

## International Cooperation and Media. Part IV

In March 2023, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, the key tasks of socio-economic development for the current year were named. First, to ensure sustainable operation of the real sector of the economy so that export growth becomes another crucial goal for the open economy of Belarus. And the key sectors of the Belarusian economy are already adapting to the current conditions. For example, it is planned to sell 1,300 buses, 26.5 thousand cars, 24 million square meters of ceramic tiles, 313 thousand tons of cheese and cottage cheese on foreign markets. Secondly, to continue the active investment policy of the state, so that each Belarusian district could independently develop and submit a project for implementation in its territory. As a result, a list of 129 investment projects has been formed on the principle of "one district - one project". Its total cost is about four and a half billion Belarusian rubles, the volume of investments for 2023 - more than one billion rubles. In addition, more than fifty import-substituting projects are planned to be implemented. What steps are being taken in Belarus in the export and investment directions? This is the subject of this proposed study.

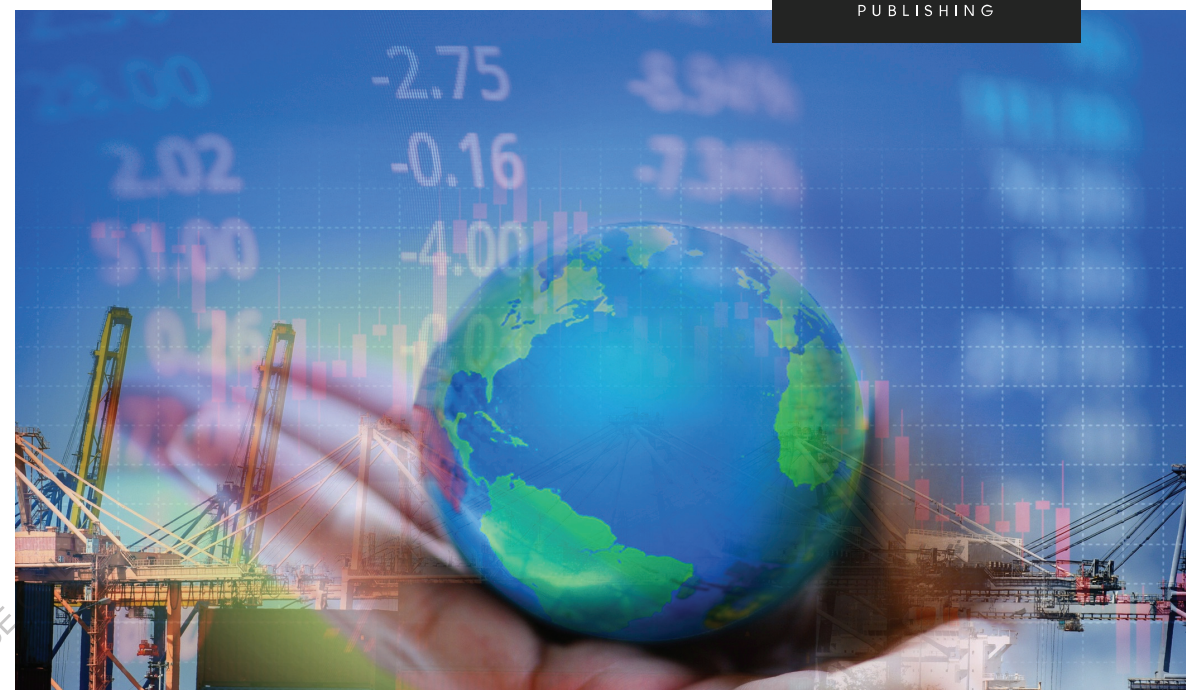


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Boris Zalessky



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*Collection of articles*

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

In December 2021, the 10th meeting of the Council for Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held to discuss preparations for the first CIS Regions Forum. Due to the current unfavourable epidemiological situation, it was decided to hold it in 2022. The draft programme of the forum envisages four panel sessions, an exhibition of agricultural products and achievements of the CIS regions. The sessions are planned to consider the development of co-operation ties between the regions in industry, transport and transit, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The focus of attention of the Council participants on this topic is explained by the fact that "it is interregional cooperation that is the basis for further development of mutual trade, entails cooperation in the market of production, investment and labour resources"<sup>1</sup>. Such figures show how relevant this issue is for the Republic of Belarus. Belarusian regions today have more than 800 documents on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres with partners in the CIS countries, the foreign trade turnover with which in January-October 2021 increased by another 36 per cent and came close to forty billion dollars. This co-operation is now developing particularly actively with the regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

In particular, **Russia** accounts for about 80 per cent of all interregional cooperation documents, and one of the most successful forms of developing these partnerships has been the holding of bilateral regional forums. In 2021, the eighth such forum was held, during which \$800 million worth of real sector contracts were signed, facilitated by the fact that "about 80 regions are involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side"<sup>2</sup>. One of the leaders in this regard on the Russian side is **Moscow**. In the first ten months of 2021, the trade turnover of the Republic of Belarus with it grew by 27 per cent and exceeded \$3.7 billion with a positive balance of more than \$1.2 billion for the Belarusian side. This was due to supplies of cars, leather shoes, non-alloyed steel bars, railway and tramway freight cars, cheese and cottage cheese,

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<sup>1</sup> Strahar: interregional co-operation is the basis for the development of mutual trade in the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strahar-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-javljaetsja-bazisom-dlja-razvitiya-vzaimnoj-torgovli-v-sng-474946-2021/>

<sup>2</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. From the forum of regions - to the expansion of cooperation / B.L. Zaleskii // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Proceedings of academic science - 2021", August 30 - September 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 16.

hosiery, dried, salted and smoked fish, butter, furniture and its parts. It is also a fact that "about 20 per cent of the Russian capital's food imports come from Belarus, especially dairy products. <...> A lot of Belarusian-made motor vehicles are used by the city municipal structures and services, the population especially appreciates modern environmentally friendly electric transport..."<sup>3</sup>. It should be assumed that all these positive trends will be maintained and continued in the new programme of cooperation between the parties for 2023-2025, which will be developed in 2022.

As for **Kazakhstan**, the regions of this country interact with Belarusian partners within the framework of about 20 documents on interregional cooperation. A good example in this regard is demonstrated by the **Kostanai** and **Grodno** regions, which signed a roadmap of cooperation for 2022-2023 at the end of September 2021. For the Belarusian region, this Central Asian country is one of the five largest foreign economic partners, with trade turnover with it having increased one and a half times over the past five years. At the same time, "now Grodno Region supplies its products to 13 regions of Kazakhstan. Among the main commodity items are meat and dairy products, woodworking and machine-building products. In the first six months of 2021 the export of goods to Kostanay region totalled \$3.1 million"<sup>4</sup>. It should be assumed that the adoption of the road map, which deals with intensification of cooperation in investment and trade and economic spheres, as well as in agriculture, tourism, culture, health care, education, will give new impulses to this interaction and will lead to new deliveries of products of Grodno enterprises and possible organisation of joint assembly production in Kostanai region.

The capital cities of **Minsk** and **Bishkek** continue to be the flagships in the development of co-operation between the regions of Belarus and **Kyrgyzstan**. In November 2021, the twin cities reached new practical arrangements in the implementation of partnership ties. The fact is that today the Kyrgyz capital needs about 1,200 units of urban public transport. Both gas-fuelled buses and electric buses. And a number of Minsk enterprises have already expressed their readiness to provide the necessary assistance to their partners from Bishkek. Especially since there "recently appeared a few

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<sup>3</sup> Industry, transport, humanitarian sphere: the directions of cooperation between Belarus and Moscow were discussed in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-transport-gumanitarnaja-sfera-v-minske-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-s-474907-2021/>

<sup>4</sup> Grodno and Kostanay regions signed a roadmap for the development of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnyu-kartu-po-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-grodnenskaja-i-kostanajskaja-oblasti-462339-2021/>

watering cars produced in Belarus"<sup>5</sup> , which were liked by the capital's residents. As a result, Minsk discussed not only the supply of certain types of equipment from the Belarusian capital, but also the creation of joint ventures in Bishkek to service and equip them. In this regard, we would like to remind that "an assembly plant for BELARUS tractors has already been set up in Bishkek. Machines for the needs of the municipal sector can be assembled there as well. The site is ready, there are qualified specialists and a service centre. In order to launch production, it is necessary to resolve issues related to the supply of components"<sup>6</sup> .

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

Gomel residents are also developing co-operation with other Uzbek partners, cooperation agreements with whom were signed at the First Forum of Regions of the two countries. Thus, in July 2020, an online forum of representatives of business circles of Gomel and **Fergana** regions was held. Among the participants from the Belarusian side were such business entities as OJSC "Managing Company of Gomel Meat and Dairy Company Holding", GU "Gomeloblprom", OJSC "Trading House "Sozh". The participants of the online forum constructively considered "issues of bilateral cooperation in terms of trade in fruit and vegetables, textile, meat and dairy products, construction materials, agricultural machinery and equipment. The parties also discussed the possibility of opening a trading house of the Fergana region in Gomel"<sup>7</sup> . In particular, one of the major exporters of fruit and vegetable

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<sup>5</sup> Mayor of Bishkek: we are interested in the purchase of Belarusian equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mer-bishkeka-my-zainteresovany-v-zakupke-belorusskoj-tehniki-469870-2021/>

<sup>6</sup> Bishkek plans to purchase from MTZ machinery for street cleaning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planirujut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehniku-dlja-uborki-ulits-470601-2021/>

<sup>7</sup> Uzbek companies are interested in co-operation with partners from Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoj-oblasti-398194-2020/>

products in Fergana region - Uz-Segang JV LLC - proposed cooperation with partners in Gomel region in the form of creating a single distribution centre for Uzbek vitamin products. The Gomeloblprom State Institution made an offer to the textile enterprise A. Akbarali Ltd. to establish supplies of Uzbek vitamin products to Belarus. Akbarali to supply cotton yarn to the Belarusian region.

The third Uzbek partner of Homiel Region is **Khorezm** Region. The cooperation agreement signed by the parties in July 2019 named "trade and economic, scientific and cultural spheres, tourism, healthcare" among the promising areas of interaction<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, the enterprise "Gomselmash" concluded a co-operation agreement with the joint-stock company "Urgenchkormmash" from the Khorezm region - a plant of forage harvesters. All in all, in preparation for the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, the companies of Gomel region signed contracts with Uzbek partners totalling almost \$1.5 million.

All these facts show that the Uzbek market is very promising for the enterprises of Gomel region. In 2020, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with this Central Asian country increased by almost 65 per cent and exceeded \$17 million. "Polymers, dairy products, wallpaper, screws, hardware, timber are exported to Uzbekistan. Among the exporters are KolorMaster JLLC (polyvinyl chloride), Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC (mechanical devices, machine tools), Milkavita OJSC, Kalinkovich Dairy Plant UE (milk powder), SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC (chemical threads)"<sup>9</sup>.

Obviously, the already mentioned above First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened "new horizons of cooperation in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, food industry, as well as in cultural, humanitarian, information and communication and scientific spheres"<sup>10</sup>. More than 200 representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent provinces took part in the forum from the Uzbek side alone. The fact that 26 direct agreements between the regions were adopted at this forum speaks for its effectiveness. In addition to

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<sup>8</sup> Gomel region will sign three agreements with Uzbekistan at the I Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-podpishet-tri-soglasheniya-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionov-356296-2019/>

<sup>9</sup> Gomel region and Navoi region of Uzbekistan intend to develop co-operation in IT-industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-navoijskij-region-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-it-otrasli-440395-2021/>

<sup>10</sup> The Forum of Regions opened new horizons for Belarus and Uzbekistan in many areas - Safaev [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-regionov-otkryl-novyje-gorizonty-dlja-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-vo-mnogih-oblastjakh-safaev-356612-2019/>

three documents of Gomel region, agreements on cooperation in trade-economic, scientific-technical and humanitarian spheres were signed by then regions: Grodno region - with Samarkand and Andijan regions, Vitebsk region - with Namangan region, Brest region - with Bukhara and Syrdarya regions. Similar documents were signed between Mahiliou and Andijan and Dzhizak voblasts. Minsk Regional Executive Committee agreed on co-operation in the social sphere with Tashkent region. An action plan for 2019-2020 to implement the agreement between the Tashkent khokimiyat and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation was signed"<sup>11</sup>.

