁴.

As for the third Chinese partner of Vitebskchyna - **Shandong Province**, back in 2005 the parties signed a memorandum of co-operation, and in October 2019 adopted an Agreement on the establishment of friendly and co-operative relations, in which they "identified as priorities for the development of partnership ties the development of an effective mechanism of interaction in the field of trade and investment, the development of co-operative ties..."¹⁷⁵. In February 2023, an agreement on establishing friendly ties between Novopolotsk and the city of Liaocheng in Shandong Province was signed. The parties noted the importance of developing interregional ties as one of the key elements of bilateral co-operation. They also discussed the implementation of a number of joint projects. It should be noted that in order to strengthen Belarusian-Chinese ties, Vitsebsk voblast and Shandong province regularly hold joint events, as well as sign bilateral documents. "Earlier agreements on the establishment of friendly relations at the municipal level were signed between the cities of Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao, Polotsk and Dezhou, Glubokoe and Jining"¹⁷⁶. And in September 2023, three more memoranda on cooperation were signed: in innovation, education and youth policy. "Based on them and on the results of the negotiations, roadmaps for co-operation on specific projects and areas of activity will be developed"¹⁷⁷.

Finally, in November 2023, within the framework of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, where more than 10 enterprises of the Belarusian northern region took part, including the Vitebsk Meat and Dairy Products Concern, Polotsk Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, Lepelsk MCC branch of the Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant, Vitba Confectionery Factory, Naftan Plant, The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a memorandum of co-operation with the company Zonghai Business Management (Jinan) on the creation of the Chinese Industry Park in Vitebsk and the Belarusian Industry Park

¹⁷⁴ Orsha and Chinese Nanchang agreed on the exchange of medical experience [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/orsha-i-kitajskij-nanchan-dogovorilis-ob-obmene-meditinskim-opytom-540364-2022/>

¹⁷⁵ Zaleski, B. From Regions to Innovations. Features of the Belarusian-Chinese strategic partnership / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 11.

¹⁷⁶ Novopolotsk and Chinese Liaocheng have established friendly ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novopolotsk-i-kitajskij-ljaochen-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svjazi-550863-2023/>

¹⁷⁷ Kochetov, S. Vitebsk region and the Chinese province of Shandong intend to develop and expand partnership in innovation, education and youth policy / S. Kochetov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/vitebskaya-oblast-i-kitayskaya-provintsija-shandun-name-remy-razvivat-i-rasshiryat-partnerstvo-v-inno/>

in Shandong province - on the site of Qingdao, where enterprises will be able to present their products and work out the issues of their marketing in different regions of China. This will be one of the leading platforms from where Vitebsk goods will be distributed. It will be a point of export growth of Vitebsk region, which they want to "maximally utilise, and not only for the sale of goods. <...> This is probably one of the most fresh and promising projects"¹⁷⁸ . All this in general suggests that in 2024 Vitebsk region intends to develop co-operation with Chinese regions even more actively in a wide range of areas, including economy, trade, science, engineering, technology, education, health care and sports.

And now let us turn once again to the 6th China International Import Expo 2023 in Shanghai, where the Day of **Brest Region** was held in November this year, where the economic, cultural, tourist, educational, medical potential of the Belarusian region was presented with a bias towards exporting goods and services to China. It should be noted that this exhibition forum was attended by "more than 150 countries representing the regions of Asia, Africa and Europe"¹⁷⁹ and featured various thematic sections, including automotive industry, high-tech equipment and information technology, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, trade in services, food and agricultural products. In this regard, the participation of Belarusian companies at the Import Fair in Shanghai is of strategic importance. After all, China is one of the largest and most dynamically developing markets in the world and "provides an opportunity for Belarusian companies to expand their horizons and establish business ties with potential partners and buyers, including Chinese state corporations"¹⁸⁰ . An important detail: if at the 5th forum China International Import Expo 2022 in Shanghai, 27 organisations from the food industry, logistics, science and education participated in the Belarusian exposition, this time more than 70 representatives from Belarus took part in the exhibition.

As for **Brest Oblast**, it is among the leaders among Belarusian regions in terms of trade and economic relations with China. Suffice it to say that "for eight months of the current [2023] year, the volume of trade turnover [with China] totalled almost \$280 million and increased almost one and a half times. Thanks to

¹⁷⁸ Subbotin: import exhibition in Shanghai helps enterprises to make themselves known and find partners in China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-vystavka-importa-v-shanhae-pomogaet-predpriyatijam-zajavit-o-sebe-i-najti-partnerov-v-kitae-598641-2023/>

¹⁷⁹ What will be the national exposition of Belarus at the international import exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kakoj-budet-natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-v-shanhae-582374-2023/>

¹⁸⁰ International import exhibition opened in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnaja-vystavka-importa-otkrylas-v-shanhae-597935-2023/>

contacts with businesses, Chinese foreign direct investment has already increased by 40 per cent"¹⁸¹. At the import exhibition in Shanghai Brestchina demonstrated a wide range of goods and services, which interested consumers not only from China, but also from other countries. In particular, at the collective stand of the Brestmyasomolprom Concern, Brest Meat Processing Plant, Berezovsky Meat Canning Plant, Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Luninets Dairy Plant, and Pruzhany Dairy Plant presented their products with tasting. The educational potential of the region was presented by Brest State Technical University, while the medical potential was presented by Brest Regional Clinical Hospital.

As a result, representatives of the Belarusian region at the exhibition "signed 18 bilateral documents: seven agreements, four memoranda, six commercial contracts, and one action plan. They concern different areas, including trade and economic co-operation, co-operation in education, health care, tourism"¹⁸². For example, the Brest Regional Executive Committee signed agreements with two corporations involved in the creation of freight forwarding centres and the development of electronic commerce; Brest State Technical University signed agreements with the Hubei Institute of International Business and Economics. As for the memorandums on cooperation development, they were concluded by: the Brest Free Economic Zone and the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the administration of the Coastal Park of the Integrated Bond Zone in the city of Shenyang, which is the administrative centre of Liaoning Province; the Department of Sports and Tourism of the Brest Regional Executive Committee with the Belarusian-Chinese Centre for Culture and Development of the People's Republic of China. Speaking about commercial contracts, they primarily concern supplies of Brest foodstuffs, mainly meat and dairy processing products, and are estimated at more than twenty million dollars.

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

¹⁸¹ Chinese partners are interested in the creation of production and logistics companies in Brest region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskim-partneram-interesno-sozdanie-proizvodstv-i-logisticheskikh-kompanij-v-brestskoj-oblasti-598059-2023/>

¹⁸² Gorodetsky, D. In China concluded commercial contracts and new co-operation agreements / D. Gorodetsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/v-kitae-zakljuchili-kommercheskie-kontrakty-i-novye-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-8970/>

plan on the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation for 2023-2025. In addition, agreements on the establishment of twinning relations between the cities of Brest and Hefei, Berezovsky district and the city of Benbu were signed, while the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital agreed on cooperation with Anhui Medical University. We would like to add that Brest and Hefei already intend to draw up a roadmap for co-operation. The main points to find points of contact are "production sphere, transport and logistics, educational, medical, cultural..."¹⁸³

Speaking about the economic aspect of twinning, the Chinese partners are particularly interested in setting up production and logistics companies in the Belarusian region. In turn, the Belarusian side "is ready to offer services for the conversion of wagons from narrow European gauge to broad gauge, as well as the implementation of a project to create a transport and logistics hub in the Brest region"¹⁸⁴. The fact is that Brest is a nodal point of the Chinese "Silk Road" and an important element of the cross-border corridor to promote the project "Freight trains from China to Europe". In addition, Brest region is ready to provide the Chinese side with a site for the implementation of the project to build an educational centre. And this is only the beginning of new joint mutually beneficial projects.

All these facts suggest that Belarusian-Chinese interregional interaction is gradually reaching a new level of co-operation in an all-weather and all-round strategic partnership. So, in the near future, the parties will demonstrate even more innovative approaches to make it much easier and simpler for the regions to work on joint projects and programmes.

¹⁸³ Brest and Chinese Hefei intend to draw up a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-kitajskij-hefej-namereny-sostavit-dorozhnyu-kartu-dlja-sotrudnichestva-599168-2023/>

¹⁸⁴ Brest and Bereza got twinned in the Chinese province of Anhui [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-bereza-obzavelis-pobratimami-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-anhoj-598126-2023/>

Promote Belarusian exporters and help Chinese importers

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

At the end of 2022, the amount of transactions made by Chinese companies at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) trades increased by almost 15 per cent to about \$53 million. At the beginning of 2023, the number of trading session participants from China also increased significantly - from 67 to 113, two of which had the status of stockbrokers. "Last year, sawn timber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, vet-blue leather and synthetic fibres were supplied to China through the exchange platform. In turn, Belarusian companies purchased Chinese-made ferrous metal products and soya meal on BUTB"¹⁸⁵.

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

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

¹⁸⁵ The amount of transactions of Chinese companies on BUTB increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-sdelok-kitajskih-kompanij-na-butb-vozroslo-na-14-551264-2023/>

attract new buyers from China to the Belarusian trading platform"¹⁸⁶. Now the geography of purchases by SUMEC International Trading is quite diversified. Timber products are imported from Brazil, Canada, Congo, Russia, Finland and other countries, including Belarus, where the company has recently opened a subsidiary. At the same time, the Chinese side is ready to purchase Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB on a regular basis, provided that the price offers of domestic woodworkers are competitive and the rhythm of deliveries is guaranteed. It should be recalled that in March 2023, at a special session at BUTB aimed at the Chinese market, Belarusian bidders placed bids for the sale of sawn timber in the volume of over 100 thousand cubic metres.

In April 2023, the Chinese corporation **Xiamen Xiangyu Group Corporation (XMXYG)**, which is one of the Fortune 500 largest companies in the world, confirmed its readiness to increase the volume of purchases of wood products on the BUTB trading floor, as well as to develop cooperation in other promising commodity areas. Since March 2022, its subsidiary **Xiamen Xiangyu Superchain Supply Chain Development Co.** - regularly participates in lumber trading on the Belarusian exchange platform. "During this time, XMXYG has purchased nearly 10,000 cubic metres of sawn timber products worth about \$2 million through BUTB"¹⁸⁷. Thanks to the exchange, the company has already purchased four trains of sawn timber and is determined to continue co-operation in the same vein, progressively increasing the volume of purchases. XMXYG is also interested in expanding the list of goods that the corporation buys on BUTB, and not only in the timber industry segment. We are talking about the possibility of bidding for agricultural products and, first of all, rapeseed oil, which is in stable demand in China and was already supplied to the PRC market through BUTB in 2022. At that time, it was sold for more than \$42 million, including within the framework of import transactions made by Chinese participants. Therefore, given the significant production capacity of Belarusian oil extraction plants, this area may become a new growth point for the Chinese corporation in Belarus.

Another partner of BUTB, which is interested in co-operation with the Belarusian exchange platform, was the Chinese company **Beijing Huibaocheng Technology** in May 2023. This importer buys dairy products and vegetable oils, which are widely used in China's food industry. The company plans to "buy about

¹⁸⁶ BUTB has agreed on co-operation with one of the largest Chinese importers of forest products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-dogovorilas-osotrudnichestve-s-odnim-iz-krupnejshih-kitajskih-importerov-lesoproduktsii-553935-2023/>

¹⁸⁷ Chinese corporation is ready to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-korporatsija-gotova-naraschivat-zakupki-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-cherez-butb-560768-2023>

10,000 tonnes of rapeseed oil on the exchange on a monthly basis with the possibility of increasing supplies in the future"¹⁸⁸ . The Chinese importer is interested in Belarusian dried milk, so it will actively participate in the bidding.

In June 2023, another major Chinese importing company announced its intention to increase purchases of sawn timber products on the BUTB - it is **Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology**. The fact is that according to the results of five months of 2023, the company has already purchased about 53 thousand cubic metres of these products through the exchange, which is almost twice as much as last year's figure for the same period. But this is far from the limit. And by the end of 2023, "it is planned to buy at least another 20 thousand cubic metres. Thus, Belarus may become one of the three main markets from where Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology imports woodworking products"¹⁸⁹ . Interestingly, in 2022, Russia, Canada and Sweden were the strategic partners of this company for the supply of sawn timber, while Belarus ranked only fourth.

We would like to remind you once again that as of the beginning of 2023, the number of participants of BUTB trading sessions from China was already 113. And as of 27 November of the same year, 152 of them had already been accredited on the Belarusian exchange floor. "At the end of 10 months [2023], China has become the largest export destination for Belarusian exchange trading participants. <...> As a result, compared to January - October last year, the volume of export transactions increased two and a half times"¹⁹⁰ and totalled almost \$60 million.

One of the primary tasks that BUTB will address with Chinese partners in 2024 is to expand the range of goods from Belarus and China involved in mutual exchange trade. It should be noted that "Belarusian sawn timber, rapeseed oil, meat products and milk powder are exported to China through the exchange. At the same time, the exchange mechanism is becoming more and more popular with Chinese business, ensuring a high positive dynamics in terms of the amount of

¹⁸⁸ BUTB expects to increase supplies of sawn timber, vegetable oils, meat and dairy products to China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-v-kitaj-pilomaterialov-rastitelnyh-masel-mjasa-i-molochki-567273-2023/>

¹⁸⁹ A large Chinese importer intends to increase purchases of sawn timber products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-nameren-narashivat-zakupki-piloproduktov-na-butb-571701-2023/>

¹⁹⁰ Osmolovsky: BUTB will provide comprehensive support to Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/osmolovskij-butb-okazhet-kompleksnuju-podderzhku-belorusskim-eksporteram-599485-2023/>

transactions"¹⁹¹. To further develop these processes, Belarus and China plan to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, primarily producers of import-substituting goods. In addition, it is planned to ensure further diversification of the product mix by means of BUTB's targeted work with sectoral business associations and chambers of commerce and industry in various regions of China, which "will make it possible to establish interaction with both producers of products in demand in Belarus and potential consumers of Belarusian goods"¹⁹².

In particular, in July 2023, BUTB and the **Xinjiang Asia-Europe International Trade Centre (AEEX)**, the operator of the **Asia Europa Exchange** electronic trading platform, agreed to increase exports to China. It will focus "on the regions through which the New Silk Road passes. First of all, these are Shanghai, Taicang and Xinjiang"¹⁹³, where there are AEEX offices, which are already establishing interaction with representatives of Chinese businesses interested in working through BUTB.

In August 2023, the **China National Forestry Industry Corporation** announced its intention to expand cooperation with BUTB. It plans not only to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber, but also to sell Chinese-made goods through the Belarusian import substitution platform. The parties also reached an agreement to explore the possibility of importing Belarusian rapeseed oil and milk powder to China as the most liquid commodity items. "In this context, the issue of accreditation of the corporation as an exchange broker is also being considered, which will allow it to attract economic entities from other sectors of the economy to the BUTB"¹⁹⁴.

Another fact: in September 2023, the **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region** expressed its interest in developing cooperation with the BUTB, which "has four main features: vast territory, huge reserves of natural resources, highly

¹⁹¹ BUTB and the Chinese Embassy identified priorities for co-operation in the trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-posolstvo-kitaja-opredelili-prioritety-vzaimodejstvija-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoi-sfere-594539-2023/>

¹⁹² Prospects for the development of exchange trade between Belarus and China discussed at the business forum in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/perspektivy-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-kitaja-obsudili-na-biznes-forume-v-shanhae-597700-2023/>

¹⁹³ Xinjiang Asia-Europe Trade Centre to help boost exports to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sintzjanskij-aziatsko-evropejskij-torgovij-tsentr-pomozhet-narastit-eksport-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-576501-2023/>

¹⁹⁴ China Forest Industry Corporation intends to expand co-operation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-lesopromyshlennaja-korporatsija-namerena-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-butb-581070-2023/>

developed agriculture and a powerful energy industry"¹⁹⁵. The Chinese side believes that exchange trading can play a key role in creating favourable conditions for companies from this region of China to do business in Belarus. In this regard, the BUTB, with its extensive import and export opportunities, can facilitate the activities of companies from Inner Mongolia in the Belarusian market.

Finally, in November 2023, as part of the 13th China International Wood Trade Conference, which took place in Nanning, the administrative centre of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a memorandum of cooperation on electronic exchange trade was signed by BUTB and the **China Timber and Forest Products Trade Association (CTWPDA)** to assist Chinese companies in entering the Belarusian market. Recall that over 467 thousand cubic metres of Belarusian lumber products were "sold on the Chinese market in the first 11 months of 2023. This is almost five times more than in January-November last year. At the same time, working with domestic suppliers, Chinese importers actively use the mechanism of exchange address transactions, the volume of which has already reached 237 thousand cubic metres in just a few months"¹⁹⁶. In this regard, the establishment of partnership relations between BUTB and CTWPDA will not only help to find new buyers for sawn timber produced in Belarus, but will also provide an additional impetus to the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the exchange sphere.

A total of 162 Chinese residents have already been accredited on BUTB in January 2024, 51 more than in January 2023. "At the same time, the amount of transactions made by Chinese bidders increased 2.7 times - from \$30.4 million in 2022 to \$80.6 million in 2023"¹⁹⁷. This happened mainly due to exports of Belarusian products. These were mainly supplies of sawn timber, rapeseed oil, dried milk and petrochemical products. When it comes to imports from China, "Belarusian traders predominantly purchased ferrous and non-ferrous metal products through BUTB"¹⁹⁸. For this reason, BUTB's plans for 2024 include not

¹⁹⁵ Belarus and China discussed the prospects of development of exchange trade [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-590151-2023/>

¹⁹⁶ BUTB and China Forest Trade Association signed a memorandum of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskaja-assotsiatsija-torgovli-lesom-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-602012-2023/>

¹⁹⁷ The new broker BUTB will be engaged in deliveries of import-substituting goods from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-broker-butb-zajmetsja-postavkami-importozameschajuschih-tovarov-iz-kitaja-611688-2024/>

¹⁹⁸ BUTB and the Chinese Shenyang administration agreed to co-operate in exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-administratsija-kitajskogo-shenjiana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-606169-2023/>

only further increasing export sales, but also expanding the range of Chinese-made goods. Moreover, in 2023, about a quarter of transactions on BUTB's industrial and consumer goods platform were for products of Chinese origin.

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

By the way, in the new year 2024, BUTB has already established partnership relations with the Chinese holding **Osell Group**, which unites a number of electronic trading platforms for manufacturers from China and facilitates their entry into foreign markets. The fact is that "the Osell Grop digital ecosystem is used by thousands of companies from various industries and agriculture, and the purpose of cooperation with BUTB is to involve Chinese business representatives in cross-border trade on the Belarusian exchange platform"¹⁹⁹. And already in January this year, BUTB and Osell Grop organised a round table for the business community of this region in the city of Wuxi in

¹⁹⁹ BUTB has started co-operation with a major Chinese trading platform [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-nachala-sotrudnicat-s-krupnoj-kitajskoj-torgovoj-platformoj-612305-2024/>

Jiangsu Province, given the high level of economic development and significant export potential of this province. It is expected that the results of this event will be available in the near future.

Returning to the topic of Belarusian exports to China via BUTB, it should be noted that this trend will continue to dominate in 2024. Especially in terms of successful deliveries of Belarusian woodworking products to the Celestial Empire market. This is evidenced by the figures, which show that "in 2023, Chinese companies purchased 501 thousand cubic metres of sawn wood products on the exchange, which is 4 times more than in 2022. Over 53% of the total sales volume was provided by exchange address transactions. At the same time, about 30 buyers from China regularly participated in the auction"²⁰⁰. This year, BUTB will further expand the range of buyers of these supplies in China.

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

Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology, already mentioned above, which became the largest foreign buyer of sawn timber on the BUTB in 2023, plans to scale its business in Belarus. Last year, the firm bought more than 140,000 cubic metres of sawn timber on the exchange, almost four times more than in 2022. The company will continue to increase its purchases in 2024. "At the same time, we are talking not only about increasing imports of sawn timber products through BUTB, but also about purchases of other Belarusian goods popular in China"²⁰¹. These are milk powder, rapeseed oil, sugar. In order to further deepen cooperation in the field of exchange trade, the parties also agreed to work on the integration of the BUTB platform and the Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology electronic marketplace, where banking and logistics services are already connected, which will allow Belarusian exporters accredited at BUTB to

²⁰⁰ . BUTB expands the range of lumber buyers from China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-krug-pokupatelej-pilomaterialov-iz-kitaja-607633-2023/>

²⁰¹ The largest foreign buyer of sawn timber at BUTB is ready to scale up business in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnejshij-inostrannyj-pokupatel-pilomaterialov-na-butb-gotov-masshtabirovat-biznes-v-belarusi-610932-2024/>

better and more effectively promote their products in the Chinese market, interacting with their end consumers.

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

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Partnerships, forward-looking

In 2023, the Republic of Turkey turned one hundred years old. Today, it is a dynamic, future-focused state with achievements in a number of specific spheres and major logistics and energy projects that link Asia and Europe. Belarus traditionally views Turkey as an important and promising partner and a reliable friend. It should be recalled that it was this country that "became the first foreign state to recognise the state independence of the Republic of Belarus"²⁰². In March 2022, Minsk and Ankara celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. In 1996, the **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation** between the two countries was signed during the first visit of the Belarusian head of state to Turkey.

The visit of Turkish President R.T. Erdoğan to Belarus in November 2016, the first ever visit to Belarus in the history of bilateral relations, was also a milestone in the Belarusian-Turkish relations. Firstly, it set a goal of reaching a mutual trade turnover of one billion dollars. Secondly, the parties decided to focus on the maximum use of the potential of trade and economic interaction with an emphasis on the creation in the regions of Belarus and Turkey of "joint production of complex technical products, including for the purpose of their promotion to the markets of third countries"²⁰³ and the organisation of joint industrial zones.²⁰⁴ In April 2019, President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko paid an official visit to Turkey, during which he identified priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation in trade and investment, implementation of joint projects in machine-building, agriculture, construction, finance, chemical and light industry, and outlined concrete steps to build up contacts in the areas of technology, innovation, education, intensification of interaction "in the field of joint scientific developments, academic programmes, and joint research and development".

О серьезности намерений сторон активно развивать взаимодействие в **научно-техническом и гуманитарном направлениях** свидетельствует факт подписания по итогам апрельских (2019) переговоров лидеров Беларуси и Турции ряда документов – межправительственного соглашения о сотрудничестве в сфере образования, дорожной карты развития сотрудничества между Национальной академией наук Беларуси (НАН) и

²⁰² Political relations [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://turkey.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/political/relations/

²⁰³ Official visit of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-turtsii-redzhapa-tajipa-erdogana-14820/

²⁰⁴ Official visit to Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-v-turtsiju-20884/

Научно-исследовательским советом Турции на 2019-2021 годы, меморандума о научно-техническом сотрудничестве в Антарктике между НАН Беларуси и Министерством промышленности

In particular, the **intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in education** aims to establish and develop direct contacts between higher education institutions and scientific organisations of the two countries so that students and specialists from Belarus and Turkey can participate in events aimed at demonstrating the educational, scientific, technical and innovative potential of their countries. The parties intend to provide space for higher and postgraduate education in relevant institutions, to inform each other about mutual recognition of documents on training, education and academic degrees, as well as to create all the necessary conditions "to expand and deepen contacts between the countries in the whole range of educational activities, to attract Turkish citizens to study in Belarus"²⁰⁵.

As for the interaction between the scientific communities of the two countries, it is based on the cooperation agreements signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus: in 2002 - with the Turkish Research Council for Science and Technology; in 2009 - with the Turkish Academy of Sciences. In 2016, the governments of Belarus and Turkey signed an **agreement on cooperation in science and technology**. A year later, there were memoranda of understanding between the National Centre for Intellectual Property of the Republic of Belarus and the Turkish Patent and Trademark Agency; and memoranda of cooperation between the Belarusian Innovation Fund and the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. And in November 2018, the **first meeting of the joint Belarusian-Turkish Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology** was held, during which the parties agreed to "intensify bilateral co-operation in the line of innovation structure entities, in particular between technology parks in Belarus and Turkish science parks"²⁰⁶. At the same meeting of the commission it was stated that "scientists of Belarus and Turkey intend to develop co-operation in the field of polar research"²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁵ Belarus and Turkey are interested in the development of contacts between universities and scientific organisations [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-zainteresovany-v-razvitii-kontaktov-mezhdu-vuzami-i-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-344261-2019/>

²⁰⁶ Belarus and Turkey will hold a competition of joint innovation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://www.gknt.gov.by/news/2018/belarus_i_turtsiya_provedut_konkurs_sovmestnykh_innovatsionnykh_proektov/

²⁰⁷ Belarus and Turkey intend to develop cooperation in the field of polar research [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-poljarnyh-issledovanij-324445-2018/>

Adopted in April 2019, the **roadmap for the development of cooperation for 2019-2021** is designed to intensify joint activities of Belarusian and Turkish scientists in the most promising areas of scientific and technical cooperation. "These include optics for space observation of the Earth's surface, unmanned aerial vehicles, batteries for electric cars and other vehicles, composite organomineral materials, mineral enrichment, and the use of information technologies for forecasting dangerous natural phenomena"²⁰⁸.

In addition, the adopted roadmap provides for the organisation of a joint competition of projects in priority areas of science and technology development along the lines identified during the joint seminars: in 2018 - in Gebze; in 2019 - in Minsk. In particular, in March 2019, the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, with the support of the Belarusian Innovation Fund and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, announced a **competition for joint innovative scientific and technological projects for 2019-2020** to provide them with "direct financial support at an early stage of development"²⁰⁹ in such priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation as information and communication technologies, optoelectronics, nanomaterials, and drones. As for the roadmap, the document also contained measures to develop, improve the organisation and increase the efficiency of joint scientific and technical activities and joint works of the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research and the Research Council of Turkey.

In early December 2020, the **second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Turkish commission for cooperation in science and technology** was held, during which the parties confirmed their mutual desire to develop scientific and technical cooperation in the fields of energy, information and communication technologies, medicine, chemical technologies, and new materials. It should be noted that these partnerships intensified after the signing of the already mentioned intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in science and technology in November 2016. In this document, the parties agreed to provide comprehensive assistance to cooperation between organisations of both countries in such priority areas as "energy; agro-industrial technologies; industrial and construction technologies and production; medicine and medical technologies, pharmacy; chemical technologies; nano- and biotechnologies; information and

²⁰⁸ Belarus and Turkey signed a roadmap of scientific cooperation until 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-nauchnogo-sotrudnichestva-do-2021-goda-344282-2019/>

²⁰⁹ Belarus and Turkey announced a competition of joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-objjavili-konkurs-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektov-338588-2019/>

communication technologies (e-services, cyber security); aerospace technologies; new materials; environmental management; prevention and elimination of consequences of natural disasters; and the development of new technologies.²¹⁰

²¹¹ At the same second meeting of the joint commission on cooperation in science and technology, it became known that the joint project of the Joint Institute of Informatics Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Turkish company Novosim Engineering Services on the development of an autonomous multi-robotics warehouse system, which "will be designed to move goods in automatic mode inside both designed and existing warehouses, logistics centres, taking into account information about their configuration" has already been accepted for funding xml-ph-0000@dee In addition, the Turkish side was considering two more innovative projects of Belarusian scientists, which also received a favourable expert evaluation.

Another topical area of Belarusian-Turkish scientific and technical interaction that was discussed at the second meeting of the Joint Commission for Cooperation in Science and Technology was the **interaction between Turkish and Belarusian technoparks**. For the Belarusian side this topic is relevant because "Belarus has 25 innovation infrastructure entities: 16 technoparks (including 3 private ones), 8 technology transfer centres and the Belarusian Innovation Fund. The technopark network covers all regional centres"²¹². There were also technoparks in Pinsk, Novopolotsk, Horki, and Liakhovichi district. Plans for 2020 included their opening in Baranovichi, Bobruisk, Borisov, Orsha and Molodechno. All this said that Belarus was implementing systematic measures to develop technoparks as regional innovation platforms for the organisation of high-tech industries. That is why it was especially important for the Belarusian side to learn from the best foreign experience in this area. Turkey, it should be said, had such experience.

Technoparks or technopolises in this country began to be created in 2001. By mid-2019, their number here had increased to 84, of which 63 are operational, with 21 more undergoing infrastructure works. "Now there are technoparks in 54

²¹⁰ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on cooperation in the field of science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=101600046&p1=1>

²¹¹ Belarus and Turkey plan to develop co-operation in the spheres of energy, ICT and medicine [Electronic resource]. - 202-. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsija-planirujut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sferah-energetiki-ikt-i-meditsiny-418159-2020/>

²¹² Shumilin, A. Forecast to 2040 - about the prospects of science development and international co-operation / A. Shumilin // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/prognoz-do-2040-goda-o-perspektivah-razvitiya-nauki-i-mezhdunarodnom-sotrudnichestve-7168/>

provinces of the country, with more than 5 thousand companies working in the territories of technological development zones"²¹³. The most technoparks were in Istanbul - 11. They are followed by Ankara - 9, Kocaeli - 5, Izmir - 4. Their aim is to contribute to the development of high-tech manufacturing and services, to provide co-operation between entrepreneurs, researchers and scientists. The scale of activities of Turkish technology parks was also very eloquently spoken about by such figures. As of mid-2019, almost 33 thousand projects had been realised in them, and about ten thousand more were under development. And the number of jobs there exceeded 55 thousand. Finally, the exports of resident companies of technoparks as of July 2019 totalled more than four billion dollars. And all this - in less than twenty years. There is something to be learnt from Turkish partners for their Belarusian colleagues.

Let us now turn to the most relevant events on the Belarusian-Turkish agenda of the current year. In November 2023, Ankara hosted the **11th meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC) on Economic Cooperation**, which focused on systematising the entire volume of bilateral trade and activating mechanisms in logistics, transport, partnerships in industrial cooperation and agriculture, as well as a detailed review of the state of the legal framework and outlined priority areas and concrete steps to expand it. It should be noted that today "interaction with Turkey is carried out in the widest range of directions and is supported by political contacts and dialogue at the highest level, at the level of intergovernmental communication, interparliamentary communication and serious interagency cooperation"²¹⁴. As a result, the sides noted that trade and economic co-operation between Minsk and Ankara is developing very effectively. And there have already been significant successes in achieving the strategic goal of increasing mutual trade turnover to \$1.5 billion and reducing the imbalance in mutual trade. "In the last two years our trade turnover has exceeded \$1 billion, but this year [2023] we expect to reach a historical maximum. According to Turkish statistics, in the first 10 months of this year, trade turnover has already totalled \$1.6bn."²¹⁵.

A separate conversation is about the participation of the Belarusian side in the work to **rebuild the Turkish areas** affected by the February 2023 earthquake.

²¹³ 84 technoparks have been established in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://restproperty.ru/news/v-turtsii-sozdano-84-tekhnoparka/>

²¹⁴ On holding a meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fd86a4d2dbb3f651.html

²¹⁵ Belarus and Turkey will reach the historical maximum in trade turnover at the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsija-po-itogam-goda-vyjdut-na-istoricheskij-maksimum-v-tovarooborote-599138-2023>

Belarus paid "attention to the restoration of infrastructure that was destroyed as a result of the crushing earthquake in 11 provinces of Turkey"²¹⁶. In the nine months since the disaster, Belarus has tripled its supplies of construction materials, which are being used to rebuild primarily social infrastructure. The commission confirmed Belarus' readiness to further expand the volume of Belarusian supplies, which are in demand in this country. The Turkish side has received a catalogue of products, additionally prepared by the ministries, departments and economic entities of Belarus, which will be carefully considered by the Turkish partners. In addition, a project to design and build a plant of reinforced concrete structures in the Turkish town of Kilis is at the initial stage of development, which "will also make a good contribution to the reconstruction of earthquake-affected regions of Turkey"²¹⁷.

Strengthening co-operation in the **agricultural** sector is among the main tasks for the development of bilateral interaction. In 2023, Belarusian supplies of dairy products to the Turkish market started moving forward. There are serious prospects for increasing exports of meat products and beef from Belarus. This year, a number of Turkish firms have already announced their readiness to cooperate with Belarus in the food sector. For example, "Zirhlioglu Corporate Group has expressed interest in establishing direct contacts with Belarusian enterprises on the supply of specific products and further cooperation with the National Marketing Centre"²¹⁸. It is noteworthy that more than 30 Belarusian enterprises - producers and processors of food products - took part in the videoconference in September 2023 on this topic. Returning to the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, it should be noted that the parties also reached an agreement to "finalise procedures on the veterinary questionnaire sent by the Belarusian side by the end of 2024, as well as the intention to hold the second meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture, without delay, at the beginning of the next [2024] year"²¹⁹.

²¹⁶ Aleynik stated about serious prospects for increasing supplies of dairy products to Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aleynik-zajavil-o-serjeznyh-perspektivah-dlja-uvlichenija-postavok-molochnoj-produktsii-v-turtsiju-599135-2023>

²¹⁷ Turkish corporation is interested in co-operation with Belarus in the food sector [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turetskaja-korporatsija-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-v-prodovolstvennom-sektore-587699-2023/>

²¹⁸ Aleinik: Belarus is interested in supplying goods through Turkey to the countries of the Global South [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aleynik-belarus-zainteresovana-postavljat-tovary-cherez-turtsiju-v-strany-globalnogo-juga-598312-2023/>

²¹⁹ Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik at the plenary session of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (8 November 2023, Ankara) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d72f4b731323cb1d.html

In the field of **logistics and transport**, on the margins of the 11th IGC meeting, discussing the fulfilment of urgent new tasks, the parties in the format of the Joint Commission on Road **Transport** determined the quota of permits for Belarusian carriers for 2024. In addition, they "considered the possibility of creating an alternative certification centre for digital tachograph cards in Turkey, as well as extending the pilot project for permit-free bilateral and transit traffic between Belarus and Turkey for 2024"²²⁰. After all, from 1 January 2023, Belarusian carriers do not need permits for freight traffic between the two countries, as well as for transit through Turkey. This simplified regime is still operating as an experiment until the end of 2023.