The growing importance of Uzbek partners for the Belarusian regions as a whole is evidenced by such figures already in 2021. At the end of the first quarter, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by another quarter and totalled \$67.5 million. An important detail: "Exports of Belarusian goods during this period increased by 37.4% and totalled \$58.7 million <...>. The balance of foreign trade in goods was positive for Belarus and totalled \$49.8 million"<sup>12</sup>. This was due to an increase in supplies of chilled and frozen beef, medicines and polymers, tractors and lorries to the Uzbek market. It would have been extremely difficult to achieve such results without the keen involvement of the Belarusian regions.

Tajikistan is also one of those countries in Central Asia whose trade and economic relations with the regions of which the Republic of Belarus has been developing particularly intensively over the last year and a half. Thus, if in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between them increased "almost threefold and exceeded \$111 million"<sup>13</sup>, then only in January-August 2021 trade turnover came close to the mark of \$110 million, "including Belarusian exports - \$107.5 million"<sup>14</sup>. Such supplies from Belarus as tractors and tractor-trailers, sugar, cars designed to transport ten or more people, petroleum products, insulated wires, cables, stationery made of paper and cardboard, tyres played their determining role in achieving these figures. The fact that there are already "about 20 dealers of Belarusian manufacturers" in Tajikistan speaks volumes.

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<sup>11</sup> Package of interregional agreements on co-operation signed at the I Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/paket-mezhregionalnyh-soglashenij-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisan-na-i-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-356632-2019/>

<sup>12</sup> Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by 25.3% to 67.5 million in the I quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-mezhdu-belarusijju-i-uzbekistanom-za-i-kvartal-uvelichilsja-na-253-do-675-mln-440482-2021/>

<sup>13</sup> Ambassador: Belarusian projects in Tajikistan are not just justified, but have an economic effect [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-belorusskie-proekty-v-tadzhikistane-ne-prosto-obosnovany-a-dajut-ekonomicheskij-effekt-459969-2021/>

<sup>14</sup> Trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/belarus\\_tajikistan/trade\\_economic/](https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/belarus_tajikistan/trade_economic/)

We are talking about the assembly of tractors, machinery of Bobruiskagromash and Gomselmash. Joint projects in the dairy industry are also being prepared"<sup>15</sup>, in each of which the interaction of specific regions of the two countries should play a decisive role.

It should be recalled that the topic of intensifying interregional cooperation was discussed back in April 2021 at the 14th meeting of the intergovernmental Tajik-Belarusian commission on trade and economic cooperation, where "topical issues of interaction in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, health care and education, investment and information technology" were considered<sup>16</sup>. An important detail: today such regions of Tajikistan and Belarus are developing trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural ties within the framework of signed co-operation agreements as: Sughd region - with Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev regions, Khatlon and Gomel regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, Khujand and Mogilev, Yavan and Uzden districts.

One of the most active participants in Belarusian-Tajik interregional cooperation is **Minsk Region**, whose foreign trade turnover with Tajikistan more than tripled to over USD 22 million in the first eight months of 2021. The key role in achieving such indicators was played, among other things, by the implementation of the cooperation agreement with **Sughd Region**, signed in 2014. At the same time, the parties are not going to stop at what has been achieved, outlining new plans for mutually beneficial partnerships. In particular, at the meeting of the heads of the regions A. Turchin and R. Ahmadzoda in early November 2021, they discussed a number of new promising areas of cooperation. One of the obvious priorities is the Belarusian light industry, for which Tajik cotton can become a raw material. In this regard, Belarus was also interested in establishing joint ventures for cotton processing in Tajikistan. As for the Tajik partners of the Belarusian capital region, they are interested "in supplying vegetables and fruits to Belarus, as well as receiving quality Belarusian potato seeds. Within 3-4 years the region plans to increase the volume of potato production up to 1 million tonnes"<sup>17</sup>. In general, the parties expect to expand bilateral ties very seriously in the near future. This

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<sup>15</sup> Denisenko: friendship of the leaders of Belarus and Tajikistan is a good basis for comprehensive cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/denisenko-druzhba-liderov-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-horoshaja-osnova-dlja-vsestoronnego-sotrudnichestva-460655-2021/>

<sup>16</sup> Zaleski, B.L. In the line of positive dynamics of co-operation / B.L. Zaleski // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Cotton, fruit, potato seeds: Minsk region plans to increase co-operation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/hlopok-frukty-semena-kartofelja-minskaja-oblast-planiruet-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-tadzhikistanom-467756-2021/>

is evidenced by the fact that at a business meeting held in November 2021, "representatives of more than 30 Tajik and Belarusian enterprises held talks on possible co-operation in machine building, healthcare, woodworking, food and processing industries"<sup>18</sup>. The memorandum of co-operation between the cities of Zhodino and Gulistan, signed in November 2021, should also contribute to the expansion of co-operation between the two regions.

**Mogilev** region intends to actively develop partnership relations with Sughd region. The parties signed a co-operation agreement in 2017. And in the three quarters of 2021, the trade turnover between them increased by almost a third. And in this case we are talking about an active search for new opportunities for co-operation. One of the priorities is the creation of joint productions. Given the fact that Mogilev is home to the largest Belarusian textile producer, OJSC Mogotex, there is a serious interest in cotton supplies from Tajikistan. And the Tajik partners, who annually increase the area of cultivation of this crop, also have their own interest: to organise a joint venture with the Belarusian side to process cotton. "This will make it possible to create several thousand new jobs here [in Sughd Oblast]"<sup>19</sup>. OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" is also planning to set up joint production of lifts in the Tajik region. And this is only a part of the proposals voiced in November 2021 at the business meeting of the parties in Mogilev, within the framework of which a cooperation agreement was signed by the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Sughd region. Besides, "OJSC "Mogilev plant "Strommashina" and CJSC "Nord Asia Metal" agreed to sign an agreement of intentions on the implementation of the project on manufacturing and supply of technological equipment for the production of asbestos-cement sheets"<sup>20</sup>. And representatives of other Mogilev enterprises from a number of industries have established contacts for trade in finished products and raw materials. And this is encouraging.

As we can see, the ties between the regions of the post-Soviet countries are gradually being filled with concrete projects, stimulating today the

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<sup>18</sup> Enterprises of Minsk and Sughd regions are interested in co-operation in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-minskoj-i-sogdijskoj-oblastej-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-promyshlennosti-468050-2021/>

<sup>19</sup> Zayats: Mogilev region and Sughd region of Tajikistan are interested in close co-operation and implementation of projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zajats-mogilevskij-region-i-sogdijskaja-oblast-tadzhikistana-zainteresovany-v-tesnom-sotrudnichestve-i-467893-2021/>

<sup>20</sup> Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Sughd region of Tajikistan signed a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevskoe-otdelenie-beltp-i-tpg-sogdijskoj-oblasti-tadzhikistana-podpisali-soglasenie-o-468065-2021/>



integration processes in the Commonwealth and demonstrating the relevance of holding the First Forum of Regions of the CIS countries in 2022.

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## **Eurasian Economic Union: To build on already established co-operation mechanisms**

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, approved in December 2020, include among the main tasks the further development of the contractual and legal framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with third countries and their integration associations on the creation of preferential trade regimes for the development and comprehensive deepening of trade and economic cooperation. In fact, the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations over the next five years should become one of the most important areas of the EAEU, which "will make it possible to carry out coordinated work on the issues of interfacing integration processes in the Eurasian space"<sup>21</sup>.

In December 2021, the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2022, which include the development of already established mechanisms of cooperation with third countries, regional integration associations and international organisations, as well as identifying potentially promising partners. In particular, "the priority for the EAEU in 2022 will be cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union (EU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum..."<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as the development of exports, transport and energy infrastructure, industrial cooperation, introduction of new technologies, as well as creating conditions for joint entry of member states' enterprises into the markets of third countries, including the states of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific region, North Africa, and Latin America.

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

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<sup>21</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Eurasian integration in the context of a large partnership on the continent / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa myśl informacyjnej powieki - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C.24.

<sup>22</sup> The EAEU approved the main directions of international activities for 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/v-eaes-utverdili-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoj-deyatelnosti-na-2022-god/>

directions of Eurasian economic integration until 2025.<sup>23</sup> An undoubted priority in this regard is international cooperation, which "it is important to develop both the dialogue format of cooperation and trade and economic relations with third countries by signing trade agreements in order to enter new promising markets..."<sup>24</sup>, so that producers from the countries of this integration entity, including Belarus, "receive the most favourable conditions when exporting their products to foreign markets, and consumers receive safe, high-quality and inexpensive goods" xml-p

It should be recalled that by the beginning of 2022, the EAEU had already concluded preferential agreements on the creation of free trade zones (FTZs) with Vietnam, Serbia, Singapore, and a temporary agreement with Iran. An agreement on trade and economic co-operation with the People's Republic of China has also entered into force. As for the search for potential partners, "negotiations on the establishment of FTAs with Egypt and Israel are at an active stage, work is underway to prepare the first round of negotiations with India, and negotiations have begun to prepare for a full-scale free trade agreement with Mongolia and Indonesia"<sup>25</sup>. And intensive work continues on identifying new partners and negotiating appropriate agreements with them.

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

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<sup>23</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Indonesia, Chile, Egypt / B.L. Zalesky // Материалы XV Международной ведеcko-практиcka conference "Ведеcky прumysl evropskeho kontinentu - 2019". Volume 6: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Address by President Sadyr Zhaparov to the Heads of the EAEU Member States on the occasion of Kyrgyzstan's chairmanship in the bodies of the Union in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/obrashhenie-prezidenta-sadyra-zhaparova-k-glavam-gosudarstv-%E2%80%933-chlenov-eaes-po-sluchayu-predsedatelstvovaniya-kyrgyzstana-v-organakh-soyuza-v-2022-godu/>

<sup>25</sup> Gorelik, Y. Without industrial lockdowns and reduction of export activity / Y. Gorelik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bez-promyshlennyh-lokdaunov-i-snizhenija-eksportnoj-aktivnosti-predstavitel-mid-o-vneshnetorgovoj-477276-2021/>

fuels, cereals and other goods to the LACB"<sup>26</sup>. Recently, co-operation in such spheres as pharmaceuticals, machine building, information and communication services has been growing. Bioengineering, green technologies, services, including tourism and education, could become new areas of co-operation. Among the main reasons for the still insufficient level of trade and economic co-operation, the joint statement pointed out "the low level of awareness of the subjects of economic relations about the needs and opportunities of business in the EAEU and LACB countries, <...> the lack of modern trade and economic agreements between the countries and integration associations of the EAEU and LACB"<sup>27</sup>. As a result, an agreement was reached to move from agreeing on general areas of co-operation to substantive negotiations with the involvement of interested business representatives. Among the possible areas of cooperation were the post-water and green economies, economic methods of combating climate change, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth, and expanding the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in foreign trade.

A kind of complement to the development of relations with the LACB will apparently be the plan of joint actions until 2025 with Cuba, signed by the EAEU in December 2021, which covers 34 areas of co-operation. For Cuba, this document is important in the context of the implementation of the country's National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030 and the Economic and Social Strategy to stimulate the economy and overcome the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, "the Cuban side showed particular interest in strengthening sectoral dialogue, in particular, in the areas of technical regulation and regulation of the circulation of medicines in the EAEU"<sup>28</sup>.

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

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<sup>26</sup> EAEU and Latin American countries intend to reach pre-crisis trade indicators by the end of 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-strany-latinskoj-ameriki-namereny-vyjti-na-dokrizisnye-pokazateli-torgovli-po-itogam-2021-goda/>

<sup>27</sup> ECE and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System announced the transition to substantive negotiations on trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-postoyannyj-sekretariat-latinoamerikanskoj-ekonomicheskoy-sistemy-zayavili-o-perehode-k-predmetnym-peregovorom-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskoy-sotrudnichestve/>

<sup>28</sup> EAEU and Cuba signed a plan of joint actions until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-do-2025-goda-/>

bring the two organisations to "the horizon of practical interaction <...> to develop effective measures for the development of a common market for sugar and sugar-containing products"<sup>29</sup> .