Active and regular interaction with the Turkish-Belarusian Business Cooperation Council under the Foreign Economic Relations Committee of Turkey, the Association of Independent Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, as well as with other associations of Turkish business, including exhibition companies, was named at the IGC meeting as important elements in the development of **trade and economic** relations between the two countries. In this regard, the parties "signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study and the Association of Turkish Businessmen (ASRIAD), their representatives plan to participate in a joint business forum in Belarus in the first quarter of 2024"²²¹. Next February, Istanbul will host the Istanbul Yarn Fair, an international exhibition of yarns and fibres, which will be of interest to Belarusian light industry, chemical and petrochemical enterprises.

Recall that the high level of Belarusian products could be judged by the participation of exporters from Belarus at this exhibition forum - International Istanbul Yarn Fair, which was held in early June 2023 in Istanbul and where 650 companies from different countries, including China, India, Uzbekistan, Germany, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and the Republic of Korea, were represented. Belarusian petrochemical enterprises participated in the Made in Belarus exposition, demonstrating "a wide range of manufactured products based on the best world technologies, including various types of fibres, yarns and materials used in the textile, knitting and garment industries"²²².

²²⁰ Belarus and Turkey discuss the extension of the simplified regime of transport communication [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-obsuzhdajut-prodlenie-uproschennogo-rezhima-transportnogo-soobschenija-598317-2023/>

²²¹ Belarus and Turkey intend to hold a joint business forum in the first quarter of 2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsija-namereny-provesti-sovmestnyj-biznes-forum-v-pervom-kvartale-2024-goda-598314-2023/>

²²² Belarusian enterprises presented their products at the international exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predprijatija-predstavili-produktsiju-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-turtsii-569846-2023/>

Thus, Naftan OJSC demonstrated acrylic fibres used in the production of yarn and artificial fur, and Polotsk-Steklovolokno OJSC demonstrated glass fibres and products based on them. The Belarusian chemical company "Mogilevkhimvolokno" offered a wide range of polyester fibres and yarns used in the production of yarns, fillers and artificial fur, and also presented polyester fabrics indispensable in the production of roofing materials and carpets. The branch "Khimvolokno Plant" of JSC "Grodno Azot" at the exhibition demonstrated cord fabrics for reinforcing pneumatic tyre tyres, polyamide yarns for production of ropes and fishing gear and polyamide-6. Also polymer composite materials, which are widely used at the enterprises of automobile, aviation and oil industries, were presented at the stand of the enterprise. SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC showed special fabrics, yarns and fibres designed for application in the automotive industry. As a result, Belarusian exporters held very effective negotiations not only with Turkish partners and counterparties, but also with representatives of companies from other countries. So let us hope that the exhibition in Istanbul in February 2024 will be a continuation of new interesting joint projects.

Another important aspect of the partnership ties between Belarus and Turkey, which was noted at the 11th meeting of the IGC, is the further expansion of the **legal framework**. Statistics say that more than 40 intergovernmental, interdepartmental agreements have already been included in this base. A new document in this regard is the protocol of the 11th meeting of the commission, which contains a list of eight agreements on which the parties agreed to accelerate joint work. In fact, this final protocol is "a new programme of action, a kind of roadmap for the development of bilateral economic relations in the short and medium term and will allow Belarus and Turkey to make fuller use of the available opportunities for cooperation"²²³.

And already in November 2023, as part of this programme, the Belarusian-Turkish Research Centre opened in Minsk on the basis of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which became another step towards the development of relations between the two countries. "Its main tasks are to coordinate and carry out joint research works, individual projects in the field of historical, cultural and philosophical heritage of Belarus and Turkey, to improve the qualifications of scientific personnel by studying Turkish, as well as to translate the works of Turkish and Belarusian philosophers and

²²³ Belarus is working out new investment projects with Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-prorabatyvaet-s-turtsiej-novye-investitsionnye-proekty-598324-2023/>

scientists into Belarusian and Turkish"²²⁴ . At the moment the new centre is focused on "Philosophical and spiritual-cultural heritage of Belarus and Turkey: history and modernity". Turkish researchers are preparing a "Review of the main achievements of Turkish philosophy", while their Belarusian colleagues are researching "The influence of Belarusian-Muslim tradition on the formation of cultural and national identity". In addition, the centre is expected to perform educational and promotional functions, as scientists of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will study the Turkish language on its basis, and a variety of lectures and master classes are planned.

Let us summarise the results. Over the past three decades of diplomatic relations, Minsk and Ankara have not only identified the priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation, but also clearly built a multilevel system of interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation, which jointly moves towards the implementation of new strategic objectives. In this regard, the decisions of the 11th meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation are yet another solid confirmation of partnership ties that are focused on the future.

²²⁴ Belarusian-Turkish Research Centre opened at the National Academy of Sciences [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-turetskij-issledovatel'skij-tsentr-otkrylsja-v-nan-597558-2023/>

To make the relationship strategic

Mongolia is a state located in East Asia, with which Belarus develops effective co-operation in a wide range of areas. Trade and economic cooperation is actively developing between the countries, partnership ties between Belarusian and Mongolian regions are being built, inter-parliamentary contacts are being strengthened, and joint projects in the field of education continue to be implemented. It should be noted that since the establishment of Belarusian-Mongolian diplomatic relations in January 1992, Belarusian exports have traditionally formed the basis of bilateral trade. In this context, promising areas of cooperation include "mining (supplies of quarry and special machinery), transport (transit, supplies of passenger vehicles, railway cars, and equipment), road construction (supplies of special machinery, equipment, and technologies), agriculture (supplies of machinery, equipment, and technologies, cooperation in crop production, livestock breeding, and veterinary medicine), and prevention of emergency situations (supplies of fire-fighting equipment).²²⁵ .

At the end of 2018, with the total trade turnover of \$19.5 million, the value of exports from Belarus exceeded \$19 million with a positive balance of \$18.8 million for the Belarusian side. Milk, condensed and dried cream, trucks, plastic containers, road and construction machinery, butter, medicines, bread and flour confectionery, synthetic combed fibres, footwear, sugar, engines and power units made up the bulk of supplies of goods from Belarus to Mongolia. In the same year 2018, the turnover of services between the two countries also increased almost 1.8 times, surpassing the six million dollar figure. The facts show that bilateral ties between Belarus and Mongolia have noticeably intensified in recent years after:

- 1) establishment of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Co-operation in 2013;
- 2) opening of the Belarusian embassy in Ulaanbaatar in June 2014;
- 3) the emergence in 2015 of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology and the bilateral interdepartmental Working Group on Cooperation in Agriculture.

In June 2018, on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in the Chinese city of Qingdao, the leaders of the two countries stated during a bilateral meeting that "Belarus and Mongolia are located between large

²²⁵ Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://export.by/mongolia>

states or blocs, so it is important to be able to take advantage of this position and find advantages in terms of economy"²²⁶ . At that time, the Belarusian side voiced its readiness to create high-productive enterprises and machinery production on Mongolian soil, while the Mongolian side expressed its interest, first of all, in the creation of dairy production using Belarusian technologies. In general, in recent years, Belarus and Mongolia have "expanded their legal framework and strengthened trade and economic cooperation. Cooperation in the agricultural and scientific-technical spheres has been launched. Bilateral ties in education and sports have been restored"²²⁷ . And in the future, the Mongolian side is not only interested in more active cooperation with Belarus in agriculture, mechanical engineering, food industry, science, education, but also sees great opportunities in the wide mutual use of each other's transit potential. According to the parties, "Belarus can become an outlet to Europe for Mongolia and its goods, and Mongolia can become a conduit to Asia for Belarusian products"²²⁸ .

In April 2019, an **intergovernmental general agreement on the provision of an export credit** was adopted to ensure the supply of Belarusian machinery to Mongolia. According to this document, "in the coming years, the parties will work on the supply of fire, agricultural, municipal, road-building and road-cleaning equipment, passenger lifts and railway cars"²²⁹ . It was also discussed that a dairy cluster will be created in Mongolia using Belarusian technologies, including a milk processing plant and dairy farms, and "opportunities to develop cooperation in the construction and mining industries, education, as well as to expand the bilateral legal framework"²³⁰ . In June 2019, the **fifth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian commission on trade and economic cooperation** was held in Ulaanbaatar, where the issues of practical implementation of the intergovernmental general agreement on granting export credit were considered,

²²⁶ Negotiations with the President of Mongolia Halmagiin Battulga [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-mongolii-xaltmagijn-battulgoj-18894/

²²⁷ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei following the talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia (4 June, 2018, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d211839fb93936d7.html

²²⁸ Tsogtbaatar, D. Belarus can become an exit to Europe for Mongolia and its goods / D. Tsogtbaatar // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/belarus-mozhet-stat-dlja-mongolii-i-ee-tovarov-vyhodom-v-evropu-6281/>

²²⁹ Belarus will provide an export credit to Mongolia for the purchase of its equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predostavit-eksportnyj-kredit-mongolii-na-pokupku-svoej-tehniki-345020-2019/>

²³⁰ The regular meeting of the Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Ulan Bator [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ddb45d27a11bdef0.html>

and the **Roadmap for the development of cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia for 2019-2021** was signed.

And already within the framework of this loan, several major projects were implemented in 2021. "More than 70 units of fire-fighting equipment on MAZ chassis were delivered for the needs of the State Emergency Situations Agency of Mongolia. <...> The supply of road cleaning and repair equipment on MAZ chassis for the needs of the Ministry of Roads and Transport Development of Mongolia became highly demanded. A total of 42 units were delivered for all aimags of Mongolia"²³¹. The Belarusian side also transferred road pavement repair technology and assisted in setting up in that country the production of necessary components for road repair machines. As for other results of 2021, "trade turnover of food products and agricultural raw materials with Mongolia totalled \$14.1 million (up 2.5 times compared to 2020). The main export items were milk and milk products - 85.9 per cent"²³². In the same year, the Mongolian side decided to purchase about nine thousand heads of highly productive pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection from Belarus.

Interesting prospects have also opened up in the **Belarusian-Mongolian cooperation in the field of education**, the basic element of which is the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in this area, signed in 2013, which provides for the possibility of annual exchange of students to study at the universities of the parties. Fulfilling the provisions of this document and within the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum on interaction and cooperation between Dalanzadgad commune of Umnugovi aimag and the city of Zhodino, signed in 2016, "in the 2017/2018 academic year, six citizens of Mongolia were enrolled to study at the Branch of BNTU "Zhodino State College"²³³. And in 2021, more than 30 Mongolian students have already studied in Belarus. The most popular specialties for them were: medical science, IT software, information systems and technologies, mining machinery and equipment, agronomy, veterinary science, law, and transport logistics.

The sixth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian commission, which discussed topical issues of expanding mutually beneficial partnership, was

²³¹ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Mongolia D. Gorelik to the information portal "GOGO" (5 January 2022). Gorelik to the information portal "GOGO" (5 January 2022) [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/bf44fc21553530dd.html>

²³² Belarus and Mongolia intend to increase co-operation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-mongolija-namereny-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-selskom-hozjajstve-498561-2022/>

²³³ Humanitarian co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cultural/e6d8f5ae8191d258.html

held already in February 2022 in the format of a videoconference, where it was noted that "among the main goods exported from Belarus to Mongolia are food products and quarry machinery"²³⁴. The parties then agreed to intensify projects to be implemented under the General Agreement on Export Credit (2019), including the replacement or reconstruction of lifts in residential buildings in Ulaanbaatar and the supply of agricultural machinery and equipment. And at the same time, an "agreement was reached on co-operation with Belarus within the framework of the national Billion Tree Movement"²³⁵, initiated by Mongolian President U. Khurelsukh in 2021. In the same year 2022, **interregional co-operation** also began to develop more actively.

Brest Region is among the Belarusian regions that are seriously interested in developing trade and economic interaction with Mongolian partners. Suffice it to say that the foreign trade turnover with Mongolia increased more than 2.5 times in 2021 and totalled over \$1.2 million. The positive dynamics continues in the following years, which is based on the supplies of furniture, industrial equipment, food products from Brestchina. And the parties have a good reason to expand partnership ties. After all, Mongolia is a country with a developed mining industry, agriculture, where the number of cattle is more than 70 million. And "more than half of the world's cashmere is of Mongolian origin"²³⁶.

Mogilev Region is also highly interested in co-operation with this East Asian country. After all, in 2020 the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with Mongolia was only \$179 thousand, in 2021 - more than \$1.5 million, and "at the end of 9 months of the current [2022] year this figure will be about \$2.7 million"²³⁷. In October 2022, Mogilev held talks with a delegation from **Bulgan aimag**. The main industry of the Mongolian region is agriculture, including cattle breeding and farming. Among the issues discussed during the meeting was Mogilev's experience in training highly professional specialists in these areas, as well as the development of cultural, educational, sports and tourist co-operation. And the parties have already agreed to work in these areas.

²³⁴ Belarus and Mongolia held a meeting of the commission on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-mongolija-proveli-zasedanie-komissii-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnichestvu-487044-2022/>

²³⁵ Battsetsag, G. Mongolia and Belarus held an online meeting of the commission on trade and economic cooperation / G. Battsetsag // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://montsame.mn/ru/read/291038>

²³⁶ Brest region and Mongolia are interested in the development of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-mongolija-zainteresovany-v-razviti-sotrudnichestva-497468-2022/>

²³⁷ Isachenko on cooperation with Mongolia: success depends on the desire to work together [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/isachenko-o-sotrudnichestve-s-mongoliej-uspeh-zavisit-ot-zhelanija-sovmestno-rabotat-532389-2022/>

Finally, in January 2024, Minsk hosted the **seventh meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian intergovernmental commission (IGC)** on trade and economic cooperation, where they discussed the state and prospects of interaction in industry, agriculture, transport and logistics, finance, as well as in education, culture, and science. The parties agreed that "today's mutual trade turnover does not reflect the potential of the two countries, in the past periods the volume of trade turnover was much higher. <...> But we must do everything to make the relationship between the two countries acquire a strategic character"²³⁸.

Among the priority areas of co-operation between Belarus and Mongolia are agriculture-related topics. These include supplies of equipment for dairy and livestock farms, potato and other crop seeds, Belarusian-made veterinary drugs, as well as training and retraining of Mongolian specialists in Belarusian agrarian universities. As part of the IGC, at the third meeting of the Belarusian-Mongolian working group on agriculture, an agreement on cooperation in the field of pedigree cattle breeding was signed between the Belarusian State **Association Belplemzhivobedinenie** and the **State Agricultural Corporation of Mongolia**, which "provides for the supply of pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection to Mongolia"²³⁹.

In addition, the parties discussed the construction and operation of a multi-brand centre in this East Asian country, where all Belarusian machinery - tractors, combines, trucks, and dump trucks - will be presented. And **Gomselmash** has already signed a contract with the State Agricultural Corporation of Mongolia to supply 10 self-propelled mowers. Note that "this [Mongolian] market consumes up to 300 units of self-propelled grain harvesting machinery annually"²⁴⁰. Gomel mowers were supplied to the Mongolian market until 2015. And today these deliveries are already being resumed. For reference: "Gomselmash" took part in the **48th international exhibition Ulaanbaatar Partnership-2023 in Ulaanbaatar** in autumn 2023, where it showed a wide range of products, which can be further developed to meet the requirements of the Mongolian specifics and the wishes of customers based on the purpose of its application. Within the framework of this business forum the specialists of Gomel enterprise held

²³⁸ Multi-brand centre of Belarusian machinery is planned to open in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/multibrendovyy-tsentr-belorusskoj-tehniki-planirujut-otkryt-v-mongolii-611362-2024/>

²³⁹ Belarus plans to expand the range of food supplies to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-rasshirit-assortiment-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-mongoliju-611355-2024/>

²⁴⁰ "Gomselmash" resumes deliveries to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-vozobnovljaet-postavki-v-mongoliju-611342-2024/>

negotiations with representatives of the **Ministry of Agriculture of Mongolia and KOGS "Agricultural Corporation"**, where "the main topic was the promotion of Belarusian harvesters on the Mongolian market"²⁴¹. And already in 2024 the supplies of machinery from Gomel will start, which is in demand. **Minsk Tractor Works** is also interested in increasing the volume of supplies of BELARUS machines to this country. Especially since "the growth rate of MTZ exports to Mongolia in 2023 was 163.3% compared to 2022"²⁴².

Returning to the 48th International Exhibition in Ulaanbaatar, we would like to remind that Ulaanbaatar Partnership-2023 is the largest multi-sectoral exhibition event in Mongolia, which annually brings together hundreds of companies from such sectors as agriculture, engineering, oil refining, construction and light industry. In 2023, the collective exposition Made in Belarus was also presented at this forum, where "six companies participated, covering such sectors as food industry, mechanical engineering, dual-use machinery and consumer goods"²⁴³. Among them was **Vitebsk Carpets OJSC**, which displayed new polypropylene carpet samples and classic carpet collections. A wide range of products, including sterilised milk, cheese, skimmed milk powder, whey, sweet butter, glazed cheese, milkshakes and lactose-free products, was presented by **Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1**. Optical-electronic devices and surveillance systems, including night vision devices, laser rangefinders and rangefinder modules, as well as thermal imaging surveillance devices, were demonstrated by the **Scientific and Technical Centre "LEMT" of BelOMO**. Another exhibitor - **Zenit JSC** - showed at its stand a wide range of products and promising developments, including LED headlights and lights for harsh operating conditions, electrical products for completing lifts, street and industrial LED lighting, disinfection systems for rooms and lift cabs. The company is interested in establishing business relations with Mongolian enterprises in the mining, utilities and construction sectors.

Finally, in Ulaanbaatar, visitors to the exhibition were able to familiarise themselves with the capabilities of the **Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB)**, which established contacts with representatives of

²⁴¹ "Gomselmash" establishes business ties with Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-nalazhivaet-delovye-svjazi-s-mongoliej-591381-2023/>

²⁴² MTZ is interested in expansion of tractor deliveries to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zainteresovan-v-rasshirenii-postavok-tractorov-v-mongoliju-612157-2024/>

²⁴³ Made in Belarus exposition was presented at the exhibition in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsiju-made-in-belarus-predstavili-na-vystavke-v-mongolii-590845-2023/>

Mongolian businesses to attract them to the trades as sellers or buyers. And among the promising commodity items that were considered by BUTB during the exhibition, the focus was on exports of Belarusian agricultural products and petrochemicals to Mongolia. In the future, "BUTB expects to utilise the potential of the industrial and consumer goods platform, where deals are already being concluded to sell Mongolian products..."²⁴⁴. In addition, in September 2023, the first Mongolian stock broker was accredited on BUTB - **United Meres Machinery**, which has been working on the Belarusian market for quite a long time, has good experience in supplying raw materials for the metallurgical industry and is engaged in the sale of quarry and special equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant to mining companies in Mongolia. As a BUTB broker, the company intends to diversify its commodity portfolio and use all groups of goods represented on the Belarusian exchange platform. After all, "Mongolia is a promising market for Belarusian companies, both in terms of purchasing raw materials and supplies and selling finished products. Using the exchange platform as a link between Belarusian and Mongolian business entities will not only simplify the search for business partners, but will remove the main risks associated with payment and delivery of goods"²⁴⁵. The new broker plans to start with high-demand goods - ferrous metals and coal. In addition, the possibility of supplying petrochemical and agro-industrial products to Mongolia is being worked out. And in January 2024, with the help of the first Mongolian broker on BUTB, the first transaction for the supply of white granulated sugar to this East Asian country was registered. "The volume of the pilot purchase was 312 tonnes"²⁴⁶. Given the high demand for sugar in Mongolia, it can be assumed that this product area may become one of the promising markets in Asia. Especially since after the successful fulfilment of the first contract, Mongolian partners are already expecting an increase in the volume of exchange exports from Belarus.

As for the 7th meeting of the IGC, the parties also discussed topical **issues of scientific and technical co-operation** and noted the significant potential for strengthening co-operation between Belarus and Mongolia in science and education. In particular, within the framework of the IGC, at the fourth meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission for Cooperation in Science and

²⁴⁴ Opportunities of the Belarusian exchange platform are presented at the international exhibition in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozmozhnosti-belorusskoj-birzhevoj-ploschadki-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-mongolii-590839-2023/>

²⁴⁵ BUTB accredited the first broker in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervogo-brokera-v-mongolii-586995-2023/>

²⁴⁶ Belarusian sugar for the first time sold to Mongolia through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskij-sahar-vpervye-prodan-v-mongoliju-cherez-butb-611445-2024/>

Technology, the parties agreed to announce in the near future a **competition of scientific and technical projects for 2024-2025**. "Points of mutual interest are agriculture, agricultural and forestry machinery and equipment, intensive livestock breeding, reforestation and breeding, crop production, as well as history and archaeology"²⁴⁷. And in the same January 2024, an agreement was reached to sign an updated agreement between the **National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus** and the **Academy of Sciences of Mongolia**, supplementing it with a **roadmap of cooperation for 2024-2025**, as well as "to study the issue of signing a cooperation agreement between the NAS of Belarus and the Ministry of Education and Science of Mongolia"²⁴⁸. In addition, the parties will consider the possibility of organising a **forum of young scientists** in the first half of 2024 and work out the issue of training of Mongolian specialists in master's, postgraduate and doctoral studies of the **State Educational Institution "University of NAS of Belarus"**.

Another interesting topic that was in the focus of Belarusian-Mongolian interaction at the 7th meeting of the IGC was **ecology**. The fact is that the Mongolian government does not have a separate forestry ministry. For this reason, environmental issues are distributed among several agencies. We have already mentioned that in 2021, Mongolian President U. Khurelsukh announced an ambitious initiative to plant at least one billion trees by 2030. In this context, improving the technology of forestry is becoming a priority issue in Mongolia. In particular, the East Asian country was interested in the Belarusian experience in forestry and drew attention to several promising areas for expanding partnerships, including wooden house building. And the Belarusian side offered "Mongolia to consider high-quality ecological housing from Belarusian forestry enterprises"²⁴⁹. In addition, the Mongolian partners initiated joint scientific research on reforestation in the context of climate change and desertification, cultivation of planting material, and training of specialists with the possibility of opening a sectoral training centre.

Summarising the results of the 7th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, we note that today the

²⁴⁷ Belarusian-Mongolian competition of scientific and technical projects will be announced in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-mongolskij-konkurs-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektov-objavjat-v-blizhajshee-vremja-611318-2024/>

²⁴⁸ Belarus and Mongolia are considering the possibility of holding a forum of young scientists this year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-mongolija-rassmatrivajut-vozmozhnost-provedenija-foruma-molodyh-uchenyh-v-etom-godu-612262-2024>

²⁴⁹ Mongolia is interested in studying the Belarusian experience of forestry [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mongolija-zainteresovana-v-izuchenii-beloruskogo-opyta-vedenija-lesnogo-hozjajstva-611197-2024/>

traditionally friendly relations and cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia are actively developing in trade, economy, agriculture, light industry and other areas. As for further bilateral interaction, it will only be saturated with new innovative ideas and projects to make these partnerships truly strategic. After all, Belarus and Mongolia still have a lot of untapped opportunities for cooperation. The task of the governments of both countries is not to miss these opportunities and to create conditions for their realisation.

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The key to co-operation is concrete projects

In September 2023, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus held a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on the development of cooperation with African countries, at which the Belarusian government outlined the main areas of focus on this continent: medicine, education, ensuring food security of African countries, supply of agricultural machinery, and industrial cooperation. Assessing the objective foreign trade situation, Belarusian Prime Minister R. Golovchenko emphasised that Africa has a huge development potential and is a driver of international growth, but the accumulated political capital of Belarus has not yet been converted to a proper extent into successful trade and economic projects. "In 2022, Belarusian exports to Africa totalled just over \$200 million and are showing some downward trend. The maximum volume of exports - over \$400 million - was reached in pre-Kovy 2019..."²⁵⁰. Note that this continent is home to more than one and a half billion people. For this reason, the government of Belarus has set a clear task - every effort should be made to find the right tools and formula to reverse the negative dynamics in co-operation with the countries of this continent. The tools include "forming road maps, looking for concrete projects that can be implemented"²⁵¹. And then a practical result will be obtained.

It is important to note that the Belarusian side tries to come to African countries with its own technologies, trains them, and provides service and maintenance of the supplied machinery. In particular, especially large machinery from Belarus extracts various minerals that this continent is rich in. For example, Belarusian dump trucks operate in Zimbabwe, the Republic of South Africa, Angola, Algeria, and Morocco. Among the new potential partners is Kenya, where the first agricultural machines were delivered about six months ago. Serious dialogue has been started and continues with such countries as Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Sudan. Even "the distant South African Republic has received our tractors of Minsk Tractor Plant, now they are being tested and there is confidence that the supply of our machinery there will increase dramatically"²⁵².

²⁵⁰ Roman Golovchenko on co-operation with Africa: The potential is huge, we need to ensure significant growth of exports [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10698>

²⁵¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs: it is necessary to form roadmaps for co-operation with African countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mid-nuzhno-sformirovat-dorozhnye-karty-sotrudnichestva-so-stranami-afriki-591013-2023/>

²⁵² Technique, training, export: Parkhomchik told about co-operation with African countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tehnika-obuchenie-eksport-parhomchik-rasskazal-o-sotrudnichestve-s-afrikanskimi-stranami-587303-2023/>

The Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus pays special attention to the development of supplies to African countries, as the industry offers "the whole range of machinery of the machine-building complex - tractors, combines, lorries. It is also household appliances - TV sets produced by Gozizont Holding, refrigerators"²⁵³. For example, Gomselmash plans to supply a large batch of its equipment to these countries. Currently, already 80 units of Gomselmash machinery are working mainly in Zimbabwe and Kenya. And up to 80 more units will be shipped to the African region in the near future. Moreover, "a centre of Belarusian machinery has been established in Africa, which accompanies and maintains all the equipment supplied to the continent"²⁵⁴. And on the way out - a contract for delivery to Zimbabwe. Contacts are being worked out in Togo and Malawi.

Another African country that is paying attention to Belarusian trucks is Ethiopia. In August 2023, it became known that Minsk Automobile Plant may set up an assembly plant for trucks in this African country, as "Ethiopia has a high demand for trucks, which is currently not fully satisfied"²⁵⁵. The Ethiopian firm Ethio - Engineering Group is interested in organising the assembly of Belarusian cars from the supplied components at the company's existing facilities. In August this year, the Belarusian holding AMKODOR and the Ethiopian company Epitychia General Trading discussed the prospects of co-operation and possibilities of joint production in Minsk. During the talks, "it was decided to return to the discussion after a deeper analysis of the construction machinery market, which can most effectively support the needs of projects in Ethiopia"²⁵⁶.

The African region is one of the promising and quite familiar destinations for food and agricultural exports from Belarus. Suffice it to say that "in January-April this year [2023], Belarusian products were supplied to such African countries as Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. The nomenclature of export shipments includes dried dairy products, horned hoof raw materials, offal, beef, poultry meat, alcoholic beverages and

²⁵³ Combines, tractors, televisions. Rogozhnik told about the range of industrial products for delivery to Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kombajny-tractory-televizory-rogozhnik-rasskazal-ob-assortimente-promproduktsii-dlja-postavok-v-afriku-586805-2023/>

²⁵⁴ "Gomselmash" plans to supply a large batch of machinery to the African region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomselmash-planiruet-postavit-krupnuju-partiju-tehniki-v-afrikanskij-region-586884-2023/>

²⁵⁵ MAZ can create assembly production of trucks in Ethiopia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-mozhet-sozdat-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-gruzovoj-tehniki-v-efiopii-582045-2023/>

²⁵⁶ "AMKODOR" and representatives of Ethiopia discussed the possibilities of joint production [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-i-predstaviteli-efiopii-obsudili-vozmozhnosti-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-581985-2023/>

other products"²⁵⁷. This year, Belarus continues to discuss with its African partners promising areas of co-operation in agriculture. This year, the Belarusian side continues to discuss with its African partners promising areas of cooperation in agriculture, not only mutual trade, but also mechanisation, irrigation, fertilisers, and cooperation in education and science, including the education of African students in Belarus.

In particular, in June 2023, a communiqué was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment of Kenya, in which the parties agreed to further co-operation in agriculture. The fact is that in this African country there are no problems with food, but there are problems with its storage. Also, they have a lot of small farmers, but no large farms. In addition, "another problem is the small percentage of cultivated land"²⁵⁸. That is why Kenyan partners are interested in mechanisation of agriculture in the country and, consequently, in increasing its efficiency, as well as in Belarus' experience in mechanisation of agriculture and training of personnel in order to "equip the industry with machine systems, carry out mechanisation and provide our [Belarusian] agricultural technologies"²⁵⁹, create enterprises for processing and storage of products. Apparently, representatives of the country's leading regions will soon come from Kenya to further build trade and economic relations.

Zimbabwe has also become a new market for Belarus. In June 2023, at the first meeting of the Belarusian-Zimbabwean working group on agricultural cooperation in Minsk, the leadership of the Belarusian Ministry of Agriculture and Food said that it looked forward to long-term cooperation with Zimbabwean partners. In particular, "another important area of cooperation is the development of dairy cattle breeding"²⁶⁰ in Zimbabwe, as well as the supply of Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, the use of advanced Belarusian experience and technologies in the establishment of agro-industrial enterprises on

²⁵⁷ Export of products, co-operation in education. Ministry of Agriculture and Food on work with the regions of Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-sotrudnichestvo-v-obrazovanii-minselhozprod-o-rabote-s-regionami-afriki-573991-2023/>

²⁵⁸ The supply of tractors and potash fertilisers from Belarus to Kenya was discussed in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavku-tractorov-i-kalijnyh-udobrenij-iz-belarusi-v-keniju-obsudili-v-minselhozprode-570585-2023/>

²⁵⁹ Mechanisation of agriculture, processing plants. What Kenya is interested in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mechanizatsija-selskogo-hozjajstva-pererabatyvajushchie-zavody-chem-v-belarusi-zainteresovalas-kenija-570564-2023/>

²⁶⁰ Brylo: Belarus counts on long-term co-operation with Zimbabwe in the sphere of agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brylo-belarus-rasschityvaet-na-dolgosrochnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-zimbabwe-v-sfere-apk-571063-2023/>

Zimbabwean soil. In addition, "the Zimbabwean side was particularly interested in grain trucks and tractor-trailers with semi-trailers"²⁶¹.

In order to expand the geography of supplies from Belarus, domestic exporters continue to work to ensure access of agricultural products, machinery and equipment to promising markets of the "black" continent. In February 2023, OJSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" signed a contract with Bemaco from Madagascar for the supply of 24 units of machinery of the Belarusian company - mounted ploughs, disc harrows, universal pneumatic seeders. And "in the near future it is planned to expand the range of Belarusian machinery supplied to the Republic of Madagascar, including new models of ploughs, seeders, trailers and harrows"²⁶². At the same time, Bemaco was awarded a certificate to extend the status of the official dealer of Bobruiskagromash for 2023.

Ghana is another African country that is interested in expanding trade and economic co-operation with Belarus. In June 2023, the two states celebrated the 31st anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Ghana diplomatic relations. And the parties expressed their common mood for intensive work to expand contacts at all levels. Recall that Ghana is the largest producer of high-quality fruit and cocoa and is ready to supply the Belarusian market in any volume. As for Belarus, it is "ready to participate in Ghana's agricultural mechanisation programmes, supply this country with a wide range of municipal and municipal equipment, medicines, introduce the latest technologies in the agro-industrial complex, train Ghanaian students in Belarusian universities in various specialties"²⁶³.

And one more interesting point. At the end of November 2023, an exposition of Belarusian producers Made in Belarus will be organised in West Africa - the city of Accra (Ghana) - as part of the 6th Agrofood Ghana International Exhibition, where exporters "in the fields of agriculture, food processing and packaging, ingredients, bakery and confectionery, food and

²⁶¹ Zimbabwe is interested in dump trucks-grain trucks and truck tractors MAZ [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zimbabwe-zainteresovano-v-samosvalah-zernovozah-i-sedelnyh-tjagachah-maz-571222-2023/>

²⁶² "Bobruiskagromash" will supply more than 20 units of machinery to Madagascar [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-postavit-bolee-20-edinits-tehniki-na-madagaskar-549344-2023/>

²⁶³ Pivovar, E. Belarus is ready to participate in the agricultural mechanization programmes in Ghana / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-programmah-mehanizatsii-selskogo-hozjajstva-gany-570335-2023/>

hospitality in West Africa" will be represented²⁶⁴. Last year, 98 exhibitors from 22 countries, namely Belgium, Burkina Faso, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Ghana, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America participated in the forum. This time in Accra, suppliers from Belarus will also show their "goods face", and hopefully they will get a good practical result from this exhibition forum.

In short, Belarusian supplies in this direction are growing. It is believed that in the next two or three years, with the help of African countries, it is possible to achieve food exports in general within ten billion dollars. For reference, we note that "based on the results of work for nine months [2023], Belarusian agricultural exports totalled about \$5 billion"²⁶⁵.