If we talk about the development of EAEU co-operation with partners on different continents, at the end of 2021, its structures were particularly active in co-operation with such Asian countries as China, Iran, Mongolia and Bangladesh. Thus, in December 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission on the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC, it was noted that the volume of mutual trade in 2021 will exceed the pre-pandemic level and reach a record \$165 billion, demonstrating the high intensity and mutual complementarity of trade ties. Discussing the progress in preparing a roadmap for the implementation of the agreement between the EAEU and the PRC, which came into force in 2019, the parties highlighted the development of digital transport corridors as the main section of this document, as "the digitalisation of rail transport can have a cumulative effect"<sup>30</sup> . The issues of green trade and green investment were not left aside, where the Chinese side proposed to strengthen interaction between the PRC and the EAEU on the global climate agenda, as well as the prospects for cooperation in three areas that "relate to the issues of smart customs, smart customs borders and smart interconnectivity"<sup>31</sup> . At the same time, the Chinese side expressed its willingness to share its experience in implementing the concept of "three intelligent spheres", which is based on the modern technological mode with the use of new methods, systems and equipment, with the aim of intelligent customs control and management.

As for Iran, the temporary free trade agreement with Iran entered into force in October 2019. Thanks to this document, "the list of goods for which exporters of EAEU countries, including Belarus, received preferences includes meat and oil and fat products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"<sup>32</sup> . In

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<sup>29</sup> ECE and the International Sugar Organisation signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-mezhdunarodnaya-organizatsiya-po-saharu-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii/>

<sup>30</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "EAEU-PRC co-operation is gaining momentum, it organically complements the bilateral relations of our states" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-sotrudnichestvo-caes-krn-nabiraet-obo-roty-ono-organichno-dopolnyaet-dvustoronnije-otnosheniya-nashih-gosudarstv/>

<sup>31</sup> Formation of "single window" and intelligent customs discussed by representatives of the EEC and China [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/formirovanie-%C2%AABedinog-okna%C2%BB-i-intellektualnuyu-tamozhnyu-obsudili-predstaviteli-eeek-i-kitaya/>

<sup>32</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Serbia, Iran, China / B.L. Zalesky // *Materiály XV Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Perspektywy i wyzwania opracowania sa nauka i technikami - 2019"*, Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 20.

December 2021, this interim agreement was extended until 2025. The past two years have shown that the interaction between the parties is developing exclusively on an upward trajectory. Thus, in the first half of 2021, "exports of the Union's member states increased by almost 47% to \$1.35 billion, while imports increased by 34% to \$825 million"<sup>33</sup>, which indicates great prospects for this co-operation.

Another promising EAEU partner in Asia is Mongolia, a memorandum of co-operation with which was signed back in 2015. In December 2021, the 4th meeting of the joint working group on interaction between the EEC and the Mongolian government was held, at which it was noted that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the parties totalled \$1.5 billion. And "in the first nine months of the current [2021] year, trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Mongolia increased by 23 per cent, while the potential of mutual trade is clearly not fully utilised"<sup>34</sup>. In order to maintain this positive dynamics, it was decided to update the plan of joint measures for the implementation of the above-mentioned memorandum until 2025. As a key reserve for the development of trade and economic ties, the parties identified the activation of contacts between business circles and business associations. And for this purpose, a business forum will be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2022 at the suggestion of the Mongolian side.

Also in December 2021, the 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group on ECE engagement with the Government of Bangladesh on the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in May 2019 was held. It noted that trade volume between the two sides has grown six times in the last ten years. In 2020, its growth continued by another 11 per cent to more than two and a half billion dollars. And "in January-September of this [2021] year, the EAEU's trade turnover with Bangladesh increased one and a half times - to \$2.2 billion. USD"<sup>35</sup>. As a real task, the parties are now considering increasing this indicator to three billion dollars. There are reserves for this: agricultural products, machinery, equipment, vehicles, pharmaceuticals, as well as other types of products with a relatively high share of added value.

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<sup>33</sup> Pivovar, E. The validity of the temporary agreement on free trade between the EAEU and Iran is extended until 2025 / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dejstvie-vremennogo-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-mezhdu-eaes-i-iranom-prodleno-do-2025-goda-474217-2021>

<sup>34</sup> EEC and the Government of Mongolia discuss plans of interaction until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/eeek-i-pravitelstvo-mongolii-obsuzhdayut-plan-y-vzaimodejstviya-do-2025-goda/>

<sup>35</sup> EAEU countries and Bangladesh have the potential to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/strany-eaes-i-bangladesh-imeyut-potentsial-dlya-dostizheniya-tovarooborota-v-3-mlrd-dollarov-ssha/>

Among the international organisations with which the EAEU plans to actively develop cooperation in 2022 is the European Union (EU). In particular, it is a question of developing a dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the European Commission (EC), including interaction with specialised EU bodies, "in the areas of technical regulation, application of sanitary and veterinary measures, circulation of medicines and medical devices, competition, certain aspects of trade policy, as well as in other areas of the Union's activities"<sup>36</sup>.

The relevance of the EAEU's European vector of international cooperation is already explained by the fact that "the European Union continues to be the key trade and economic partner of the Eurasian Economic Union, occupying 35.5% of EAEU imports"<sup>37</sup>. EU member states are the main buyers of goods exported from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. In 2021, trade turnover between them grew by another 40 per cent or so and is "expected to reach about \$330 billion. U.S."<sup>38</sup>. And this is far from the limit if a number of pressing problems in trade between the parties are resolved. Many of these were discussed in December 2021 during the 8th round of the EEC and EC technical dialogue, in which the parties addressed the difficulties faced by business. In particular, the conversation was about the registration of medicines and medical devices in the EAEU countries, as well as the validity of the technical regulation "On the safety of alcoholic beverages". The topics of technical regulation in the field of railway transport in the EU countries, e-commerce, development of the "single window" mechanism as a tool to simplify trade procedures were discussed. An important detail: convinced of the usefulness of the technical dialogue "both parties plan <...> to continue interaction in this format in 2022, as well as to consider the possibility of holding specialized webinars on topical issues"<sup>39</sup>.

In the same December 2021 meeting with the Association of European Businesses, issues related to free trade agreements, response to climate change, labelling, e-commerce, rules for importing certain types of goods, and

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<sup>36</sup> . Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 53-54.

<sup>37</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "Strategy-2025 meets the interests of both Eurasian and European business" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergej-glazev-%C2%ABstrategiya-2025-otvechaet-interesam-kak-evrazijskogo-tak-i-evropejskogo-biznesa%C2%BB/>

<sup>38</sup> The meeting of the management of the trade block of the Eurasian Economic Commission with the Association of European Business was held [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sostoyalas-vstrecha-rukovodstva-torgovogo-bloka-evraziyskoy-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-s-associatsiey-evropeyskogo-biznesa/>

<sup>39</sup> EEC and the European Commission held consultations on topical issues of business work [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-i-evrokomissiya-proveli-konsultatsii-po-aktualnym-voprosam-raboty-biznesa/>

determination of customs value were discussed in practical terms.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, a meeting was held in the EEC with the heads and representatives of the Russian-German Foreign Trade Chamber, the Franco-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Italian Industrialists in Russia, the Working Group for the elaboration of the initiative to create a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, where a wide range of issues of relevance to European business communities were discussed, including "in the areas of intellectual property, taxation, labour migration, regulation of the circulation of medicines and pharmaceuticals".

Among the individual EU member states with which the EAEU intends to seriously intensify co-operation in the near future is Portugal. In November 2021, the 4th Russian-Portuguese Innovation Forum "New Opportunities and Challenges in Innovation" addressed the issues of promoting high-tech products and facilitating the diversification of trade and economic ties between the EAEU and Portuguese-speaking countries. It was emphasised that "business circles in Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries are building their commercial strategies taking into account the factor of Eurasian economic integration and the opportunities associated with it"<sup>41</sup>. As a result, the forum participants were able to consider promising cooperation projects in such areas as information and communication technologies, bioenergy, agriculture, healthcare, transport infrastructure, and interregional cooperation. German business, whose representatives attended a seminar held by the EEC in September 2021, can be named among the promising EAEU partners in the European direction. The exchange of views focused on such areas of interaction as "digital agenda, green economy, customs co-operation"<sup>42</sup>. One of the outcomes of this event was the consolidated opinion of its participants on the importance of continuing the dialogue between the EAEU and German business in various formats to promote mutual trade and facilitate foreign economic activity of economic entities, as well as the creation of a dialogue mechanism to resolve disputes.

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<sup>40</sup> Ruslan Beketaev: "Direct dialogue is an effective tool of interaction between the EEC and European entrepreneurs and investors" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ruslan-beketaev-%C2%ABpryamoj-dialog-%E2%80%93-effektivnyj-instrument-%20vzaimodejstviya-eek-s-evropejskimi-predprinimateljami-i-investoram%C2%BB/>

<sup>41</sup> Gohar Barseghyan: "Portuguese business captures new opportunities in the EAEU market" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/goar-barseghyan-%C2%ABportugalskij-biznes-fiksiruets-novye-vozmozhnosti-na-rynke-eaes%C2%BB/>

<sup>42</sup> EEC held a seminar for German business on the regulation of foreign economic activity in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eek-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosam-regulirovaniya-vneshneekonomicheskoy-deyatelnosti-v-eaes/>



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

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

Intensification of economic cooperation with international organisations and foreign countries is one of the most important areas of development of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) until 2025. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as "creating conditions for joint entry of enterprises of member states into the markets of third countries..."<sup>43</sup>. In December 2022, at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek, the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2023 were approved, where, in the context of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the EAEU's priorities will promote the realisation of the export potential of the Union's countries.

As of mid-November 2022, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has already concluded "46 memorandums with international organisations, 27 memorandums with governments, ministries and agencies of third countries, 14 memorandums with regional integration and interstate associations, 7 trade agreements with third countries"<sup>44</sup>. In 2023, the EAEU will interact with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the European Union, the BRICS countries, as well as with the World Customs Organisation, the World Trade Organisation and the African Union. In this context, the development of dialogue with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) is one of the priorities of the EAEU's international activities.

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

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<sup>43</sup> Zaleskii, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

<sup>44</sup> Approved the Main directions of the EAEU international activities for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-eaes-na-2023-god/>

and investment interaction between EAEU member states and ASEAN in "the following areas: a) customs regulation and trade facilitation; b) sanitary and phytosanitary measures; c) technical regulation; d) e-commerce; e) trade in services and investment; f) entrepreneurship development, primarily for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises..." .<sup>45</sup>

A Cooperation Programme for 2020-2025 has been adopted to implement the Memorandum. It covers such areas as customs legislation and law enforcement, trade policy, business activities, technical and antimonopoly regulation, SPS measures, energy, functioning of domestic markets. All this work contributes to the growth of trade and economic co-operation of EAEU states with ASEAN countries. "In 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with ASEAN increased by 34.6 per cent to \$23.9 billion," he said. The Union's exports rose to \$10.2bn (up 53.5 per cent) and imports to \$13.7bn (up 23.3 per cent). ASEAN's share in the Union's foreign trade turnover was 2.8 per cent"<sup>46</sup>. The Parties focus on new points of growth, search for balanced solutions for successful interaction and new long-term forms of cooperation, identifying prospects for the development of scientific, technical and innovative interaction, industrial cooperation, as well as mechanisms for the exchange of practices and competences, taking into account the goals of sustainable development. In particular, the digitalisation of the economy, where the EAEU and ASEAN have their own serious developments of mutual interest, is among the promising areas of cooperation. In order to steadily increase trade, it is necessary to strengthen co-operation in the financial and banking sphere, including the use of payments in national currencies. The Eurasian Economic Union is successfully developing co-operation with the governments of a number of ASEAN countries in bilateral formats, including **Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia**.

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

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<sup>45</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the field of economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/%D1%8E%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82+%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BB.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> EAEU and ASEAN increase the volume of trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeu.Развития.nion.org/news/eaes-i-asean-narashchivayut-obemy-tovarooborota-/>.

same time, exports added 34.1 per cent and imports increased by 44.5 per cent"<sup>47</sup>. At the end of three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost half more, with EAEU exports increasing more than two and a half times. And there is confidence that the liberalisation of trade conditions may allow to increase trade turnover by at least another \$1.5 billion. In December 2022, the EAEU and Indonesia recorded an agreement to hold the first negotiating round in the first quarter of 2023, emphasising that the parties "have prospects both for agricultural goods, which traditionally make up the bulk of the Union's imports from Indonesia, and for an industrial group actively traded in both directions"<sup>48</sup>. So the potential for partnership in 2023 remains high.