Finally, another African country that appeared on the map of Belarus's business partners in 2023 was Equatorial Guinea. The fact is that in June 2023, a very important event took place in the Belarus-Africa relationship: it was the first ever visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister S. Aleinik to this country. Aleinik's first ever visit to this country. The visit resulted in the signing of a Joint Statement on the development of political dialogue, as well as "cooperation in trade, economy and investment, cooperation in trade, economy and investment, cooperation in cooperation, food security, health care, medicine, maternal and child welfare, education, science and technology, mining and petrochemicals, security and defence"²⁶⁶. The parties outlined practical steps to expand the contractual and legal framework of bilateral relations, where agreements on cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex will also be developed. And in September 2023, President of Equatorial Guinea Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo paid his first visit to Belarus, during which seven documents were signed aimed at developing relations across a wide thematic spectrum, from the economy to the humanitarian sphere, including the establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission between the two states.

At the first meeting of the commission in October 2023, where from the African side "more than 20 representatives of practically all key ministries,

²⁶⁴ Belarus will present its exposition at the agricultural exhibition in Ghana [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-selskohozjajstvennoj-vystavke-v-gane-587952-2023/>

²⁶⁵ Hare: Belarusian agricultural exports totalled about \$5bn in nine months [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajats-eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktsii-za-devjat-mesjatsev-sostavil-okolo-5-mlrd-597077-2023/>

²⁶⁶ On the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik to Equatorial Guinea. Aleinik's visit to Equatorial Guinea [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fa2023a57e9ef156.html

agencies, including 8 heads of ministries came"²⁶⁷, the participants in the discussion decided to create a number of subcommissions or working groups to achieve results as soon as possible on the main sectors of the Belarusian-Equatoguinean interaction. "These are the spheres of industry, agriculture, science and technology, health and pharmacology. These four priority areas have been identified and highlighted separately"²⁶⁸. The two sides agreed to ensure continuous growth of trade turnover to bring it in line with the potential of the two countries, as well as to promote specific projects in the areas of industry, technological development, agriculture, health, science, technology, education, culture, construction. Minsk and Malabo identified as priority areas of cooperation "agriculture; healthcare; industry; construction; woodworking and forestry; cooperation in the oil and gas sector; cooperation in banking, finance and taxation; digitalisation of the economy; cooperation in the field of culture, including museum, archive, library; cooperation in the field of tourism; cooperation in the field of sports; and environmental protection, among others"²⁶⁹.

In particular, with regard to industry, the Belarusian side is already working on supplies of cargo, passenger, trailer, special-purpose machinery, and dump trucks for the needs of Equatorial Guinea's growing economy, as the country's task is to shift from the raw materials sector to a more technological, knowledge-intensive, and innovative development path. Belarus is also ready to "supply optoelectronic products, multifunctional unmanned aerial and robotic systems, create closed-cycle enterprises for the production and processing of meat and dairy products"²⁷⁰.

African partners are interested in Belarus' experience in efficient livestock breeding, improvement of veterinary services and food quality control, development of crops with the highest resource potential, and creation of a high-quality and effective system of personnel training. Especially since "Equatorial

²⁶⁷ "A good start of co-operation has been given". Aleynik on the first meeting of the intergovernmental commission with Equatorial Guinea [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/dan-horoshij-start-sotrudnichestvu-alejnik-o-pervom-zasedanii-mezhpravkomissii-s-ekvatorialnoj-gvineej-594724-2023/>

²⁶⁸ Transcript of the approach to the press by Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik following the meeting of the Permanent Joint Commission of Belarus and Equatorial Guinea (19 October 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ed7ba0f461785b44.html

²⁶⁹ Joint communiqué on the results of the first meeting of the Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation between Belarus and Equatorial Guinea (19 October 2023) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cba05c3a89729e69.html

²⁷⁰ Speech by Minister S. Aleinik at the opening of the meeting of the Joint Commission for Cooperation between Belarus and Equatorial Guinea (18 October 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c32017cdfb25123b.html

Guinea has a great need for dairy and meat products, which we [Belarus] produce in sufficient quantities"²⁷¹ . In addition, this country is very promising for the enterprises of Belgospischeprom Concern. For example, in mid-September 2023, "the first batch of products [malt] was shipped to Equatorial Guinea. This is a trial batch, this market is new and interesting for us"²⁷² .

As for medicine, in accordance with the agreement on cooperation in the field of healthcare signed in Minsk during the first meeting of the commission, it is planned to establish a training centre on the basis of a medical university in Belarus to train students from Equatorial Guinea and other African countries, as well as to improve the qualifications of doctors. The parties identified cooperation in forestry and environmental protection as one of the new areas of co-operation.

In addition, this African country "plans to create a production and logistics hub for Belarusian products"²⁷³ , which will be used, among other things, to supply and promote products from Belarus to the neighbouring countries of Central and West Africa. After all, Equatorial Guinea is one of the leading economies in Africa, which ranks third in oil production on the continent and has a developed port infrastructure. Over the past quarter century, its gross domestic product has increased more than 52 times and it ranks among the leading per capita economies in Africa. In addition, "Equatorial Guinea is a member of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which brings together 54 States, as well as the Economic Community of Central African States, which includes 11 States"²⁷⁴ .

In short, the first meeting of the Belarus-Ekwatoguinea Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation showed that the parties intend to expand long-term interaction and develop and adopt the Roadmap to 2030 by the end of this year. In addition, plans have been outlined to develop the legal framework and sign new bilateral agreements in order to reach a level of trade turnover of at least \$100 million by 2030 in terms of economic activity.

²⁷¹ Belarus is ready to help Equatorial Guinea in the development of agro-industrial complex and training of agricultural specialists [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-pomoch-ekvatorialnoj-gvinee-v-razvitii-apk-i-podgotovke-selhozspetsialistov-586755-2023/>

²⁷² Zhidkov: African continent is promising for export of Belarusian food products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zhidkov-afrikanskij-kontinent-perspektiven-dlja-eksporta-belorusskoj-pischevoj-produktsii-588012-2023/>

²⁷³ Aleinik: the issue of creating a hub of Belarusian products in Equatorial Guinea is under consideration [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aleinik-prorabatvaetsja-vopros-sozdaniya-v-ekvatorialnoj-gvinee-haba-belorusskoj-produktsii-594535-2023/>

²⁷⁴ Machine building, roadmap, opening of embassies. Minsk and Malabo have defined the prospects of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mashinostroenie-dorozhnaja-karta-otkrytie-posolstv-minsk-i-malabo-opredelili-perspektivy-594759-2023/>

From economics to education

The Republic of Zimbabwe is an African country with which the Republic of Belarus established diplomatic relations back in April 1992. The new stage of cooperation with this South African state dates back to January 2023, when a Belarusian delegation paid a state visit to Zimbabwe. At that time, "a package of important bilateral documents was signed, which includes basic economic agreements that are designed to ensure the development of industrial co-operation and economic co-operation..."²⁷⁵. The two governments then approved a roadmap for the implementation of the agreements. "The document includes 65 measures in various areas: political-diplomatic, trade and economic, agricultural, military-technical, healthcare and medical science, investment, energy, supply and maintenance of equipment. In addition, Belarus will continue to participate in the programme to modernise and mechanise Zimbabwe's agriculture"²⁷⁶.

Speaking about the economic component of this partnership, "trade turnover between Belarus and Zimbabwe has increased eightfold since 2018"²⁷⁷. At the same time, the parties have significantly expanded trade and economic interaction, established humanitarian cooperation and strengthened the contractual and legal framework of bilateral relations. As for the 2022 figures, "Belarus and Zimbabwe traded more than \$39 million, which is almost 57 per cent more than the 2021 level. At the same time, Belarusian exports totalled almost \$30 million. Belarus supplied Zimbabwe with tractors and tractors, machines and mechanisms for harvesting and threshing crops, parts and accessories for cars and tractors"²⁷⁸. In addition, a single centre of Belarusian enterprises has been established on Zimbabwean soil to provide a whole range of services for all types of machinery supplied from Belarus, where one can get education in the field of vehicle management, necessary recommendations, purchase spare parts, and services to perform routine maintenance on Belarusian machinery.

²⁷⁵ Zaleskii, B. Export growth strategy. Opportunities and challenges of open economy in modern conditions / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 30.

²⁷⁶ Frederick Shava: Zimbabwe has achieved a lot in terms of food security thanks to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/frederik-shava-zimbabwe-mnogogo-dostiglo-v-plane-prodovolstvennoj-bezopasnosti-blagodarja-belarusi-557640-2023/>

²⁷⁷ Parkhomchik: trade turnover between Belarus and Zimbabwe has grown eight times since 2018, it is important to maintain the dynamics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parkhomchik-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-zimbabwe-s-2018-goda-vyros-v-vosem-raz-vazhno-sohranit-dinamiku-586362-2023/>

²⁷⁸ The meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Zimbabwe was held in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vstrecha-ministrov-inostrannyh-del-belarusi-i-zimbabwe-prohodit-v-minske-557558-2023/>

In March 2023, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe F. Shava visited the Belarusian capital. During his official visit, he said that the Zimbabwean side was interested in identifying additional opportunities for economic co-operation with Belarus. As for official Minsk, it "wants to bring the relations with Zimbabwe to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership"²⁷⁹. Following the talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, the two sides adopted a joint statement and reviewed the implementation of agreements in the trade and economic sphere, in particular, the implementation of contracts for the supply of agricultural and firefighting equipment to Zimbabwe, construction and modernisation of grain storage facilities, as well as discussed cooperation in the spheres of industry, agriculture, energy, mining and light industry. In particular, Belarus will continue to make its significant contribution to the achievement by the Zimbabwean government of the goals of the long-term development strategy of this southern African country "Vision 2030".

In addition, the parties continued to expand the legal framework of the Belarusian-Zimbabwean bilateral relations, which already includes more than twenty intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements. And in March 2023, this list of documents was supplemented by the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of the Republic of Belarus and the National Organisation for the Promotion and Development of Trade in Zimbabwe "Zim Trade", which "will become an additional stimulus and support for the intensification of interaction between business circles, enterprises and economic entities of the two countries"²⁸⁰.

Speaking about the nearest plans, more than 130 fire engines will be delivered by the end of 2023, "they are now at different stages of delivery. Contracts for the delivery of 3,161 tractors, 80 combines were signed. By the end of the year we [the Belarusian side] will start fulfilling these contracts, and we will try to solve these issues in 2023-2025. We have also reached agreements on the delivery of grain drying complexes there"²⁸¹. In the medium term, Belarusian

²⁷⁹ Belarus wants to bring relations with Zimbabwe to the level of comprehensive strategic partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-hochet-vyvesti-otnosheniya-s-zimbabwe-na-uroven-vseobijemljushego-strategicheskogo-partnerstva-557622-2023>

²⁸⁰ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik following the talks with the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe (27 March 2023). Aleinik following the talks with the Head of the Foreign Ministry of Zimbabwe (27 March 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fd375850144e9b08.html

²⁸¹ Parkhomchik: exports of Belarusian goods to Zimbabwe increased eight times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-eksport-belorusskih-tovarov-v-zimbabwe-uvlechilsja-v-vosem-raz-587300-2023/>

exporters are only ready to increase their supplies to the Zimbabwean market. For example, the Belarusian Automobile Plant is interested in developing fruitful cooperation with mining companies in Zimbabwe, as the mining industry of the country, which has large reserves of minerals, including coal, copper, gold, diamonds, is developing rapidly. After all, 55- and 130-tonne dump trucks from Belarus are now used in mining coal and diamonds in Zimbabwean quarries alone; Belarusian special-purpose machinery - bulldozers, loaders, tractors and irrigation and watering machines - is also in operation. And "BELAZ is ready to offer for the mining industry of Zimbabwe not only efficient quarry machinery, but also ready-made complex solutions for the supply of machines with all the necessary infrastructure, equipment and software on a turnkey basis"²⁸².

Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural machinery also have interesting plans to export to this South African country. After all, agricultural mechanisation in this region of Africa is now receiving increased attention. Suffice it to say that "last year [2022] Zimbabwe harvested a record wheat crop for the last 25 years thanks to Belarusian-made agricultural machinery"²⁸³. And there are plans to promote joint projects to provide agricultural machinery from Belarus, including tillage units, machines for growing cotton, and tractor trailers. It should be noted that only Minsk Tractor Plant "is planning to supply 3,575 tractors to Zimbabwe in 2023-2024, their shipment has already started"²⁸⁴. In addition, this year the use of improved agricultural machinery from Belarus has made the harvesting season in this country problem-free. The fact is that in Zimbabwe in 2023 a record harvest of cereals is expected, which will exceed 440 thousand tonnes. As of early November, wheat harvesting is almost complete across the country. "To harvest faster before the rainy season, the government has deployed 249 state-of-the-art Belarusian combine harvesters. The flagship GS12 combine harvester handles at least 40 hectares a day"²⁸⁵. So the purchase of machinery from Belarus has been a success.

²⁸² BELAZ is interested in developing co-operation with mining companies in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-zainteresovan-v-razvitii-sotrudnichestva-s-dobyvajuschimi-kompanijami-zimbabwe-581975-2023/>

²⁸³ "Bobrujskagromash" and the Ambassador of Zimbabwe discussed projects to provide the region with Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-i-posol-zimbabwe-obsudili-proekty-po-obespecheniju-regiona-belorusskoj-selhoztehniko-582296-2023/>

²⁸⁴ MTZ intends to continue co-operation with partners from Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-nameren-prodolzhit-sotrudnichestvo-s-partnerami-iz-zimbabwe-581256-2023/>

²⁸⁵ Belarusian machinery helps to harvest a record harvest in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskaja-tehnika-pomogaet-ubirat-rekordnyj-urozhaj-v-zimbabwe-597984-2023/>

Another relevant topic of Belarusian-Zimbabwean interaction is the establishment of joint ventures for food production. Back in May 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus discussed with partners from Zimbabwe the issues of organising supplies of Belarusian food products, as well as "setting up joint ventures for processing dried milk into whole milk products"²⁸⁶. In addition, the issues of beef and poultry meat processing were discussed. And in Grodno region last spring with Zimbabwean partners discussed the issue of co-operation in the field of baby food. "At the first stage it can be the supply of ready-made baby food with the subsequent transfer of some technological operations to the territory of Zimbabwe with the subsequent possibility of building a full-fledged production and performing the whole list of works"²⁸⁷. And taking into account the capacities of the Grodno-based Bellakt plant, the geographical location of Zimbabwe and active interaction with its neighbours, it would be possible to consider the possibility of joint production, which would cover not only the needs of Zimbabwe, but also those of other African countries.

Another example. In June-July 2023, the first deliveries of Zimbabwean cotton fibre arrived in Belarus. The partners from South Africa are ready to co-operate on other issues as well. For example, "Zimbabwe has a school programme and about 2 million schoolchildren dress in a business style. Zimbabwe imports fabrics only from China, so we [Belarusian specialists] showed the Zimbabwean representative a number of samples of polyviscose fabric and fabric with a wool content of 20-30%"²⁸⁸.

Another interesting idea in co-operation between the two countries, which may well come true in the not-too-distant future, is that "Zimbabwe could become a major hub in South Africa for trade in Belarusian products"²⁸⁹. For this purpose, a Belarusian-Zimbabwean initiative could be implemented with the participation of another state in Southeast Africa - Mozambique. This is a country that is

²⁸⁶ The Ministry of Agriculture and Food will discuss with Zimbabwe the creation of joint ventures for the processing of milk powder [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minselhozprod-obsudit-s-zimbabwe-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-po-pererabotke-suhogo-moloka-566042-2023/>

²⁸⁷ "Bellakt" plans to create the production of dry infant formulae in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellakt-planiruet-sozdat-proizvodstvo-suhih-detskikh-smesej-na-territorii-zimbabwe-560414-2023/>

²⁸⁸ The first deliveries of Zimbabwean cotton to Belarus are expected in June-July 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervye-postavki-v-belarus-zimbabvjskogo-hlopka-ozhidajutsja-v-ijune-ijule-2023-goda-557867-2023/>

²⁸⁹ Frederick Shava: Zimbabwe can become a major hub for the supply of Belarusian equipment in South Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/frederik-shava-zimbabwe-mozhet-stat-krupnym-habom-po-postavke-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-juzhnoj-afrike-557809-2023/>

washed by the Indian Ocean. "The most promising area of Belarusian exports to the markets of Mozambique could be mechanisation of the agricultural complex of this country with subsequent servicing of Belarusian machinery"²⁹⁰. The introduction of knowledge-intensive technologies, electrification and improvement of railways, creation of the necessary logistics infrastructure, and promotion of renewable energy sources could also be key points on the way to diversifying Belarusian exports to Mozambique. Given the high demand for medicines, the country retains niches for the promotion of pharmaceutical products. In short, the Southern African market is very promising for Belarusian exports and can further increase activity in various areas.

A special talk is about the co-operation between Minsk and Harare in the educational sphere. In May 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a roadmap for 2023-2025 in higher education and university science, which identified the development of joint educational programmes and the training of Zimbabweans in Belarusian universities in demanded specialities as promising areas of Belarusian-Zimbabwean cooperation. "Also among the promising areas are the organisation of resource centres for vocational education and training, expansion of joint scientific, scientific-technical and innovative projects, including in the field of geomechanics, biotechnology, biomechanics"²⁹¹.

In addition to the roadmap, the Belarusian and Zimbabwean sides also signed over 40 bilateral agreements in the field of education in May. It should be noted that "this is a very serious legal basis for training specialists for a wide range of specialities in industry, agro-industry, health care, and energy"²⁹². It is expected that in this regard, a programme will be implemented between the educational institutions of the two countries to train not only specialists at the higher education level, but also to establish centres of competence in Zimbabwe to train specialists in working professions. For this purpose, a centre for the study of Russian as a foreign language is being established, where Zimbabwean citizens will be able to undergo training in order to both work at joint ventures in Zimbabwe and continue their studies in Belarus.

The Belarusian State University (BSU) is an active participant of interaction with Zimbabwean partners. In 2019, it signed a Memorandum of

²⁹⁰ Mozambique [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://export.by/mozambique>

²⁹¹ Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a roadmap for 2023-2025 in the field of higher education and science [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-na-2023-2025-gody-v-sfere-vysshego-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-565748-2023/>

²⁹² More than 40 bilateral agreements in the field of education will be signed following the visit of a delegation from Zimbabwe to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolse-40-dvustoronnih-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovaniya-budet-podpisano-po-itogam-vizita-v-belarus-566871-2023/>

Cooperation with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education, Science and Technological Development of Zimbabwe. In February 2023, BSU became a partner of six universities of this country at once. And in May this year it expanded the range of existing agreements. In particular, a Cooperation Agreement with the Harare Institute of Technology and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Midlands State University were signed, which will allow developing academic exchanges, conducting fundamental and applied scientific research, joint scientific conferences, exhibitions, symposiums and seminars. In addition, "there were initiatives on co-operation in the field of ecology, soil science, biology. The possibility of developing modern digital technologies, geoinformation systems, soil conservation measures and technologies on lands subject to erosion processes was considered"²⁹³. The opening of a BSU distance learning centre in Zimbabwe will also be a major step towards lasting cooperation.

Also in May 2023, Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) signed co-operation agreements with five Zimbabwean higher education institutions, which will develop cooperation with the Harare Institute of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Lupane State University, Midland State University and the University of Zimbabwe. The Brest university will implement joint educational programmes, engage in joint scientific research to be carried out in the field of Industry 4.0, digital industry and agriculture, IT technologies, on issues related to the creation of various engineering systems. In short, "cooperation can be established in all areas in which Brest residents specialise. Three students from Zimbabwe are currently studying at BrSTU: two boys and a girl"²⁹⁴. It should be assumed that in the near future Brest will welcome many more students from this South African country.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Minsk between the Belarusian State Technological University and the Midland State University. This document provides for co-operation in sharing experience in education and facilitating the exchange of students, master's and postgraduate students, teaching staff, as well as the development of joint research projects in areas of mutual interest. In particular, "in the fields of forestry, wood processing, industrial ecology, energy efficient technologies, fertiliser technology"²⁹⁵. The Belarusian

²⁹³ BSU activates co-operation with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-aktiviziruetsotrudnichestvo-s-vuzami-zimbabwe-566857-2023/>

²⁹⁴ Brest Technical University concluded co-operation agreements with five universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnicheskij-universitet-zakljuchil-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-s-pjatju-vuzami-zimbabwe-566589-2023/>

²⁹⁵ Discussion of co-operation, signing a memorandum: BSTU will be visited by the delegation of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obsuzhdenie-sotrudnichestva-podpisanie-memoranduma-bgtu-posetit-delegatsija-zimbabwe-566182-2023/>

National Technical University signed several international documents with Zimbabwean partners this spring. Firstly, a co-operation agreement with Harare Polytechnic College. Secondly, with the Midland State University. Thirdly, "a roadmap between the Belarusian National Technical University and the University of Zimbabwe was signed"²⁹⁶, and eight joint educational programmes with various universities of this country, including those in Harare, Chinhoyi, Lupane, were approved. And in October 2023, the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno and the Polytechnic College of Harare agreed to cooperate, outlining mutual interests "in the spheres of joint scientific, innovative and educational activities, as well as in the monitoring of natural resources"²⁹⁷. Finally, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education, Science and Technological Development of Zimbabwe agreed to sign a memorandum of intent and "identified a number of promising areas for co-operation: space technologies, new materials, technologies and complexes for processing of mineral raw materials and ores, agro-industrial complex, training of scientific personnel..."²⁹⁸.

Recall that in January 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a memorandum of understanding between the parties on mutual recognition of educational documents in Harare. "And they see quite great prospects for co-operation in various areas of inter-university interaction. This applies to the training of specialists with higher education in such areas as agro-industrial complex, mechanical engineering, medical technologies"²⁹⁹. So, with the signing of the roadmap for 2023-2025 in the field of higher education and university science, it seems that the educational services of Belarus in Zimbabwe will be in demand in all areas that develop the economy of this southern African country, and will become the most important element of Belarusian-Zimbabwean relations. As for the prospects of bilateral trade and economic, industrial-cooperative and scientific-educational interaction, they are seen for quite a long time. And not only in these areas, but also in other areas.

²⁹⁶ BNTU signed agreements on cooperation and implementation of joint educational programmes with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/13451-v-bntu-podpisany-soglasheniya-s-universitetami-zimbabwe>

²⁹⁷ Scientists of SDSU and Harare Polytechnic College agreed on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uchenye-grgu-i-politehnicheskogo-kolledzha-harare-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-592885-2023/>

²⁹⁸ Space technologies and new materials: the NAS of Belarus discussed cooperation with Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kosmicheskie-tehnologii-i-novye-materialy-v-nan-belarusi-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-s-zimbabwe-566338-2023/>

²⁹⁹ Zaleskii, B. Window of Opportunity and New Ideas. Realisation of the features of economic multifaceted cooperation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 23.

Maximising concrete trade and economic interaction

Latin America is one of the political and economic centres of the emerging multipolar world, home to more than 650 million people. "Many countries of this region aim to pursue an independent foreign policy and seek to move away from the historically raw material character of their economies through accelerated innovative development"³⁰⁰. And the Republic of Belarus can provide effective assistance to these states by developing the most concrete trade and economic co-operation.

In June 2022, the Belarus-Latin America Forum was held in Moscow at the Business and Cultural Complex of the Belarusian Embassy in Russia. The Forum brought together representatives of the embassies of Latin American countries in Belarus and Russia from 15 countries. The event was attended by ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions and diplomats from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and El Salvador.

The Latin America and Caribbean region is interesting for Belarus as an important platform for integration into global trade and economic ties. In 2021, the total imports of the region's countries from Belarus "totalled \$715.5 million, up 3.5% year-on-year in 2020. The commodity nomenclature of Belarusian exports to the region includes potash fertilizers, means of land transport, ferrous metal products, chemical and petrochemical products, instruments and optical devices, and dairy products"³⁰¹. At the end of 2021, Belarus' trade turnover with the Latin American region totalled about USD 1.5 billion.

Belarus already has positive experience in the region. "This includes participation of Belarusian companies in geological and seismic exploration, mining in Venezuela and Ecuador, construction projects in Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, supplies of Belarusian agricultural, automotive and passenger equipment to Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Nicaragua and Bolivia,

³⁰⁰ Aleinik told how Belarus is interested in co-operation with Latin American countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/alejnik-rasskazal-chem-belarusi-interesno-sotrudnichestvo-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-567456-2023/>

³⁰¹ NCM on the prospects of promoting Belarusian goods and services in Latin America [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-latinskoj-ameriki-8247//>

export of quarry equipment to Venezuela and Chile³⁰². The work in these areas is quite active. It is envisaged to further increase trade and investment volumes primarily through the implementation of joint co-operation projects. In its co-operation with Latin America, Belarus aims to move from simple trade to the creation of joint ventures and assembly plants.

For example, the dynamically developing agricultural sector in Latin American countries needs appropriate machinery. Reliable and price-competitive tractors, combines, and other Belarusian machinery can occupy a worthy place here. "The range of modern products manufactured in Belarus, primarily agricultural machinery, dump trucks, trucks, road construction equipment, public electric transport, tyre products and many others, can be of direct interest to meet the needs of Latin American producers of agricultural products, the mining industry and the transport sector"³⁰³.

Belarus is interested not only in trade in goods, but also in exports of services, the basis of which are transport, computer, construction and mining services. "At the end of 2021, trade in services with Latin American countries grew to \$200 million (58.3 per cent by 2020). Belarusian exports reached \$178.9 million (97.9 per cent)"³⁰⁴. Nevertheless, the dynamics in mutual trade in goods and services, as well as the existing level of trade and economic relations between Belarus and many Latin American countries do not fully correspond to the real possibilities of the parties. Undoubtedly, exporters are maximally interested in promoting Belarusian "sophisticated technical products - products of mechanical engineering, scientific sector, ranging from tomographs to spare parts and engines for existing automobile and tractor equipment"³⁰⁵. A promising area of co-operation is the expansion of contacts in the field of education. Belarusian universities are ready to accept applicants to study various specialties in demand in Latin American countries, including the training of specialists in industry, agriculture, and health care.

³⁰² Shestakov: Belarus is ready to strengthen cooperation with Latin American countries in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/shestakov-belarus-gotova-k-ukrepleniju-sotrudnichestva-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-po-vsem-510548-2022/>

³⁰³ Pivovar, E. Belarus in co-operation with Latin America aims at the transition to the creation of JVs and assembly plants / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-sotrudnichestve-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-natselena-na-perehod-k-sozdaniyu-sp-i-sborochnyh-510550-2022/>

³⁰⁴ Pivovar, E. Foreign Ministry of Belarus: trade with Latin America demonstrates steady growth / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mid-belarusi-torgovlja-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-demonstriruet-ustojchivyy-rost-510549-2022/>

³⁰⁵ Pivovar, E. Shestakov: Belarus can sell a wide range of products to Latin America / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shestakov-belarus-mozhet-prodavat-v-latinskuju-ameriku-shirokij-spektr-produktsii-510577-2022/>

In recent years, Latin American countries have maintained the role of points of growth and foreign trade activity of Belarus. These include Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

The Brazilian market is of great interest to the Belarusian machine-building and chemical industries. This is due to Brazil's ever-growing demand for agricultural and other machinery, fertilizers, tyres, and other goods produced by Belarusian companies. In 2021, bilateral trade totalled about \$800 million, with exports totalling \$585 million. Commodity items such as cord materials (yarns and fabrics) for the production of car tyres, beer malt, and electric vehicles have a significant potential for increasing supplies to the Brazilian market.

Argentina is an important trade and economic partner for Belarus. In 2021, trade turnover between the countries totalled USD 136 million. Prospective areas of trade and economic cooperation with this country include the supply of Belarusian complex technical products: agricultural and forestry machinery, forage and grain harvesters, dump trucks, passenger cars and electric vehicles.

In 2021, trade turnover between Belarus and **Colombia** totalled \$90 million, while Belarusian exports totalled \$80 million. New commodity items that may be in demand in the Colombian market include agricultural machinery, buses, foodstuffs, and may also be the IT sector.

Belarus also has points of interaction with **Venezuela** to intensify trade and economic relations. In 2021, almost USD 2 million worth of Belarusian goods were supplied to Venezuela, an increase of 82%. Among the most promising commodity items for Belarusian exports to Venezuela are condensed and dried milk and cream, printed books, brochures, pipes, tubes, hoses and plastic fittings, and whey.

Belarus and **Cuba** are also working on new joint projects in the trade and economic sphere. Tractors and tractors, condensed and dried milk and cream, parts for receiving and transmitting equipment, parts and accessories for cars and tractors, devices and appliances used in medicine, and reciprocating internal combustion engines form the bulk of Belarusian supplies to Cuba. Supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment may also become a promising area of Belarusian exports.

In September 2022, a Belarusian-Cuban business forum was held, where participants considered promising areas of trade and economic interaction between the two countries and topical issues of doing business. More than 90 representatives from 65 enterprises in areas of interest to Belarus for promotion to the Cuban market and 18 representatives of Cuban business held talks on the

development of "mutually beneficial co-operation and implementation of joint projects in molecular immunology, scientific and technological developments, education, metallurgy, agricultural engineering, trade, coffee, rum production and other areas"³⁰⁶.

It should be noted that this is the first meeting of business representatives of the two countries in a long time. Moreover, for Belarus, Cuba is a partner in export-import operations, an independent and autonomous country, and is also seen as a platform to enter the large market of Latin America - Venezuela, Bolivia and other major countries in the region. "Trade turnover between Belarus and Cuba totalled \$22.9 million in 2021, more than \$20 million of which is accounted for by Belarusian exports"³⁰⁷. The participants of the business forum showed that the potential of the two countries has not been exhausted yet. Moreover, the establishment of business contacts between representatives of the business communities of Belarus and Cuba will spur further development of trade and economic relations.

The Cuban side is ready to co-operate with partners from Belarus, particularly in the machine-building sector. For reference, more than 20,000 Belarusian-made tractors are currently operating in the fields of Cuba. At the same time, the cooperation can be "not only in the purchase of new models, but also in the purchase of spare parts for the restoration of machinery that is already available in Cuba. We are interested in supplying spare parts for repair and restoration of tractors, MAZ trucks, AMKODOR, buses. We can engage in assembly, as well as create projects to supply this equipment to the Latin American market. Belarus and Cuba also have great potential in the digital economy and tourism"³⁰⁸.

However, medicine is of the greatest interest to Cuban partners. In particular, in November 2022, the first Belarusian medicines were registered in this Latin American country. "This step was made possible thanks to long-term joint work between the Belarusian (Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare, Managing Company of Belpharmprom Holding) and Cuban (Centre

³⁰⁶ Belarus and Cuba will discuss the prospects of trade and economic cooperation at the business forum on 27 September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-obsudjat-perspektivy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-na-biznes-forume-27-525866-2022>

³⁰⁷ Business of Belarus and Cuba intends to develop co-operation in medicine, engineering and logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-belarusi-i-kuby-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-medsine-mashinostroenii-i-logistike-525975-2022/>

³⁰⁸ Medicine, engineering, tourism. The Ambassador of Cuba told about the areas of cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/medsina-mashinostroenie-turizm-posol-kuby-rasskazal-o-napravlenijah-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-525993-2022/>

for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices (CECMED)) parties. It concerns medicines produced by the UE "Minskintercaps"³⁰⁹. In addition, the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare and CECMED signed an agreement on inter-laboratory comparisons, which will contribute to increasing the level of trust between testing laboratories of Belarus and Cuba, qualification of specialists in the field of laboratory research, promote harmonisation of requirements for quality control of medicines and, as a result, increase the effectiveness and safety of medicines for patients of the two countries.

The Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPO) and the Medical University of Havana also signed a cooperation agreement in November 2022. At the Cuban Centre for Immunological Research, Belarusian specialists agreed to cooperate in prenatal diagnostics, neonatal screening, oncology and diabetology, as well as the possibility of using Cuban reagents as an adequate replacement for those currently used in various screening tests. "At the Cuban Centre of Molecular Immunology, representatives of BelMAPO agreed to open joint research projects in the field of therapy of neurological diseases and in the field of ophthalmology and combusiology with the help of stem cell technologies"³¹⁰.

³¹¹In November 2022, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education documents was added to the legal framework of the Belarusian-Cuban relations, where the following are considered as promising areas of cooperation: "joint research on the development of medicines and pharmaceutical substances; development and manufacture of medical devices and devices for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases in cardiac surgery, traumatology and orthopaedics, oncology, dentistry; and development of joint ventures in the field of medical science and technology, including in Cuba. The parties will cooperate both within the framework of science and technology parks, which are actively developing in Belarus and Cuba, and will consider the possibility of establishing joint ventures, including in Cuba. In addition, other proposals are being discussed: the possibility for higher education institutions of the two countries to participate in competitions of Belarusian-Cuban scientific and technical projects in priority areas of cooperation; the implementation of joint

³⁰⁹ Belarusian medicines are registered in Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-lekarstva-zaregistrovany-na-kube-536206-2022/>

³¹⁰ BelMAPO and the Medical University of Havana signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belmapo-i-meduniversitet-gavany-podpisali-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-536529-2022/>

³¹¹ Belarus and Cuba signed an agreement on the recognition of educational documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-podpisali-soglashenie-o-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-535587-2022/>

educational programmes to train bachelors and masters in a number of areas - pharmaceuticals, information technologies, engineering and technical specialties. Now there are 10 direct agreements between the universities of our countries. Thus, a good foundation for further development of the Belarusian-Cuban bilateral relations has already been laid.