If we talk about the EAEU's co-operation with **Thailand**, the first meeting of the joint working group on interaction was in November 2019. In September 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the working group, the parties stated that "at the end of the first half of this year [2021], the trade turnover of the EAEU countries with Thailand increased by 32.6% compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion". The EAEU's trade turnover with Thailand increased by 32.6 per cent compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion. The EEU's exports totalled USD 330.5 million, imports USD 907 million, and imports USD 1.2 billion. USD"<sup>49</sup>. Exports increased mainly due to the export of metals and metal products, food products and agricultural raw materials, leather raw materials, fur and fur products. And imports from Thailand increased due to increased imports of machinery, equipment and vehicles. Further development of co-operation between the parties is inextricably linked to the strengthening of ties between business circles in the field of transport infrastructure, introduction of new technologies. Bioengineering, supplies of energy resources and energy equipment, as well as agricultural products can be mentioned as promising areas.

Another ASEAN country developing interaction in the EAEU is **Cambodia**. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2016. In September 2021, following the third meeting of the working group between

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<sup>47</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2023 it is proposed to hold a business dialogue with Indonesia" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-v-ramkakh-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-foruma-v-2023-godu-predlagaetsya-provesti-bizn/>

<sup>48</sup> EAEU and Indonesia gave a start to negotiations on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-indoneziya-dali-start-peregovoram-po-soglasheniyu-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

<sup>49</sup> EAEU and Thailand are interested in developing cooperation in infrastructure, new technologies, digitalisation and green economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-tailand-zainteresovany-v-razvitiy-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-infrastruktury-novyh-tehnologiy-tsifrovizatsii-i-zelenoj-ekonomiki/>

the EEC and the Government of Cambodia, the parties expressed a strong interest in increasing trade and investment and identified such areas of cooperation as trade and investment, customs cooperation, innovation, telecommunications and information and communication technologies, industry and infrastructure, technical regulation, SPS measures, intellectual property issues. Recall that in 2020 the EAEU trade turnover with Cambodia declined for objective reasons, but already in the first half of 2021 statistics inspired cautious optimism. "Trade increased by 1.4 times compared to the same period last year [2020] and reached \$130 million. US\$130 MILLION. At the same time, growth was observed in all EAEU states"<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, the existing trade turnover does not fully reveal the full potential of cooperation between the EAEU countries and Cambodia, so the parties plan to develop dialogue and intensify trade.

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

In June 2022, the EEC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Government of the **UAE**. The EAEU considers this country as one of the most promising partners for trade and economic co-operation in the Middle East region. "According to the results of 2021, the dynamics of trade and economic co-operation between the EAEU and the UAE is positive. The trade turnover increased by 60.9% and reached \$6.3bn, while in the EAEU as a whole the foreign trade turnover increased by 35.1%"<sup>51</sup>. The parties agreed in the memorandum to increase the volume of mutual trade, as well as to implement measures aimed at removing barriers. The EEC and the UAE intend to cooperate in the areas of customs and technical regulation, application of sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary measures, financial markets, transport, industry and agro-industrial complex, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, intellectual property.

In April 2022, the parties established a joint EAEU-UAE research group to study the prospects of concluding a free trade agreement. In December 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to start negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and the UAE. The negotiations are planned to be held in an accelerated mode. The fact is that the formation of a free trade zone with the UAE will create conditions for the growth of supplies

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<sup>50</sup> ECE and the Government of Cambodia signed a joint statement on enhancing co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-pravitelstvo-kambodzh-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zayavlenie-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>51</sup> The EAEU and the UAE Government signed a Memorandum of Co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-pravitelstvo-oae-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

of more than 1,300 commodity items in both the industrial sector and the agro-industrial complex. "The relevance of multifaceted interaction is confirmed by the high interest and presence of a large number of companies of the Union's countries, including innovative ones, in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the role of this state as an international trade and transport and logistics hub. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is seen from the point of view of strengthening the positions of EAEU exporters in countries throughout the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South corridor"<sup>52</sup>.

In January 2023, the EEC, discussing with the Emirati side the issues of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU countries and the UAE, including the prospects for increasing export and import supplies and diversifying trade, invited the UAE leadership and entrepreneurs to take an active part in the Eurasian Economic Forum, which is scheduled for May 2023. Note that "according to the EEC, from 2015 to 2021, the volume of trade between the EAEU countries and the UAE increased 4 times, EAEU exports to the UAE increased 4.7 times, and EAEU imports from the UAE increased by 47 per cent. At the same time, trade turnover in the period from January to October 2022 compared to the same period in 2021 increased by a further 55%"<sup>53</sup>.

There are also plans to conclude a new comprehensive trade agreement between the EAEU and **Iran in 2023**, which will "provide an impetus for increasing mutual supplies"<sup>54</sup>. In this context, the prospects for the development of long-term mutually beneficial co-operation in transport, co-operation in industry, agriculture and food security, as well as in other areas, are impressive. A future agreement will provide a strong contractual basis for these joint plans. As for the figures, "in 2021, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran grew by 74 per cent, and in the first 10 months of 2022 - by another 25 per cent compared to the same period of the previous year"<sup>55</sup>. In

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<sup>52</sup> EAEU will start negotiations with the UAE on the conclusion of a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-nachnet-peregovory-s-oae-o-zaklyuchenii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

<sup>53</sup> Pivovarov, E. Negotiations on a free trade zone between the EAEU and the UAE are planned to be conducted in an accelerated mode [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/peregovory-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-oae-planiruetsja-vesti-v-uskorennom-rezhime-546918-2023>

<sup>54</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Today we have a serious incentive for the development of regional agreements and regional connectivity" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-segodnya-my-imeem-sereznyy-stimul-dlya-razvitiya-regionalnykh-soglasheniy-i-regionaln/>

<sup>55</sup> Andrey Slepnev discussed in Tehran the issues of finalising negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-obsudil-v-tegerane-voprosy-zaversheniya-peregovorov-po-soglasheniyu-o-zone-svobodnoy-/>

January 2023, the parties agreed on all issues to finalise negotiations and sign the agreement with the exception of mutual market access for certain categories of agricultural products, for which discussions are still ongoing, but the issue will soon be closed.

**The African Union** is another key vector of EAEU international co-operation. The EEC considers interaction with African countries, regional and sub-regional associations of this continent as an important and priority area of the EAEU's international activities, which should be intensified, first of all, with the participation of the business community. The most important tasks in this direction are to strengthen economic ties and create conditions for unlocking competitive advantages. The EEC is engaged in a dialogue with the African Union within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation of 24 October 2019. Note that "in 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with African countries increased by 21.9 per cent (to \$18.9 billion), exports by 24.0 per cent (to \$15.4 billion) and imports by 13.7 per cent (to \$3.5 billion)"<sup>56</sup>.

In the context of the EAEU's interaction with regional and subregional associations of this continent, the first working meeting of official representatives of the EEC and the **Economic Community of Central African States** (ECCAS) was held in June 2022. This is an integration association of Central African countries, established in 1983, which includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe. "The stated objectives of the organisation are to develop integration processes between member countries, to promote their comprehensive deepening with reliance on their own economic strengths, and to move towards the creation of a common market. In addition to the "classic" set of integration tasks, ECCAS is also engaged in the functions of promoting peace and stability, combating terrorism and piracy, and supporting electoral processes in the community space"<sup>57</sup>. In 2023, the parties hope to take new steps towards a more substantive dialogue aimed at practical interaction.

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<sup>56</sup> Sergey Glazhev: "I invite the African continent to co-operate with the EAEU in the creation of a new financial and economic architecture". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazhev-priglasayu-afrikanskiy-kontinent-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-eaes-v-sozdanii-novoy-finansovo->

<sup>57</sup> The Economic Community of Central African States shows interest in interaction with the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ekonomicheskoe-soobshchestvo-gosudarstv-tsentralnoy-afriki-proyavlyayet-interes-k-vzaimodeystviyu-s-e/>

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

As for **Egypt**, this country has already actively entered into negotiations with the EAEU on the creation of a free trade zone. "This African state will be the first to have a joint industrial infrastructure with the EAEU, the creation of which will become a window for the countries of the integration association to promote <...> industrial products to the countries of Africa and the Middle East"<sup>58</sup>. The signing of this agreement in the near future will open up opportunities for large-scale diversification of trade and expansion of cooperation both in traditional areas and in building new logistical and financial links, jointly addressing the issues of technological transformation, which are determined by the climate agenda and the tasks of technological sovereignty.

For reference: the EAEU's trade with Egypt "in the first half of 2021 increased by 32.5% compared to the same period last year [2020]. In particular, exports of EAEU member states to Egypt in this period increased by almost 40 per cent (from USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.95 billion), imports from Egypt to the EAEU increased by 11 per cent (from USD 437 million to USD 489 million)"<sup>59</sup>. In 2022, trade turnover increased by almost another 40 per cent. So in the near future the parties will actually be able to "make significant progress on the key issue - on the parameters of mutual reduction of import duties, as well as on the preparation of the final text of the draft agreement"<sup>60</sup>. And the plans are to increase the scale of economic co-operation between the EAEU and Egypt, which in the near future may contribute to the emergence of new joint and effective projects.

**South Africa** stands out among the countries of the African Union for its high level of development of key areas of agriculture, such as livestock breeding, fish farming, fruit and wine production. South Africa pays special attention to soil conservation and efficient farming, and applies advanced agricultural techniques. This has enabled the country to fully meet its domestic food needs. In January 2023, the EEC proposed the creation of a Eurasian

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<sup>58</sup> Zaleskii, B. With a focus on co-operation. Chronicle of international co-operation in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 24.

<sup>59</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "The EAEU and Egypt expect to hold a full-fledged round of free trade negotiations in the near future" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-caes-i-egipet-rasschityvayut-na-provedenie-polnocennogo-raunda-peregovorov-o-svobodnoy-torgovle-v-blizhayshey-perspektive/>

<sup>60</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Trade and economic relations between the EAEU and Egypt continue to develop at an accelerated pace" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnosheniya-caes-i-egipta-prodolzhayut-razvivatsya-uskorennyimi/>



industrial zone in South Africa, which could become an entry point for EAEU producers to enter the untapped markets of the African continent. The parties agreed that "in order to implement the agreements reached, the first step will be to hold consultations between representatives of the EEC and interested authorised officials of South Africa, which will allow the parties to reach a new level of exchange of successful practices of agricultural production, solving the tasks of creating modern, competitive industrial and agro-industrial complexes, and increasing the volume of mutual trade"<sup>61</sup>.

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

Another African country that intends to continue to actively engage with the EAEU in 2023 is **Ethiopia**. The Memorandum of Understanding between the parties in the field of economic co-operation was concluded in October 2019. The country is a traditional EEC partner in Africa. "The trade turnover between the EAEU member states and Ethiopia in January - October 2021 increased 4.7 times against the level of the same period in 2020. This is of particular importance in connection with plans to double trade turnover with the countries of the continent"<sup>62</sup>. It should be noted that such goods from Ethiopia as flowers, textiles, coffee and beans are traditionally in demand and competitive in the EAEU market. Apparently, in 2023, the parties intend to engage the business community in the dialogue in order to raise their awareness of the possibilities of using the EAEU's unified system of tariff preferences for developing and least developed countries, as well as certain aspects of supranational regulation within the EAEU. After all, Ethiopia is particularly attractive for investors due to the Chinese New Silk Road passing through its territory, as well as the growth rate of the Ethiopian economy. So

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<sup>61</sup> EEC and South Africa will discuss the creation of the Eurasian industrial zone in South Africa and intensify cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-i-yuar-storony-obsudyat-sozhdanie-v-yuar-evraziyskoy-promyshlennoy-zony-i-aktiviziruyut-vzaimodey/>

<sup>62</sup> EAEU and Ethiopia discussed plans for the development of cooperation for 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-efiopiya-obsudili-plany-razvitiya-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-god/>

the parties have a serious reserve for increasing trade, economic and investment co-operation.