Nicaragua should also be named among Belarus's important political and economic partners in Latin America. Moreover, in May 2024, the two countries will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. And in May 2023, Minsk and Managua said that they aim to seriously intensify trade, economic and humanitarian ties in order to constantly support and promote the bilateral agenda, filling it with new projects and cooperation programmes. It should be noted that trade relations between Belarus and Nicaragua are still relatively small. They are based on supplies of Belarusian products. The legal framework is still in the process of formation.

In May 2023, a government delegation from this Latin American country visited Minsk. This visit showed that Belarus and Nicaragua intend to actively develop the legal foundation of bilateral relations. In particular, several important documents were signed in the Belarusian capital. Firstly, the General Agreement between the two governments on the provision of export credits, which will strengthen the position of exporters from Belarus. "The buyers of Belarusian machinery will be the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Nicaragua, the Municipal Institute of Transport Regulation of Managua, and the Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development. The lending will be carried out with the use of loan funds from the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus OJSC"³¹².

Secondly, the basic agreement, which opens up opportunities for industrial cooperation and will allow "in the long term to significantly increase supplies of Belarusian machinery in demand in Nicaragua. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the increase in joint trade"³¹³. Third, the agreement on cooperation in education will provide a legal basis for interaction between the parties and establish working contacts between educational institutions of the two

³¹² Ministry of Industry: the agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits will strengthen the positions of Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-soglashenie-s-nikaragua-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-ukrepiť-pozitsii-belorusskih-567470-2023/>

³¹³ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik on the results of negotiations with the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua (19 May 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b1045153bb04077c.html>

countries, "training specialists in the specialities most in demand in Nicaragua"³¹⁴, as well as facilitate the exchange of relevant information and develop scientific and technical cooperation, which is part of this work. In addition, Minsk and Managua are working on draft agreements on trade and economic cooperation, promotion and mutual protection of investments, establishment of a joint committee on trade and economic cooperation, as well as on the abolition of visa regime.

Belarus and Nicaragua also decided to take a comprehensive approach to trade and economic interaction with a focus on industrial cooperation and investment cooperation. The parties focused on the implementation of joint projects in agriculture and the supply of Belarusian passenger, road-building and agricultural machinery to the Nicaraguan market. In particular, "in economic terms, first of all, we are talking about the development of industrial cooperation and the use of Belarusian agricultural technologies in the development of Nicaraguan agriculture..."³¹⁵. Back in June 2022, at the talks in Minsk between the Ministries of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and Agriculture and Livestock of Nicaragua, the parties considered the prospects for cooperation in agriculture. They agreed to co-operate in livestock breeding, veterinary medicine, agrarian education, and exchange of experience in crop production. In addition, "Belarus is interested in supplies from Nicaragua of raw cane sugar, coffee, cocoa beans and semi-finished fruit products for baby food production"³¹⁶.

Another interesting topic that may become promising on the Belarusian-Nicaraguan economic agenda is the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal. The fact is that back in 2012, the National Assembly of Nicaragua approved the project for the construction of the "Great Transoceanic Canal of Nicaragua," which, "if completed, will connect the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The new interoceanic canal is expected to be a longer, wider and deeper alternative to the Panama Canal (opened in 1920) and will seriously relieve maritime traffic"³¹⁷. So, despite geographical remoteness,

³¹⁴ Belarus signed an agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-podpisala-s-nikaragua-soglashenie-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-567453-2023/>

³¹⁵ Aleinik: Belarus and Nicaragua are aimed at serious intensification of trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/aleinik-belarus-i-nikaragua-natseleny-na-serjeznuju-aktivizatsiju-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-567428-2023/>

³¹⁶ Belarus and Nicaragua intend to co-operate in livestock breeding and agrarian education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-nikaragua-namereny-sotrudnichat-v-zhivotnovodstve-i-agrarnom-obrazovanii-506979-2022/>

³¹⁷ Foreign Minister of Nicaragua does not rule out the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/glava-mid-nikaragua-ne-iskljuchaet-vozmozhnosti-uchastija-belarusi-v-stroitelstve-nikaraguanskogo-567406-2023/>

distance is not an obstacle to establishing co-operation when partners have respect, trust and friendship.

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An important integration platform

The Republic of Belarus today maintains diplomatic relations with all 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean. This region of the globe is of interest to our country as an important platform for integration into global trade and economic ties. And this contributes to the rapprochement of the Belarusian side with a number of Latin American states. For example, "with some countries of the region the relations have already reached the level of strategic partnership, while with others the expansion of interaction in political, trade and economic, educational, scientific, technical and other spheres is becoming more and more progressive"³¹⁸. Recall that Belarus has embassies in Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Cuba. The year 2023 saw many interesting and significant events in the relations of our republic with a number of countries of the region.

Let us start with the **Republic of Nicaragua**. In October 2023, Minsk hosted the third meeting of the Belarusian-Nicaraguan Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which discussed the current state of interaction between Minsk and Managua and outlined further steps to expand bilateral partnerships. In particular, they considered opportunities and prospects "in the field of housing and industrial construction, building up bilateral trade, cooperation in investment, food, light industry, pharmaceuticals, culture, strengthening business contacts between the two countries, establishing ties between the capital authorities of Belarus and Nicaragua"³¹⁹.

The first two meetings of the commission were held in September 2014 in Minsk and in September 2015 in Managua. During this period, Belarusian exports were based on agricultural machinery and components, "horticultural and forestry equipment, parts for internal combustion engines, and bearings. In the commodity structure of imports, the largest specific weight was occupied by supplies of bananas, coffee and strong alcoholic beverages"³²⁰. And in May 2023, the two sides said they aimed to seriously intensify trade, economic and humanitarian ties in order to constantly fill them with new projects and cooperation programmes. At the same time, a number of important bilateral documents were signed in

³¹⁸ Belarus and the countries of Latin America [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/bilateral/america/latin_america/

³¹⁹ About the meeting of the Belarusian-Nicaraguan joint commission on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b2665dfb1e8ad9b4.html

³²⁰ Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://cuba.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/N/trade/

Minsk: A general agreement between the governments of Belarus and Nicaragua on the provision of export credits; a basic agreement on the supply of Belarusian machinery to the Nicaraguan market; and "an agreement on cooperation in education, which will provide a legal basis for interaction between the parties and the establishment of working contacts between educational institutions of the two countries"³²¹. In June 2023, the parties discussed opportunities for cooperation in agriculture and agreed to work out the prospects for cooperation in such areas as "exchange of genetic material of agricultural crops, livestock breeding, internships for scientists and specialists, training of Nicaraguan specialists at the master's and postgraduate programmes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus"³²².

In July 2023, a Belarusian delegation led by Foreign Minister S. Aleinik visited Nicaragua to discuss at the highest and highest levels "investment projects, contracts for the supply of Belarusian machinery, prospects for Belarus' participation in major infrastructure projects in Nicaragua, cooperation in agriculture, logistics and opportunities to use port infrastructure, credit and finance, and options for joint work in the markets of Latin America."³²³ Following the visit, Belarus and Nicaragua adopted another package of bilateral agreements and contracts. In particular, they signed intergovernmental agreements on mutual cancellation of visas and resumption of work of the joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, as well as approved the Roadmap of Cooperation in Agriculture. In addition, MTZ signed a framework contract to supply products of the Belarusian plant to Nicaragua for a two-year period. <...> MAZ and the mayor's office of Managua also signed a contract for the supply of Belarusian machinery. An agreement was reached to supply 236 units of AMKODOR machinery for the construction industry and municipal services in Nicaragua"³²⁴. In the field of culture, the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, the Rubén Darío National Theatre and the Nicaraguan cultural foundation Incanto signed a memorandum of cooperation.

³²¹ Zalesky, B.L. When partners have respect, trust and friendship / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XX Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji, "Aktualne problemy nowoczesnych nauk - 2023". Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 41.

³²² Belarus and Nicaragua discussed areas of cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-nikaragua-obsudili-napravleniya-sotrudnichestva-v-selskom-hozjajstve-573073-2023/>

³²³ The Belarusian delegation held extended negotiations with the economic bloc of the Nicaraguan government [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-delegatsija-provela-rasshirennye-peregovory-s-ekonomicheskim-blokom-pravitelstva-nikaragua-577785-2023/>

³²⁴ On the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik to Nicaragua. Aleinik's visit to Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a423b01505b9ac36.html

At the 3rd meeting of the joint commission, the Belarusian side stressed that it considers Nicaragua an important political, trade and economic partner in the Latin American region and a reliable ally in the international arena. As for the supply of Belarusian machinery to the Nicaraguan market, further steps have already been outlined. The products of Minsk Automobile Plant, Amkodor, Minsk Tractor Plant and other giants of the national industry will be in demand in the Latin American country "when implementing ambitious infrastructure projects planned by the current government. There are serious developments in the agricultural sector, in particular with regard to the application of Belarusian agricultural technologies in Nicaragua"³²⁵ .

Note that Nicaraguan land is very fertile. But only less than half of it is cultivated. "That is, 50 per cent of the fertile land is not cultivated because there is not enough machinery and not enough people. The country's government <...> is moving in the right direction. They have built 4,000 kilometres of roads"³²⁶ . In this regard, the Nicaraguan side expressed interest in organising the supply of a large batch of machinery of the Ministry of Industry of Belarus for various purposes - road-building, agricultural, passenger - "for municipal needs, as well as for the implementation of large infrastructure, transport and logistics projects"³²⁷ . As a result of the negotiations, the parties agreed to form a list of necessary types of equipment for the preparation of commercial offers and delivery terms. On the whole, the successful implementation of the agreements will bring the relations between Belarus and Nicaragua to a new, higher level of development.

Another strategic and very important partner of Belarus in Latin America is the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**. The two countries established diplomatic relations back in February 1997. Six years ago, in October 2017, Minsk hosted official talks between the presidents of Belarus and Venezuela, during which the parties declared their intention to increase cooperation in all areas in the coming years, despite the fact that this country has been going through a rather difficult period recently. As for the interaction with the Belarusian side,

³²⁵ Transcript of the approach to the press of Deputy Minister E. Shestakov following the meeting of the Belarusian-Nicaraguan Joint Commission (4 October 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ab8c63a09ebb1fec.html

³²⁶ Dried milk to Cuba and machinery to Nicaragua. The Ambassador told about the directions of Belarusian exports [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/suhoe-moloko-na-kubu-i-tehnika-v-nikaragua-posol-rasskazal-o-napravlenijah-belorusskogo-eksporta-579482-2023/>

³²⁷ Rogozhnik and the delegation of Nicaragua discussed the issues of intensification of supplies of Belarusian equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogozhnik-s-delegatsiej-nikaragua-obsudil-voprosy-intensifikatsii-postavok-belorusskoj-tehniki-591732-2023/>

it is still "due to the difficult situation in the world, the pace of implementation of joint projects has slowed down"³²⁸ .

It should be noted that the two sides established long-term trade, economic and co-operation ties back in 2007. Since then, Belarus has built four plants in Venezuela - for the production of ceramic blocks, tractors, municipal and road-building machinery. And in this country there were "JV MAZVEN for the assembly of MAZ trucks, JV VeneMinsk Tractores for the assembly of Belarus tractors, and a plant for the assembly of heavy road-building machinery Makinarnyas Barinas"³²⁹ . Since the same year of 2007, the Petrolera Belo-Venezolana oil and gas joint venture has been operating in Venezuela, focusing on seven oil and six gas fields, four of which are located in the west of the country - on Lake Maracaibo, the rest - in the Venezuelan east. During the operation of this JV, the financial effect for the Belarusian side totalled about \$70 million. "Over 8.4 million tonnes of oil and 6.4 billion cubic metres of gas were produced between 2008 and 2016"³³⁰ .

As for the construction sector, in addition to the opening of the largest brick factory in Latin America, Belarusian CJSC Belzarubezhstroy has been involved in the construction of housing on Venezuelan soil since 2007, where they implemented three contracts for the construction of 19968 flats. Finally, in the field of agriculture, when building the first agro-industrial town in Venezuela, Belarusian specialists "erected 176 dwelling houses and a warehouse of mineral fertilisers, laid more than 20 km of roads and cleared 2.5 thousand hectares of shrubbery. More than 400 units of specialised machinery from Belarus were supplied and 1.2 thousand hectares of territory were sown"³³¹ . It was believed that all this would amount to only one fifth of what the Belarusian representatives still had to do in Venezuela's agriculture.

As we can see, the two countries really did not need to start from scratch, renewing the agreements already reached in the field of industry and construction,

³²⁸ Negotiations with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-c-prezidentom-bolivarianskoj-respubliki-venesuela-nikolasom-maduro-17221/

³²⁹ Matveev, V. Belarus and Venezuela agree to intensify the work of assembly plants by supplying raw materials / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-venesuela-dogovarivajutsja-ob-aktivizatsii-raboty-sborochnyh-proizvodstv-za-schet-postavok-269845-2017/>

³³⁰ Matveev, V. Additional investments are needed for the development of JV "Petrolera BeloVenesolana" - General Director of "Belorusneft" / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/dlja-razvitija-sp-petrolera-belovenesolana-nuzhny-dopolnitelnye-investitsii-gendirektor-belorusnefti-269858-2017/>

³³¹ Venezuela asks to build five more agro-towns on the Belarusian model [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/venesuela-prosit-postroit-esche-pjat-agrogorodkov-po-belorusskoj-modeli-269901-2017/>

as well as in agriculture and hydrocarbon extraction. Especially since Venezuela then adopted a national programme of Bolivarian development of the post-oil economy, which included 15 directions, starting from food production and ending with the most modern equipment, "including projects in industry and agriculture. Belarus can assist in their realisation"³³². That is why at the meeting of the two presidents in Minsk it was decided to significantly intensify the activities of the joint intergovernmental commission and to hold its 7th meeting in the very near future in order to outline a concrete action plan for the implementation of both prospective and currently implemented joint projects.

In the sphere of industrial cooperation, the discussion was about bringing the existing joint ventures to full capacity so that at least half of the products manufactured at them would be sold on the Venezuelan domestic market and the other half would be exported. As for the oil and gas industry, "Belarus is interested in increasing oil production in Venezuela to 2-3 million tonnes per year"³³³. For this purpose, it would be necessary to significantly intensify cooperation between JV Petrolera Belo-Venezolana and the Belarusian industry research and design institute BelNIPIneft, whose strategic task in this Latin American country was "to increase the efficiency of oil and gas deposits development through the introduction of new production technologies and rational selection of geological and technical measures"³³⁴. In agriculture - Venezuela imports \$10 billion worth of food annually - it was planned to build dairy complexes, poultry farms, a slaughterhouse, a meat processing plant, and milk processing plants with the help of Belarusian specialists. Finally, in the field of construction, "agreements were reached on the allotment of new neighbourhoods for the construction of housing in Venezuela by Belarusian specialists"³³⁵. All these facts showed that Minsk and Caracas both then and now intend to focus on the most important issues in the development of partnership in order to fully realise the existing potential of cooperation.

³³² Belarus plans to build new plants in Venezuela and increase production volumes of the existing ones [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postroit-v-venesuele-novye-zavody-i-uvelichit-objemy-proizvodstva-dejstvujuschih-270308-2017/>

³³³ Belarus is interested in increasing oil production in Venezuela to 2-3 million tonnes per year [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-uvelichenii-dobychi-nefti-v-venesuele-do-2-3-mlnt-v-god-270309-2017/>

³³⁴ Venezuela plans to expand cooperation with Belarus in the oil sector [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/venesuela-planiruet-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusjuu-v-neftjanoj-sfere-269908-2017/>

³³⁵ Matveev, V. Chernyi: there are agreements on the allocation of new neighbourhoods for housing construction in Venezuela / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/chernyj-est-dogovorennosti-po-otvodu-novyh-mikrorajonov-dlja-stroitelstva-zhilja-v-venesuele-269871-2017/>

Now let us return to the present day. In November 2023, Minsk hosted the 8th meeting of the Belarus-Venezuela Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, at which the parties discussed the most important aspects of the development of promising areas of cooperation, found compromise solutions to existing problematic issues and outlined concrete steps for further implementation of projects in industry, construction, agriculture, food, transport, petrochemicals, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, science and technology, education and tourism. It should be specified that in November 2017, at the 7th meeting of the joint commission, the parties adopted a roadmap for bilateral cooperation in the medium and long term, which, unfortunately, was not implemented due to global events. Nevertheless, as of mid-October 2023, 32 interstate, intergovernmental and interagency agreements had been signed between Belarus and Venezuela. And at the 8th meeting of the joint commission the parties outlined the task of the current moment "to return by joint efforts to the main highway of strategic interaction between our brotherly states, despite all the obstacles and difficulties, and to realise the huge potential that exists in the relations between the Republic of Belarus and Venezuela"³³⁶. And for this reason, another 13 documents were signed in Minsk on the implementation of projects in various areas.