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

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, which were adopted at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020, contain 330 measures and mechanisms to develop cooperation, grouped into 11 system blocks, the implementation of which should lead to the achievement of high results by 2025, including building a system for managing joint cooperation projects and developing high-productivity sectors, as well as harnessing the potential of cross-border arteries and logistics. "It is expected that all these measures will help to increase non-resource exports to third countries from EAEU [Eurasian Economic Union] states by a quarter by 2025 alone. This can be achieved by following the path of creating joint Eurasian companies to mutually complement each other and produce competitive products"<sup>63</sup>. In this context, it appears that the EAEU will focus on a number of specific promising Eurasian integration projects, which include the Eurasian **Agro-Express** and the Eurasian **Electric Bus**.

As a reminder, in February 2022, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council at a meeting in the capital of Kazakhstan supported the implementation of a joint project of the EAEU countries to implement accelerated rail and multimodal transport "**Eurasian Agroexpress**", aimed at increasing mutual supplies and exports of agricultural products and food, as well as its diversification. It was expected that initially regular shipments outside the EAEU would be organised to and from the Chinese and Uzbek directions. "In the future, the routes of realisation may be extended to other countries of the Asian and European regions. Regularity of shipments will make it possible to form tariffs competitive with respect to sea freight, as well as to reduce the delivery time of goods (up to 10-14 days to China and 4-7 days to Uzbekistan)"<sup>64</sup>.

In this case, we are talking primarily about supplies of oil and fat, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetable and ready-to-eat food products. Within the framework of this joint project it was planned to launch two full trains per week

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<sup>63</sup> Zaleskii, B. With the aim of sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Pivovarov, E. Prime Ministers of the EAEU approved the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" for accelerated delivery of food / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/premier-ministry-caes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-po-uskorennoj-dostavke-prodovolstvija-486781-2022/>

along the route Belarus - Russia - Kyrgyzstan - Kazakhstan - China, including trains with refrigerated containers for frozen products. The monthly volume of transportations in the direction of China may reach about 10 thousand tonnes. The coordinator in this project is ANO Eurasian Agrologistics, and participation in it was confirmed by Bremino Group LLC (Belarus), KTZ Express JSC (Kazakhstan), NC KTZ (Kyrgyzstan), RZD Logistics JSC (Russia), and Slavtrans-Service JSC (Russia).

The Belarusian side, noting "the importance of the Eurasian Agroexpress project for food exports"<sup>65</sup>, expects to use it to increase food supplies, primarily to China. The fact is that today the carriers of products from Belarus "are mainly Chinese companies"<sup>66</sup>. The launch of this project will provide another profitable opportunity in this regard. Especially since the Celestial Empire market has traditionally been one of the main areas of Belarusian food export development. "In 2021, \$366.1 million worth of products were exported to China (47.9% growth by 2020). At the same time, in 2016, exports of food products to China totalled \$18.8 million. The main share in the formation of export growth is occupied by beef in cut form, milk powder and whey, chocolate and confectionery products, whole milk and other products"<sup>67</sup>. Supplies of starch, fruit jams and jellies, flour confectionery and pasta products, cereal flakes and butter have also increased. Moreover, 119 accredited Belarusian enterprises have already received the right to supply agricultural products to the Chinese market. All this indicates that there are considerable prospects for diversifying the commodity flows of Belarusian exports not only of meat and dairy products, but also of sugar, vegetable oil, and fish products.

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

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<sup>65</sup> Industrial cooperation, import substitution, food safety: Golovchenko on the key tasks of the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-importozameschenie-prodbezopasnost-golovchenko-o-kljuchevyh-zadachah-eaes-486890-2022/>

<sup>66</sup> Belarus expects to increase food supplies to China with the launch of "Eurasian Agroexpress" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspressa-486858-2022/>

<sup>67</sup> Brylo, I. Sustainable demand in the country and abroad: Belarus is increasing food supplies to all regions of the world / I. Brylo // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ustojchivyy-spros-v-strane-i-za-rubezhom-belarus-narashchivaet-postavki-prodovolstvija-vo-vse-regiony-mira-8088/>

Central Asian country was granted observer state status in the EAEU in December 2020. And "in 2016-2021, Uzbekistan's total trade turnover with EAEU member states increased more than 2.5 times: from \$4.5bn to \$11.6bn"<sup>68</sup>.

As for Belarus, it is agriculture that is one of the most promising areas in the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Uzbekistan. Suffice it to say that "in 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018"<sup>69</sup>. The positive dynamics of mutual trade continued in the following years. Thus, in 2021, Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$300 million and "increased by 7.8% by the level of 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>70</sup>. The main items of Belarusian exports included meat and meat products, milk powder, cheese and cottage cheese. Undoubtedly, the current dynamics of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the area of food and agricultural products suggests that the joint project of the EAEU countries "Eurasian Agroexpress" may become a very timely and effective tool for Minsk and Tashkent to diversify export supplies.

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

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<sup>68</sup> Pivovarov, E. Eurasian Intergovernmental Council supported the expansion of Uzbekistan's participation in the EAEU projects / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/evrazijskij-mezhpravsovet-podderzhal-rasshirenie-uchastie-uzbekistana-v-proektah-eaes-486888-2022/>

<sup>69</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority of cooperation - agriculture / B.L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern european science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Golovchenko: there are prerequisites for increasing trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-est-predposylki-dlja-naraschivaniya-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-uzbekistanom-486939-2022/>

corridor to work, it requires the full-scale involvement of all member states"<sup>71</sup>

It should be noted that due to the reorientation of a number of transport routes, the demand for the North-South corridor is growing significantly. Pilot shipments to Iran and India made under the project have confirmed the attractiveness of the direction. The EAEU countries here have great potential to expand their transit and export potential. All the more so because the exceeding of the Eurasian Agro Express' targets for the first year of its operation is very encouraging. "A total of 525,500 tonnes were transported under the project in 2022, including 282,900 tonnes of refrigerated cargo. The nomenclature of goods included chicken and beef meat, milk powder, oil and fats, fruit and vegetable and grain legume products"<sup>72</sup>. Even in spite of China's restrictions on product shipments due to the pandemic, multimodal transportations to this country were very active.

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

But on the whole, during the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian Agroexpress", its participants are already reaching common parameters, a common approach to this issue. This means the point of collection and the localisation of loading. After all, EAEU partners from third countries have their own special requirements. That is why the project participants must be faultless, supply perfect and at the same time meeting all the requirements of the receiving party products and at the same time it is necessary to ensure the seamless passage of such a container train at all stages. "It has to be ready for dispatch at a specific time at a specific place. Therefore,

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<sup>71</sup> Golovchenko: full-scale involvement of the EAEU countries in the work of the North-South corridor [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-nuzhno-polnomasshtabnoe-vovlechenie-stran-eaes-v-rabotu-koridora-sever-jug-548158-2023/>

<sup>72</sup> Pivovarov, E. The project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will include transportations to Turkmenistan, Iran, UAE and India / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-vkljuchat-perevozki-v-turkmenistan-iran-oae-i-indiju-548163-2023/>

we need to synchronise the processes. This will ensure predictability of train formation, fulfilment of plans"<sup>73</sup>. And at the head of the corner - serving the interests of manufacturers and enterprises that are engaged in transport and logistics schemes.

Important detail: in September 2022, the Eurasian Agroexpress project directorate - ANO Eurasian Agrologistics - and the Russian Trading Company (RTC) in China, Hua No E Xiang, signed a co-operation agreement, which sets out a common legal framework for practical assistance in the development of foreign trade in EAEU food products at the so-called "last mile", within the contour of the Chinese sales market, including a wide range of services that can be provided to suppliers from the "five" countries. The parties "agreed to jointly work out demanded trade services in conjunction with the transport and logistics complex of services, including the organisation of fast and affordable transport of goods in containers, providing for multimodal solutions, assistance in search, selection and negotiations with the Chinese buyer, gradual transition to a digital format and the provision of a range of services in the mode "from supplier to counter"<sup>74</sup>. The projected annual traffic volume of the Eurasian Agro Express project was expected to be around 500,000 tonnes by the beginning of 2023. The observed growth in sales volume in 2022 allowed the project's logistics operators to dispatch scheduled route trains with long-term competitive tariff rates on an almost daily basis. So the first results of this project in the EAEU are already encouraging.

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

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<sup>73</sup> Legal relations in the currency sphere, common industrial policy and "Eurasian Agroexpress": what is discussed in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravootnosheniya-v-valjutnoj-sfere-edinaja-prompolitika-i-evrazijskij-agroekspres-cto-obsuzhdajut-v-547995-2023/>

<sup>74</sup> Trade instrument of the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will be the Russian trading company in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/torgovym-instrumentom-proekta-evrazijskiy-agroekspres-stanet-rossijskaya-torgovaya-kompaniya-v-kita/>

equipment, construction and road, special, municipal equipment"<sup>75</sup>. In 2023, another interesting project in terms of import substitution should find its "face" in the EAEU.

The EEC industrial block has started work on the implementation of the pilot project of industrial cooperation "Eurasian Electric Bus", which was initiated by the Belarusian side. The project "is aimed at maximising the import-independence of the Union and involving as many industrial enterprises of the Union's member states as possible in the cooperation process"<sup>76</sup>.

The decision to launch the Eurasian Electric Bus pilot project was made in mid-July 2022 at a meeting of the EEC Council. "At the first stage, lists of critical components, assemblies and materials for the production of electric buses and companies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries with the necessary own production and technological potential will be formed"<sup>77</sup>. This will not only create a basis for the full-scale launch of the project, but also assess the possibility of reorienting and adapting the production of units and components designed for other types of passenger vehicles - buses, trolleybuses - for their further use in electric buses.

In early September 2022, a decision was made to form a special working group comprising representatives of state authorities of the Union's countries, manufacturers of electric-powered vehicles and automotive components, as well as academia of the member states. In October 2022, representatives of the EAEU countries discussed the approaches to the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian electric bus" at an off-site meeting of the expert group in the field of automotive industry under the EEC Advisory Committee on Industry, held at the site of the Belarusian holding Belkommunmash. The members of the expert group confirmed their interest in the development of electric transport in the EAEU countries, noting "the need to focus on organising the production of critical components, units and materials for the production of electric buses, such as traction motors and their control systems, energy storage systems, and bridges. It is proposed to consider setting up in the EAEU the

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<sup>75</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC proposes to conclude a separate agreement on import substitution in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/EEK-predlagaet-zakljuchit-v-eaes-otdelnyj-dogovor-po-voprosam-importozameshenija-548223-2023/>

<sup>76</sup> Golovchenko: it is necessary to work on achieving technological sovereignty within the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-neobhodimo-rabotat-nad-dostizheniem-tehnologicheskogo-suvereniteta-v-ramkah-eaes-548144-2023/>

<sup>77</sup> Pivovar, E. Implementation of the pilot project "Eurasian electric bus" started in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/realizatsija-pilotnogo-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-nachalas-v-eaes-521716-2022/>



production of cells for high-voltage batteries used in electric transport"<sup>78</sup>. In addition, an agreement was reached for the Belarusian side to send a list of investment projects being developed in Belarus in this area for consideration by EAEU experts in order to analyse specific proposals for the implementation of joint projects for the production of components for electric buses.

The proposal was actively supported at the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Yerevan in October 2022. After all, the implementation of the Belarusian initiative and the resolution of financing issues, both funding and preferential treatment, should launch "an irreversible process of further development of the industrial sphere and the real sector of the economy in our states on the principles of technological sovereignty. Eurasian integration should first of all ensure the interests of industrial enterprises, domestic businesses of the real sector of the economy"<sup>79</sup>. The implementation of this project with relatively cheap credit resources will create strong co-operation chains between the EAEU member states and develop the relevant competences. It is clear that "electric transport means highly productive jobs, so everyone will benefit from it"<sup>80</sup>.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Almaty, a discussion was held at which it was noted that "the possible details of the implementation of this project are currently being worked out at the EEC. We need not only to identify partners for co-operation (such proposals from Belarus have already been received), but also to prepare all the necessary documents so that in the future these projects could qualify for some benefits in terms of financing"<sup>81</sup>. At the next meeting of the EEC Council with the participation of deputy prime ministers of the EAEU countries, which took place in February 2023, the recommendation "On measures to develop co-operation between the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the formation and implementation of projects in the field of electric vehicle construction" was approved.

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<sup>78</sup> Pivovar, E. Experts of the EAEU countries discussed the implementation of the project "Eurasian electric bus" at Belkommunmash / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-stran-eaes-obsudili-na-belkommunmashe-realizatsiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-528846-2022/>

<sup>79</sup> Golovchenko: projects to create an innovative product under the Eurasian brand should be more [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-proektov-po-sozdaniyu-innovatsionnogo-produkta-pod-evrazijskim-brendom-dolzno-byt-bolshe-530593-2022/>

<sup>80</sup> About \$20 million per year will be allocated to support co-operation projects in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-20-mln-v-god-budut-napravljat-na-podderzhku-kooperatsionnyh-proektov-v-eaes-530531-2022/>

<sup>81</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC discusses the details of the project "Eurasian electric bus" initiated by Belarus / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-obsuzhdaet-detalizatsii-sirovannogo-belarusiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-548208-2023/>

This document lays down the main basic approaches to cooperation between the Member States for the development of electric transport production in the Union and measures to launch specific joint projects for the production of components. The recommendation also fixes the formed Lists of critical components and organisations with the necessary production potential. "First of all, it is necessary to develop competences in electric bus construction, since such products are already manufactured in most countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and demand for them is stimulated mainly through government procurement <...> Further work in this area will continue, but the main focus is planned to be on the formation of potential cooperation projects with the development of the possibility of subsidising interest rates on loans at the expense of the Commission's funds"<sup>82</sup>. In addition, during the elaboration of this issue, Belarus made proposals to consider the experience of Member States in the construction of charging centres, including chargers for charging electric buses, electric trucks and electric cars. Additionally, this issue will be worked out on the platform of the Commission on Cooperation and Import Substitution in priority and high-tech industries within the Union. And if necessary, the possibility of creating a joint co-operation project by the interested member states will be considered. So the Belarusian project "Eurasian Electric Bus" is already really starting its journey.

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<sup>82</sup> The EEC Council approved measures to develop co-operative cooperation of the EAEU countries in electric vehicle construction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sovet-EEK-odobril-mery-po-razvitiyu-koooperatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-eaes-v-elektromobilestroev/>

## Belarus - Russia: A factor of trust and co-operation

Direct partnership ties between the regions of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation in the September (2021) joint statement of the Prime Ministers of the two countries called an increasingly important factor of mutual trust and economic cooperation within the Union State. The following fact speaks volumes in this regard: "About 80 regions participate in this interregional co-operation on the part of Russia"<sup>83</sup>.

One of its active participants is **Astrakhan Oblast**, which signed the Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation with the Republic of Belarus back in May 1999, and in December 2021 adopted a new 3-year plan of joint actions with the Belarusian side for its implementation for 2022-2024. It should be noted that the adoption of the new 3-year plan of joint actions took place at a time of very positive development of bilateral relations between the Republic and the region. After all, "the trade turnover between Belarus and Astrakhan Oblast in January-September of this [2021] year totalled \$23.1 million, which is almost 29% more than in the same period of 2020"<sup>84</sup>. The bulk of Belarusian exports to the Russian region were chipboard, household appliances, machinery and devices for lifting, moving, loading and unloading, wool, and plastic construction parts. For example, only "shipments of uncoated paper and paperboard in the first nine months of this [2021] year increased 11.7 times over the same period last year."<sup>85</sup>. The dealer network of Belarusian enterprises, including Minsk automobile and tractor plants, Gomselmash, Bobruiskagromash, AMKODOR, and "work is underway to create a MTZ trade and service centre, which is planned to be put into operation in 2022"<sup>86</sup>. In addition, a chain of Belarusian footwear shops "Belvest", a salon of Belarusian furniture "Megapolis", five specialised shops "Belarusian Products" are successfully operating in Astrakhan. Another "about

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<sup>83</sup> Zalessky, B. Partnership orientation - success. Chronicle of multi-vector interaction / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 15.

<sup>84</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to strengthen trade and economic ties with Russian regions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10081>

<sup>85</sup> Governor: Astrakhan Oblast and Belarus are linked by long-standing partnership relations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gubernator-astrahanskiju-oblast-s-belarusju-svjazyvajut-mnogoletnie-partnerskie-otnoshenija-472693-2021/>

<sup>86</sup> Governor of the Astrakhan region: we attribute successes in agriculture to the use of Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/gubernator-astrahanskij-oblasti-uspehi-v-selskom-hozjajstve-my-svjazyvaem-s-ispolzovaniem-belorusskoj-472691-2021/>

3500 trade enterprises sell Belarusian-made goods in the region - linen, cosmetics, clothes, bedding, household chemicals" .<sup>87</sup>

The new 3-year joint action plan signed in December 2021, according to the parties, should give a new impetus to bilateral co-operation and will identify steps to further deepen co-operation in the most significant and strategic areas. In particular, the document contains specific measures "to increase trade turnover, joint activities in the agro-industrial complex and the use of innovative technologies"<sup>88</sup> . Thus, one of the clauses deals with the use of Belarusian experience in the organisation of urban public transport, road traffic and passenger transportation, automation of transport management and cashless fare payment, which is very relevant for the Russian region today. The experience of Belarus in the use of modern technologies of production and laying of asphalt-concrete mixtures, as well as in the restoration of operational characteristics of the rain drainage system will also be introduced in the Astrakhan region. Agricultural machinery and lift equipment are also promising areas of cooperation.

In addition, at the December (2021) meeting of the working group on cooperation between the republic and the region, the Astrakhan side made a proposal to Belarusian partners to "take advantage of the opportunities of the international transport corridor North-South. A new container terminal in the sea port of Olya will become a part of it"<sup>89</sup> . The fact is that the North-South International Transport Corridor links the Scandinavian countries and the north-western part of the Eurasian Economic Union with the states of Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. It includes railway, road and inland waterway transport infrastructure, seaports on the Caspian Sea, including Astrakhan, Persian Gulf ports, road and railway checkpoints, and international airports. The main advantage of the North-South ITC compared to other routes, including through the Suez Canal, is a significant reduction in the time it takes to transport goods - from 30 to 45 days. At the same time, the port of Olya, located at the mouth of the Volga River, is one of the most promising Caspian ports. It already operates on Turkmen and Iranian routes. "In the future, ferry communication with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will be

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<sup>87</sup> Zhilkin, A. Realisation of joint projects requires thorough elaboration / A. Zhilkin // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: information-integration project / compiled, interviewing: K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zalesky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 81.

<sup>88</sup> Belarus and Astrakhan Oblast signed a plan of joint actions for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-astrahanskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-na-2022-2024-gody-472832-2021/>

<sup>89</sup> Astrakhan region offered Belarus to use the port of Olya for exports to South-East Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/astrahanskaja-oblast-predlozila-belarusi-ispolzovat-port-olja-dlja-eksporta-v-jugo-vostochnuju-aziju-472703-2021/>

developed"<sup>90</sup>. That is why now new cargo flows are being actively attracted here, new technological complexes are being created here to process cargoes that are still going by other routes. The successful implementation of this port on the Caspian Sea is also facilitated by the fact that it is located on the territory of the special economic zone "Lotos", which provides favourable conditions for the implementation of investment projects in a wide range of areas in the field of industrial production and transport support. Thus, the offer from the interregional co-operation partners from Astrakhan Oblast looks very promising and promising for Belarusian business entities.

**The Republic of Bashkortostan** is another Russian region whose plans include intensifying interaction with Belarus in the near future. In December 2021, a meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation between the parties was held, at which its participants discussed possible interaction in the main areas of trade and economic cooperation - agriculture, machine building, machine tools, and construction. It should be reminded that Belarus and Bashkortostan signed the Agreement on trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural co-operation back in June 1999. Since then, "Bashkortostan sees the potential for co-operation with Belarus in those activities where it is possible to get the maximum practical effect from the union integration. This concerns, first of all, the petrochemical, machine-building and agro-industrial complexes, robotics and electronics"<sup>91</sup>. And it should be recognised that for more than twenty years of partnership ties Belarus and Bashkortostan have made significant progress in many areas. In particular, assembly plants of MTZ tractors, Gomselmash and Lidselmash combine harvesters, Bobruiskagromash machinery, trolleybuses made of MAZ machine kits, and 14 enterprises established with the participation of Belarusian capital are currently operating in this Russian region.

As for mutual trade, we note that although "Belarus ranks third in terms of trade turnover with Bashkortostan, second only to China and Kazakhstan, the opportunities for intensifying mutual trade are far from being exhausted"<sup>92</sup>. Indeed, the best indicators of trade turnover were achieved by the parties in 2018 - almost 750 million dollars. In 2020, this figure was expressed by the

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<sup>90</sup> Vinokurov, E. International transport corridor "North-South": creation of transport framework of Eurasia. Report 21/5. / E. Vinokurov, A. Akhunbaev, M. Shashkenov, A. Zaboev. - Almaty, Moscow: Eurasian Development Bank, 2021. - C. 28-29.

<sup>91</sup> Zalesky, B. International relations and media. Features of multi-vector international co-operation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 90-91.

<sup>92</sup> Development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will contribute to the growth of mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusju-i-bashkortostanom-posposobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

value of almost 427 million dollars, and for the three quarters of 2021 - just over 280 million dollars. At the same time, "for 10 months. 2021 exports of Belarusian products to the Republic of Bashkortostan amounted to \$122.4 million or 107 per cent of the same period last year"<sup>93</sup>. The main supplies from Belarus were refrigerators, freezers and refrigeration equipment, cookers, sheets and films of plastics, cheese and cottage cheese. In addition, in January - September 2021, "the supplies of wood-fibreboard (almost 14 times compared to the same period last year), consoles, tables and panels for electrical equipment (10 times) increased significantly"<sup>94</sup>. In general, the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" increased their exports to this region of Russia by more than a quarter - almost to two million dollars. "Among the new types of products that began to be supplied to Bashkortostan in the current [2021] year are wallpaper. The Belarusian Wallpaper Holding has signed a long-term contract with a company from Ufa for the supply of wallpaper products of various assortment"<sup>95</sup>.

Given the existing dynamics of cooperation, the parties agreed in December 2021 to intensify work in a number of areas in order to restore the pre-crisis trade turnover as soon as possible, and in the long term to increase it to one billion dollars, based on several priorities. "The first is the expansion of co-operative cooperation of industrial enterprises in the field of supplies of specialised and truck equipment. The second direction is interaction in the sphere of agro-industrial complex and participation in the technical modernisation of Bashkortostan's agro-industrial complex"<sup>96</sup>. In the same line is the expansion of co-operation in petrochemicals and construction, including road construction. And the prospects here, it must be said, are considerable. In particular, the Russian region, where the area of arable land is seven million hectares and where only Belarusian wheeled tractors are assembled at the Bashselkhoztekhnika enterprise, is in urgent need of caterpillar-based machinery - "we need caterpillar tractors - not dozens, but hundreds"<sup>97</sup>. As a

<sup>93</sup> The head of Bashkortostan with a large delegation visited Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/ufa/news/f288069d32f80b7a.html>

<sup>94</sup> "Neither kovid nor sanctions scare us". Bashkortostan intends to deepen cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nas-ne-pugajut-ni-kovid-ni-sanktsii-bashkortostan-nameren-uglubljat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-473499-2021/>

<sup>95</sup> Export of the enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" to Bashkortostan in January-October increased by 27% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predpriyatij-bellesbumproma-v-bashkortostan-v-janvare-oktjabre-vyros-na-27-473805-2021/>

<sup>96</sup> Equipment supplies, agro-industrial complex and petrochemistry: Roman Golovchenko outlined the priorities in cooperation with Bashkortostan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10091>

<sup>97</sup> Bashkortostan wants to expand the assembly of Belarusian tractors and is interested in drones [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-hochet-rasshirit-sborku-belorusskih-tractorov-i-zainteresovalsja-bespilotnikami-473514-2021/>

result, the issue of possible assembly of Belarusian caterpillar tractors on Bashkir territory has already been put into practice.