In particular, the parties adopted an important document on the creation of a high-level group for strategic planning of the joint commission to monitor the implementation of "new structural mechanisms in bilateral relations that will increase trade turnover between our countries and organise efficient logistics and production chains"³³⁷. In addition, an agreement was signed in the scientific sphere, which provides for the exchange of experience between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Venezuelan Institute of Geography in the field of geography, hermetics, geodata, as well as documents in the field of tourism and health care, and in the industrial sphere.

All these facts suggest that the 8th meeting of the joint commission may become a new starting point for the preparation of an updated draft roadmap for the short, medium, and long term. Moreover, the parties have already identified eight most pressing issues that should be resolved as soon as possible: 1) resumption of assembly operations of Belarusian machinery in Venezuela; 2) intensification of projects in construction; 3) discussion of options for cooperation

³³⁶ Parkhomchik: Belarus and Venezuela are political and economic partners, as well as close friends and allies [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-belarus-i-venezuela-politicheskije-i-ekonomicheskie-partnery-a-takzhe-blizkie-druzija-i-602138-2023/>

³³⁷ Vice-President of Venezuela: our countries are bound by ties of friendship, we need to continue to stick together [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vitse-prezident-venesuely-nashi-strany-svjazyvajut-uzy-druzhy-nam-i-dalshe-nuzhno-derzatsja-drug-602296-2023/>

in forestry and woodworking; 4) consideration of opportunities for joint projects in the mining industry; 5) cooperation between the parties in agriculture and food supplies; 6) cooperation between the two countries in the construction industry; 5) cooperation in the supply of foodstuffs; and 6) cooperation in the manufacture and distribution of goods and services.

Of course, one of the most important topics on this list is the resumption of the work of tractor and truck assembly plants in Venezuela. It should be noted that over the past years, the Venezuelan side has purchased more than 1,300 machine kits from Belarus, "which were assembled in Venezuela and are used in the national economy. More than 3,000 Belarusian tractors work in the fields of our country [in Venezuela], and lorries drive on the roads"³³⁸. The urgent task of these plants is to reach their design capacity of 10,000 tractors and 5,000 lorries, and to sell them on the markets of neighbouring Latin American countries. On the basis of these enterprises it is necessary to create a multi-brand centre for support of the equipment that will be produced there. And "specialists from MTZ and MAZ will work in this centre. They will perform tasks related to education, training, support and service. On the basis of this centre there will also be formed warehouses of spare parts for production and repair of produced machinery"³³⁹. In addition, a very important issue is in the mining industry, as Belarus is interested in supplying quarry equipment to Venezuela, especially since this equipment has already been supplied to this country. For this reason, the parties agreed to "additionally create a narrow working group that would work out a plan of co-operation in this direction"³⁴⁰.

As for the agro-industrial complex, the first meeting of the Belarusian-Venezuelan working group on agriculture and food was held within the framework of the joint commission in Minsk to discuss prospects for cooperation in crop production, livestock breeding, veterinary medicine, and agrarian education. For reference, we note that "in the first 9 months of this year, Belarus' trade turnover with Venezuela increased by 27.9% compared to the same period last year [2022]. The main export item is dried milk whey, and the main suppliers are Slutsk Cheese Factory OJSC and Molochny Mir OJSC. The main import item

³³⁸ Vice-President of Venezuela: the participation of Belarus in the life of our country is of great importance and weight [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vitse-prezident-venesuely-uchastie-belarusi-v-zhizni-nashej-strany-imeet-bolshoe-znachenie-i-ves-602178-2023/>

³³⁹ It is planned to create a multi-brand centre on the basis of Belarusian-Venezuelan enterprises [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-baze-belorusko-venesuelskih-predpriyatij-planiruetsja-sozdat-multibrendovyy-tsentr-602259-2023/>

³⁴⁰ Belarus is interested in supplying quarry equipment to Venezuela [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-karjernoj-tehniki-v-venesuelu-602262-2023/>

is ethyl alcohol"³⁴¹. As a result, the parties agreed to exchange experience in the field of agrarian education, exchange visits of technical specialists for internship, advanced training and retraining in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and fish farming.

Speaking about the intention to expand co-operation in the field of education and science, the Venezuelan side outlined the main directions in this interaction as well. "These include artificial intelligence, bio- and information technologies, as well as the field of social sciences"³⁴². On the Belarusian side, the Belarusian State University is already actively involved in these partnerships, having signed a co-operation agreement with the Simon Rodriguez National Experimental University back in 2007.

During the plenary session of the joint Belarus-Venezuela Commission in November 2023, the parties stressed that the organisation of efficient transport communication is also of paramount importance for the two countries. In this regard, there was a proposal for "the possibility of direct air communication between our countries and joint steps to organise the transportation of goods by sea"³⁴³. In general, the two countries see great opportunities to develop cooperation in other areas - construction, forestry, woodworking, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, tourism. This gives Belarus and Venezuela a reason to plan co-operation not only for the next three to five years, but also for the long term.

The Federative Republic of Brazil is the main partner of the Republic of Belarus in foreign trade with Latin American countries and is among the top ten partners of the Belarusian state in the world. Again, let us make a brief excursion to the past, when the first meeting of the Belarus-Brazil Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation took place in November 2017. This fact very eloquently illustrated the state of relations between the two countries, the essence of which was that "despite its geographical remoteness, Brazil has been and remains for Belarus the most important trade and economic partner in Latin America"³⁴⁴, so the Belarusian side was very interested in significantly intensifying contacts with

³⁴¹ Belarus is interested in supplying a wide range of food products to Venezuela [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-shirokogo-assortimenta-prodovolstvennoj-produktsii-v-venesuelu-602273-2023/>

³⁴² Belarus and Venezuela intend to expand cooperation in education and science [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-venesuela-namereny-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-594268-2023/>

³⁴³ Belarus proposes to establish direct air communication with Venezuela [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predlagaet-naladit-prjamoe-aviasoobschenie-s-venesueloj-602159-2023/>

³⁴⁴ Congratulations to the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil Michel Temer [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-federativnoj-respubliki-brazilija-mishelu-temeru-17019/

Brazilian partners in the economic, political, scientific, technical, and cultural spheres. On the one hand, Belarus is a major importer of Brazilian sugar, iron, tobacco, leather and fruit, and on the other hand, it exports a lot of fertilisers, textiles and machinery to this Latin American country. Suffice it to say that in 2016, the Belarusian-Brazilian trade turnover exceeded half a billion dollars. But, according to the parties, "the economic potential of our countries shows that we can multiply mutually beneficial co-operation in trade, science and technology, education and other areas"³⁴⁵. That is why in July 2017, the foreign ministries of the two countries signed a memorandum on the establishment of the Joint Belarusian-Brazilian Commission for Economic Cooperation, which was to become one of the most important instruments for the implementation of mutually beneficial economic projects aimed at intensifying and further expanding trade and economic interaction, and more fully realising the potential available in the bilateral relations, which would allow to increase and diversify mutual trade turnover.

There were three main areas that looked most promising for Belarusian-Brazilian interaction at that time: first, increasing mutual trade turnover in goods and services; second, applying more complex forms of cooperation between Belarusian and Brazilian economic entities; and third, moving towards the establishment of joint ventures in sectors of mutual interest - machine-building and agriculture, oil and gas, and the high-tech sector. In this respect, the first meeting of the Belarus-Brazil Joint Commission on Economic Co-operation can be considered quite effective.

First, the parties agreed to locate assembly production of Belarusian tractors at one of the sites in the agro-industrial district of Anapolis in the state of Goiás. To this end, Minsk Tractor Works, the Ministry of Industry of Belarus, and the Secretariat for Economic Development of the State of Goiás signed a memorandum of intent. Secondly, "a number of commercial contracts worth over USD 40 million were concluded"³⁴⁶. In particular, the Orsha Flax Mill and the Baranovichi Cotton Association alone will supply Brazil with almost one and a half million dollars worth of fabrics. In addition, Belarusian exporters were expected to interact with Brazilian partners in such interesting and mutually beneficial areas as "supplying the Brazilian market with blended fabrics containing viscose; resuming cooperation with Belarusian manufacturers in the

³⁴⁵ Interview of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus E. Shestakov to the publication "Brasilia in Foco" (8 July 2017, Brazil) [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/c98f377693514952.html>

³⁴⁶ Anatoly Kalinin made a working visit to the Federal Republic of Brazil [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7680>

production and supply of men's shirts; expanding the range of linen fabrics supplied to Brazil. It is also planned to supply the Brazilian market with blackout fabrics, bed linen and towels"³⁴⁷. In particular, a trial batch of its goods to the Brazilian company Viner Brasil Tecnologia Ltd was to be supplied by OJSC "Mogilevkhimvolokno". Brazil was supposed to supply Belarus with tannery semi-finished product "vet-blue" to ensure the utilisation of capacities of Belarusian tanneries.

As for other promising areas of co-operation, they looked very promising: firstly, the desire of Embraer, one of the world's largest Brazilian aircraft-building companies, to open its service centre in Belarus; secondly, the signed agreement on technical cooperation between PA Belorusneft and Viner Brasil Tecnologia Ltd; thirdly, the adopted contract for the supply of potash fertilisers between Belarusian Potash Company and Camporico; fourthly, a "tripartite memorandum of intent between MTZ, Bobruiskagromash and Geoterra on working out the issue of entry of Belarusian tractor machinery, attachments and trailed equipment into the Brazilian market"³⁴⁸; fifthly, an agreed memorandum of co-operation between the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belarus-Brazil Chamber of Commerce and Industry. All these concrete steps to strengthen Belarusian-Brazilian co-operation were expected to yield positive results in the near future.

Now let's look at the present day. Note that "in 2021, bilateral trade totalled \$782.9 million. In 2021, bilateral trade totalled \$782.9 million (growth rate of 108.9 per cent). Exports totalled \$585.1 million. USD 585.1 MILLION (108.3%)"³⁴⁹. At that time, Belarusian supplies were based on petrochemicals and products of the Belarusian Metallurgical Plant. In 2022, due to a number of limiting factors, the figures of the Belarusian-Brazilian trade turnover slightly decreased. However, on 1 January 2023, Brazil underwent significant changes: a new president of the country took office and a new government is already functioning. These changes have to some extent affected the relations between Belarus and Brazil, which were established more than 30 years ago - in February 1992. It can be said that today the two states, separated by 14 thousand kilometres, "have every reason for the progressive development of bilateral cooperation in

³⁴⁷ Orsha Flax Factory and BPHO will supply fabrics to Brazil for \$1.4 million [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/orshanskij-lnokombinat-i-bpho-postavjat-v-braziliju-tkanej-na-14-mln-279290-2017/>

³⁴⁸ Contracts worth over \$40 million concluded during the visit of the Belarusian delegation to Brazil [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kontrakty-na-summu-bolee-40-mln-zakljucheny-vo-vremja-vizita-belorusskoj-delegatsii-v-braziliju-278631-2017/>

³⁴⁹ Trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://brazil.mfa.gov.by/ru/exportby/tev/>

both political and economic spheres"³⁵⁰ . The dynamics of 2022-2023 demonstrates the recovery of foreign trade volumes. In particular, "trade turnover for the first nine months of the current [2023] year totalled almost \$700 million. This is twice as much as last year's figures"³⁵¹ . Judging by the available facts, two spheres of cooperation stand out in the interaction between the two countries today - agriculture and education.

With regard to the first area, we recall that "in Brazil, there are about 5 million agricultural enterprises, of which 70 per cent are small businesses. They need equipment, tractors <...>. For example, BELARUS-152 and BELARUS-622 models, which are just suitable for such farms"³⁵² . The Brazilian side believes that the machines of the Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) are of high quality, easy to operate, and contribute to increased productivity. This can be judged, for example, by the results of the International Agricultural Exhibition-Fair AgriShow, which was held in May 2023 in the Brazilian city of Ribeirão Preto. This business forum is "the largest agricultural event in South America, which is attended by all representatives of agribusiness of the continent without exception. In terms of its characteristics, the exhibition is more like a district or even regional centre: the number of exhibitors and visitors exceeds 200,000 people, and the exhibition areas and pavilions occupy 520,000 square metres"³⁵³ .

The 2023 AgriShow saw a record number of participants - from more than 90 countries. And at this agro-industrial summit, Belarus presented MTZ tractors for the first time: not only small and manoeuvrable models for individual farmers, but also large multifunctional machines for large farms. Specialists from Minsk Tractor Plant, Smorgon Aggregate Plant, Bobruisk Tractor Parts and Aggregates Plant, and Borisov Metalist Plant worked at the exhibition. At the same time, "a niche for Belarusian agricultural machinery was defined: low-powered basic tractors with a capacity of up to 20-25 horsepower, which can become an

³⁵⁰ Lukashevich: the volume of trade of Belarus with Brazil is hundreds of times higher than with some neighbouring countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/lukashevich-objem-torgovli-belarusi-s-braziliej-v-sotni-raz-vyshe-chem-s-nekotorymi-sosednimi-stranami-555506-2023/>

³⁵¹ Trade turnover between Belarus and Brazil totalled almost \$700 million for nine months [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-belarusi-i-brazilii-za-devjat-mesjatsev-sostavil-pochti-700-mln-600698-2023/>

³⁵² Ambassador: Brazil has a high interest in Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-brazilii-v-nashej-strane-est-vysokij-interes-k-belorusskoj-tehnike-582274-2023/>

³⁵³ Belarus presented its tractors at the largest agricultural exhibition in South America [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-svoi-traktory-na-krupnejshej-agrovystavke-v-juzhnoj-amerike-564485-2023/>

indispensable assistant for family farming, which is the basis of agriculture in Brazil"³⁵⁴.

Back in March 2023, Belarus and Brazil agreed to build two plants for the production of MTZ tractors in this country. Consent has already been received from the governors of two Brazilian states - Ceará and Goiás, "project activities are underway. <...> specialists have already started discussing these nuances, there are positive signals"³⁵⁵. And in July this year, a roadmap for the project to create joint Belarusian-Brazilian assembly plants, including small tractor machinery oriented at family farms, has already been signed. And this interesting initiative in the field of industrial co-operation may have an impressive result.

Speaking about the development of cooperation between Belarus and Brazil in the field of education, we would like to recall that the Agreement on Cooperation in this area was signed in August 2015. However, even earlier, Belarusian universities started developing ties with Brazilian partners. For example, Belarusian State University (BSU) adopted relevant documents on co-operation with the universities of Brasília (2012) and Uberlandia (2014). In 2015, the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy signed a co-operation agreement with the same University of Uberlandia. In 2020, the Memorandum of Cooperation was adopted by the P.M. Masharov Vitebsk State University and the Federal University of the State of Paraná.

In 2023, the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), which was founded in 1927 and today ranks 10th in the rating of the best universities in Latin America, joined the partnership with Belarusian universities. More than 40 thousand students study there and more than three thousand teachers work there. The structure of the university includes 20 academic departments and 25 libraries. In September of this year BSU and FUMJ signed a memorandum that envisages educational and scientific interaction, development of academic mobility, and "the parties plan to cooperate in the preparation of joint educational programmes, publications, implementation of research projects, to hold conferences, seminars, workshops, <...> exchange students and teachers, educational and scientific materials"³⁵⁶.

³⁵⁴ Belarus plans to help Brazil create its new tractor [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-pomoch-brazilii-sozdat-svoj-narodnyj-tractor-564487-2023/>

³⁵⁵ Belarus and Brazil have agreed on the construction of two plants for the assembly of MTZ tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-brazilija-dogovorilis-o-stroitelstve-dvuh-zavodov-po-sborke-tractorov-mtz-555498-2023/>

³⁵⁶ Memorandum of Understanding signed between BSU and the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-o->

In September 2023, the partners of the Brazilian university also included the Belarusian State University of Economics (BSEU) and the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR), which adopted the respective memoranda with AHIF, which became the first step towards fruitful Belarusian-Brazilian cooperation in this field. In particular, BSEU and AHIF have already identified specific areas of partnership. Firstly, "the focus is on teaching Portuguese to Belarusian students and Russian to Brazilian students"³⁵⁷. Secondly, it is the creation of joint programmes in English in the speciality "World Economy". In addition, the Centre for Latin American Studies has already been "established and is successfully functioning at the Faculty of International Business Communications of BSEU, where joint projects are conducted by scientists from both universities. The Centre of Portuguese Language Studies will also be developed"³⁵⁸. All these joint projects, which are interesting for both sides and are already being implemented in the near future, will certainly serve to bring the two peoples - Belarusian and Brazilian - closer together. A rapprochement that will only deepen.

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³⁵⁷ Memorandum of Understanding signed between BSEU and Brazilian Federal University of Minas Gerais [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-podpisan-mezhdu-bgeu-i-brazilskim-federalnym-universitetom-minas-zherajs-588101-2023/>

³⁵⁸ Rector of the Brazilian university: co-operation in education will serve to bring our countries closer together [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/rektor-brazilskogo-universiteta-sotrudnichestvo-v-obrazovanii-posluzhit-sblizheniju-nashih-stran-588136-2023/>

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