Another promising topic concerns motorways, the total length of which in this Russian region exceeds 50 thousand kilometres, and Bashkortostan ranks second in Russia in terms of the extensive network of local roads. All major federal highways pass through here. It is planned to start reconstruction of a section of the Kazan - Yekaterinburg motorway running through the Bashkir land. And in this regard, they are interested in the Belarusian experience of using cement concrete pavements, which was launched in our country in 2014. At that time, the first object was the second ring road around Minsk, and then two more artificial runways - at the National Airport and Orsha. Bashkortostan firmly intends to develop cement-concrete road construction and is ready to intensify co-operation in this direction with partners from Belarus. Besides, taking into account the fact that the inter-repair periods of cement-concrete roads are much longer than those of asphalt-concrete roads, the Bashkir side expressed its interest in co-operation with Belarusian specialists "not only in the construction of federal roads of the highest class, but also in the restoration of regional roads with gravel and crushed stone pavement, which require improvement of their operational characteristics"<sup>98</sup>. And, to all appearances, the Belarusian holding Belavtodor is already ready to share the experience of its organisations with its Bashkir partners in these matters. Note that all these facts are only part of the agreements that were reached in December 2021 within the framework of more than 200 meetings of business people in Minsk to develop co-operation between Belarus and Bashkortostan.

In January 2022, the **Republic of Tyva**, a Russian region located in the south of Eastern Siberia and home to 330,000 people, also made a significant bid to significantly intensify interaction with Belarus. It is clear that geographical remoteness brings its own adjustments to the implementation of joint projects of the parties. This is evidenced by the volume of trade and economic co-operation between Belarus and Tyva, which amounted to about \$275 thousand in 2020, and even less in the first 11 months of 2021 - only \$47.5 thousand. "The basis of supplies from our republic [Belarus] was the supply of machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading or unloading,

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<sup>98</sup> Bashkortostan is interested in studying the Belarusian experience of road maintenance [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izuchenii-belorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjajstva-473566-2021/>

metal structures made of ferrous metals, corsetry products and women's knitwear"<sup>99</sup>.

The issue of the need to intensify cooperation between the parties was raised three years ago - in December 2018 - at a meeting of the Tyva administration with representatives of the Belarusian distribution network in the region, where it was noted that "there are 70 BELAZ dump trucks in operation at the enterprises of the Republic of Tyva, moreover, the region has a serious potential for further expansion of the fleet of this equipment"<sup>100</sup>. And in January 2022, during the first visit of the head of the Russian region V. Khovaly to Belarus, these intentions began to take quite concrete shape.

Minsk sees the prospects for the development of these partnerships in the near future as a serious increase in trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva. Especially since there is a lot of potential in this respect: from supplies of modern Belarusian road, municipal, construction, logging, and passenger equipment to the Russian region to the implementation of joint projects "in the agro-industrial sphere, in the field of water supply and drainage, design of housing and social facilities"<sup>101</sup>. In particular, one of the concrete results of the visit of the representative delegation of Tyva to Belarus was the agreement that with the help of the Belarusian side a dairy farm will be built in the region, which will be "equipped with Belarusian-made equipment and Belarusian cattle. It is planned to implement the project within a year, and then this experience can be replicated"<sup>102</sup>, in order to fully meet the region's demand for milk and dairy products by creating its own base. The Belarusian side has already expressed its readiness to transfer the project documentation for the construction of small dairy farms - approximately for 200 heads - with subsequent completion of these facilities with Belarusian milking and refrigeration equipment. It should be noted in this connection that Belarus already has a good experience of co-operation with Siberian regions in the agricultural sector. Suffice it to say that "in the Siberian Federal District, of

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<sup>99</sup> Agriculture, industry, tourism: Grodno region and the Republic of Tyva signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-industrija-turizm-grodnenskaja-oblast-i-respublika-tyva-podpisali-protokol-o-480420-2022/>

<sup>100</sup> The Republic of Belarus and the Tyva Republic of the Russian Federation plan to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/krasnoyarsk/news/98cd50c57373.html>

<sup>101</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to increase trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10135>

<sup>102</sup> Belarus will help Tyva in the construction of a dairy farm [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovarnoj-fermy-480369-2022/>



which Tyva is a part, Belarus [in 2021] supplied over \$100 million worth of agricultural products"<sup>103</sup>.

Another promising area is the IT sphere. The fact is that the partners from Tyva were very interested in the Belarusian experience related to the system of training IT-specialists, where IT-education programmes are implemented at all levels - from universities to kindergartens. As a result, following the meeting at the High Technology Park in Minsk, "points of interaction between the two sides were found, which is especially important for the Russian delegation on the eve of the opening of its own IT park, scheduled for the next [2023] year"<sup>104</sup>.

Among Belarusian regions, Grodno Region has a great interest in co-operation with the Republic of Tyva. In January 2022, the parties discussed possible joint projects in agriculture, "as the Tyva administration plans to triple its share in the gross regional product. In addition, it is possible that Belarusian specialists will participate in the development of infrastructure of the Ak-Sug mining and processing plant under construction"<sup>105</sup>. Apparently, the dialogue between the parties will be continued in late June 2022 at the 9th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which will be held in Hrodna, where all the agreements reached in January can be formalized in the form of a corresponding agreement.

In January 2022, the Gomel Region signed a protocol on cooperation intentions with the Republic of Tyva to actively develop mutually beneficial ties in various spheres. The immediate plans here include providing the Russian region with Gomselmash machinery, as well as the development of high technologies, including in livestock breeding. The fact is that in Gomel region there is an enterprise "Agrokomplekt", which designs dairy equipment, dairy farms "with different volumes of milk production and different capacities - from 200 to 1200 heads with different milking rates"<sup>106</sup>. It is quite possible that it will become an active participant in this interregional cooperation to support the implementation of projects in Tyva from the moment of design to the launch of the farm.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> The Republic of Tyva is interested in the Belarusian experience of training IT-specialists [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/respublika-tyva-zainteresovana-v-belorusskom-opyte-podgotovki-it-spetsialistov-481053-2022/>

<sup>105</sup> Karanik on co-operation with the Republic of Tyva: it is necessary to turn the potential into concrete projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/karanik-o-sotrudnichestve-s-respublikoj-tyva-nado-prevratit-potentsial-v-konkretnye-proekty-480387-2022/>

<sup>106</sup> Economy, technology, agro-industrial complex: Gomel region and the Republic of Tyva intend to develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ekonomika-tehnologii-apk-gomelskaja-oblast-i-respublika-tyva-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-480782-2022/>

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

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 in November 2017. In this document, the parties outlined the realisation of a qualitatively new stage in their bilateral relations. At the end of June 2021, during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to this Central Asian country, a task corresponding to this new stage was announced - to "reach new indicators in mutual trade - more than \$1bn in goods and services per year"<sup>107</sup> .

In February 2022, summarising the results of the past year, the parties stated at a high level that Belarusian-Kazakh trade turnover exceeded one billion dollars for the first time in history. To be absolutely precise, it "totalled \$1,092.5 billion and increased by 31.9% compared to the same period last year [2020], exports - \$911.8 million (up 25%). The balance is positive - \$731.1 million"<sup>108</sup> . Belarusian supplies were based on a variety of food products - fresh or chilled beef, condensed and dried milk and cream, cheese and cottage cheese, sausages and similar meat products, sugar, as well as parts of rolling stock, combine harvesters, furniture and its parts. The commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in Kazakhstan includes more than 40 companies, as well as more than 170 entities of the dealer network. There are also a number of joint assembly plants for Belarusian machinery and equipment.

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

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

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<sup>107</sup> Zaleskii , B.L. With an eye on trade and production co-operation / B.L. Zaleskii// Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Dynamika naukowych badań - 2021", Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 21.

<sup>108</sup> Golovchenko: trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2021 for the first time exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kazachstana-v-2021-godu-vpervye-prevysil-1-mlrd-486829-2022/>

in the industrial zone in Kostanai, the construction of a workshop for manufacturing of unified cabins with a production capacity of up to 10 thousand units per year has been completed. "The parties are studying the possibility of organising the production of not only elements and units of tractor equipment, but also machine tools, engines for tractor equipment, diesel generators, pumping units, optical products"<sup>109</sup>.

As for new prospects for cooperation, the production of fire trucks based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant and the Pozhsnab enterprise is being discussed. This is a new promising niche that needs to be filled with Belarusian equipment. In general, "we can increase mutual supplies with Kazakhstan by \$200 million"<sup>110</sup>. The experience of Minsk Motor Plant (MMZ), whose trading house was opened in early 2022 in Kazakhstan and which successfully sells Belarusian engines, special equipment and spare parts with increasing indicators, is interesting in this regard. In this context, in October 2022, MMZ took part in the KazAgro-2022 international exhibition, which is the largest and most visited in Central Asia. The goal of the Belarusian company at the forum is "to expand business and commercial prospects, opportunities to promote products, and increase brand recognition"<sup>111</sup>. For the same purpose, in September 2022 in Astana, more than 30 Belarusian business entities took part in international specialised exhibitions on mechanical engineering and metalworking, as well as on the manufacturing industry. Collective stands were "presented by enterprises of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Education, individual stands were presented by Minsk Tractor Plant and machine-tool enterprises"<sup>112</sup>. This suggests that new projects in Belarusian-Kazakh industrial co-operation are on the way.

In the agro-industrial sector, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan confirmed its interest in building a 1200-head dairy farm on Kazakh soil, where "Belarusian technologies, materials, equipment and dairy cattle will be used.

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<sup>109</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Kazakhstan need to move forward in the field of industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarusi-i-kazahstanu-nuzhno-dvigatsja-dalshe-v-oblasti-promkooperatsii-531879-2022/>

<sup>110</sup> Snopkov: The basis of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan is production cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-bazoj-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kazahstana-javljaetsja-proizvodstvennaja-kooperatsija-506651-2022/>

<sup>111</sup> Minsk Motor Plant presented its products at the exhibition in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-predstavil-produktsiju-na-vystavke-v-kazahstane-528774-2022/>

<sup>112</sup> More than 30 Belarusian enterprises participate in industry exhibitions in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-belorusskikh-predpriyatij-uchastvujut-v-vystavkah-promyshlennosti-v-kazahstane-525159-2022/>

The work will start this year and will continue in 2023"<sup>113</sup>. Belarus continues to study the creation of veterinary drugs production in Kazakhstan to meet the needs of both the domestic market and prospective exports to third countries. BelVitinopharm will participate in this project on the Belarusian side. In addition, the Kazakh side expressed interest in supplies of Belarusian mixed fodders, premixes, amino acids, and in switching to potato seeds of Belarusian selection.

The Belarusian and Kazakh partners are also planning several projects in the construction sector in the near future. "Among them there are symmetrical ones - the construction of a Belarusian neighbourhood in Astana and a Kazakh neighbourhood in Minsk. <...> At this stage, the plan is to determine the land plots and concept, to attract state developers"<sup>114</sup>. Another project is the joint production of ceramic tiles. Kazakhstan has a lot of mineral resources, so it is planned to create a production facility with the involvement of Belarusian specialists and technologies.

Another interesting fact: Belarus and Kazakhstan are also planning to develop freight transport by railway. In October 2022, a Belarus-Kazakhstan round table was held in Astana, where more than 80 participants, including about 40 Kazakh companies from the mining, oil, chemical, gas, metallurgical and agricultural industries, carriers and transport and logistics companies of the country, as well as representatives of Belarusian forestry, woodworking and food industries, transport and freight forwarding companies, discussed the prospects for the development of existing projects and current transport and logistics solutions for long-distance transport. At the same time, "considerable attention was paid to the issues of unimpeded passage of cargo from Belarus to Kazakhstan, as well as to China in transit through Kazakhstan, including as part of container trains"<sup>115</sup>.

Interregional co-operation is another important component of Belarusian-Kazakh bilateral interaction. Let us recall that "there are about 30 agreements between the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan"<sup>116</sup>. Among the

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<sup>113</sup> Production of veterinary preparations and construction of MTFs. How Belarus and Kazakhstan will co-operate in agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/produzvodstvo-vetpreparatov-i-stroitelstvo-mtf-kak-budut-sotrudnichat-belarus-i-kazakhstan-v-apk-531987-2022/>

<sup>114</sup> Belarusian quarter in Astana, Kazakh quarter in Minsk. What new projects are discussed in construction [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-kvartal-v-astane-kazahstanskij-v-minske-kakie-novye-proekty-obsuzhdajut-v-stroitelstve-531980-2022/>

<sup>115</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan plan to develop freight traffic by railway [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazakhstan-planirujut-razvivat-gruzoperevozki-po-zheleznoj-doroge-530740-2022/>

<sup>116</sup> Zaleskii, B. The goal is stable growth. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskyy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 52.

Belarusian participants of this effective interaction is **Minsk Region**, whose trade turnover with Kazakhstan in 2021 increased by another 7.5 per cent to \$190 million. At the same time, "exports accounted for almost \$180 million, with a growth rate of 107.2 per cent. In foreign trade there was a surplus of almost \$170 million. The volume of foreign direct investment from Kazakhstan was more than \$1.2 million, or 137.2 per cent of the 2020 level"<sup>117</sup>. Karaganda and Pavlodar regions are among the active Kazakh partners of the Belarusian capital region.

Thus, the agreement on cooperation between Minsk **Region** and **Karaganda Region** was signed back in 1996 and included measures on cooperation in industry, agriculture, healthcare, and education. In June 2013, in this Kazakh region began its work LLP "JV KazBelAZ" - a joint venture for overhaul of units and assemblies, production of spare parts and manufacture of machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant. "The production is based at Karaganda Foundry and Machine Building Plant (KLMZ) - a branch of Kazakhmys Corporation LLP"<sup>118</sup>. This JV became one of the largest in the State Programme of Forced Industrial and Innovative Development and was included in the Map of Industrialisation of Kazakhstan for 2010-2014. The first Belarusian dump truck was assembled in Karaganda in August 2013 by "Karaganda automobile masters who were trained at the Belarusian plant"<sup>119</sup>. And in October 2021, the parties have already discussed the establishment of a joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the Karaganda region. At that time, "21 joint ventures were already operating in the Kazakh region. Among them is a company for the assembly of dump trucks, repair and maintenance of BelAZ equipment"<sup>120</sup>. Apparently, this interaction can be further expanded, as the region is interested in attracting Belarusian companies and is ready to create favourable conditions for them so that they could "take part in the implementation of agricultural projects, construction of schools. Co-operation in the IT sphere is also possible"<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> Turchin discussed with Beisenbayev the development of cooperation between Minsk region and Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-beisenbayevym-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-minskoj-oblastju-i-kazahstanom-486296-2022/>

<sup>118</sup> Potylitsyn, S. The process of regular evolution / S. Potylitsyn // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://kazpravda.kz/n/protsess-zakonomernoy-evolyutsii/>

<sup>119</sup> Akhmetova, A. Karaganda residents assembled the first Belarusian dump truck / A. Akhmetova // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <https://www.altyn-orda.kz/karagandincy-sobrali-pervyj-belorusskij-samosval/>

<sup>120</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan can launch joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the territory of Karaganda region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. -

[https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus\\_i\\_kazahstan\\_mogut\\_zapustit\\_sovmestnoe\\_proizvodstvo\\_pozharnoy\\_tekhniki\\_na\\_territorii\\_karagan-38483/](https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus_i_kazahstan_mogut_zapustit_sovmestnoe_proizvodstvo_pozharnoy_tekhniki_na_territorii_karagan-38483/)

<sup>121</sup> About the visit of the Ambassador of Belarus to Karaganda region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c25b80e259079cad.html>

As for **Pavlodar Region**, Minsk Region signed an agreement with it on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation in 2009. In 2017, the parties agreed to cooperate in agriculture. A great interest of the Kazakhs then aroused the Belarusian experience in the construction of dairy and cattle complexes. "Handing over a package of model projects of agricultural facilities to Pavlodar residents, representatives of the capital region of Belarus expressed their readiness not only to advise them on this topic, but also to build dairy complexes at their place on mutually beneficial terms"<sup>122</sup>. In addition, the free economic zones of Pavlodar region invited interested companies of Minsk region to participate in projects on joint use of subsoil resources of the region. One of them is an aluminium cluster involving large companies from Germany, Poland, and Turkey. It should be noted that the machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant is already very actively used in this area of Kazakhstan. In particular, in February 2021, at the assembly site of the technopark of the Vostochny open-pit mine of JSC "EEC" of the Eurasian Group (ERG), the assembly of three BelAZ dump trucks with a payload capacity of 130 tonnes, which were added to this coal mine enterprise, was completed. They joined "seven of their brethren, which have been in operation for two years at the cyclic-flow stripping areas of the open-pit mine, having earned the Ekibastuz miners a reputation of reliable and highly productive mining machines"<sup>123</sup>. As we can see, the range of development of relations between Minsk and Pavlodar regions can still be very wide.

In particular, co-operation with Kazakhstan is among the priority areas of development of foreign economic relations of **Gomel region**. Enterprises of the south-eastern region of Belarus have the most serious intentions to develop co-operation ties with Kazakh partners in import substitution and logistics opportunities. A good example is the joint production of Gomselmash OJSC and AgromashHolding KZ JSC, which has been operating in Kazakhstan since 2007. Today it is not just an assembly shop, but a real production facility. "During the period of cooperation, more than \$320 million worth of the plant's products have been delivered to the Kazakhstan market, and a total of over

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<sup>122</sup> Zalesky, B. Actual media topics of Belarusian-Kazakh interaction / B. Zalesky // International Journalism-2018: global challenges, regional partnership and media: materials of the VII International scientific and practical conference, Minsk, 15 February. 2018 / comp. B.L. Zaleskiy ; ed. by T.N. Dasaeva. - Minsk: Izd. Centre BSU, 2018. - C. 98.

<sup>123</sup> BELAZ delivered 130-tonne dump trucks to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-130-tonnye-samosvaly-v-kazahstan-428544-2021/>

3,700 units of jointly produced machinery have been sold"<sup>124</sup>. The products of other enterprises of Gomel region, including Belarusian Metallurgical Plant and Milkavita open joint-stock company, are also in demand in Kazakhstan.

**The Mogilev region** also cooperates closely with this country in Central Asia, which is beginning to step up its work in trade and economic co-operation. "In the first seven months of this year [2022], the foreign trade turnover between Mogilev Oblast and Kazakhstan totalled about \$40 million"<sup>125</sup>. But there are still plenty of opportunities for the parties to work together. Kazakhstan is one of the most important trade and economic partners for the Belarusian region, ranking second in terms of foreign trade turnover among the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union both at the end of 2021 and for the first seven months of 2022. The main export items are machinery and spare parts for cars, dairy products, poultry meat, lifts, and railway cars. In turn, Mogilev region buys equipment, chemical products and various raw materials in Kazakhstan. It should be noted that almost 45 per cent of all imports of the region is paraxylene, which is used by Mogilevkhimvolokno. Other enterprises of the Belarusian region, including those from the free economic zone Mogilev, also have a number of proposals for co-operation with Kazakh partners.

**Hrodna Region** is also intensifying its co-operation with Kazakhstan, having already concluded five agreements with Kazakh regions. Hrodna region actively supplies agricultural, processing and woodworking products to its partners. But "the time has come to intensify the work, to fill these agreements with real projects and contracts that will intensify the relations between the two countries"<sup>126</sup>.

As for cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in the educational sphere, the interaction between the parties was also enriched with new colours in 2022. In particular, in October, Baranavichy State University offered co-operation to Shakarim University, which is located in Semey, Abay region. More than seven thousand students study at five faculties in this educational and scientific centre of the north-eastern region of Kazakhstan. The two

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<sup>124</sup> Enterprises of Gomel region intend to develop co-operative relations with Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-kooperatsionnye-svjazi-s-kazahstanom-512360-2022>

<sup>125</sup> Isachenko at the meeting with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan: it's time to strengthen work in trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/isachenko-na-vstreche-s-poslom-kazahstana-prishlo-vremja-usilit-rabotu-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoy-sfere-525098-2022/>

<sup>126</sup> Ambassador of Kazakhstan at the meeting with Karanik: our task is to help businessmen of the two countries to find each other [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-kazahstana-na-vstreche-s-karanikom-nasha-zadacha-pomoch-biznesmenam-dvuh-stran-najti-drug-druga-514826-2022/>

universities are interested in "jointly implementing educational programmes for students and teachers, organising academic exchanges, summer and winter schools. There are ideas for scientific and innovative projects"<sup>127</sup> .

And one more thing: in September 2022, a round table "Kazakhstan and Belarus: the Road of Friendship and Cooperation" was held in Minsk, where it was noted that "in 2021, trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Belarus exceeded \$1 billion"<sup>128</sup> , but there are still solid reserves for increasing trade turnover: it is not only industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, transport, deepening interregional cooperation, joint ventures, but also interaction in cultural and humanitarian spheres.

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<sup>127</sup> BarSU aims to cooperate closely with the university from Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-natselen-tesno-sotrudnichat-s-universitetom-iz-kazahstana-530948-2022/>

<sup>128</sup> Ambassador of Kazakhstan: Belarus is a country that one always wants to return to [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/posol-kazahstana-belarus-strana-v-kotoruju-vsegda-hochetsja-vozvrashchatsja-526048-2022/>



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

In April 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Uzbekistan and signed contracts worth more than USD 25 million. An equally important outcome was the statement by Minsk and Tashkent that new points of growth in co-operation have been found. And "now the task is to fill it with new content"<sup>129</sup>, in order to bring the annual volume of mutual trade up to half a billion dollars.

The beginning of 2022 showed that the parties were confidently approaching the set goal. While in 2021 Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by almost 8 per cent and exceeded \$300 million with a surplus of almost \$190 million for the Belarusian side, "in January-February 2022 trade turnover amounted to \$53.5 million and increased by 9.9 per cent against the level of the corresponding period of 2021"<sup>130</sup>. The trade and investment volumes are expected to increase further, primarily through the implementation of joint co-operation projects.

It should be noted that 103 organisations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, Belvitunifarm LLC. One assembly production of Belarusian machinery with the participation of Belarusian capital - JV AMKODOR-AGROTEXMASH LLC - has been set up there. In particular, "the production of loaders has been set up at the Tashkent Tractor Plant, which shows the demand for these products in the local and regional market"<sup>131</sup>. In addition, co-operation between MAZ OJSC and KRANTAS GROUP LLC, MTZ OJSC and Uzavtosanoat JSC in the field of production of motor vehicles and tractors continues. And "Marko Company" is implementing a joint project in Uzbekistan for the production of footwear. Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC is implementing an investment project in this country to produce

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<sup>129</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Uzbekistan can increase trade and investment, growth points have been found [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10260>

<sup>130</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan intensify the implementation of production and co-operation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-aktivizirujut-realizatsiju-proizvodstvenno-koooperatsionnyh-proektov-495026-2022/>

<sup>131</sup> Machinery, equipment, scientific and technical developments. What Belarus will present at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/tehnika-oborudovanie-nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-cto-belarus-prezentuet-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-8158/>

welding electrodes. For this purpose, the FE "MONOLITH ASIA" LLC was established in Tashkent<sup>132</sup>. And these ties continue to be actively strengthened.

Thus, in April 2022, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in this Central Asian country - MAZ-TASHKENT LLC - started industrial assembly of MAZ vehicles from SKD kits. "The first model was the MAZ-5337 chassis. Localisation of assembly production in Uzbekistan will allow Minsk Automobile Plant to expand its presence in the market of Central Asian countries, and in the future - Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan"<sup>133</sup>. And within the framework of the Uzbek-Belarusian business forum, held in April in Tashkent, MAZ distributor "signed a contract with PE OLIY TEXNIK for the purchase of 41 MAZ vehicles. <...> The contract amount exceeded \$3 million"<sup>134</sup>.

The Minsk Tractor Plant is also actively increasing its presence in the Uzbek market, having increased shipments of its machines by almost a quarter in the first quarter of 2022. "In total, more than \$10 million worth of machinery was shipped"<sup>135</sup>. Interestingly, Belarusian tractors worth \$31 million were shipped to Uzbek partners for the whole of 2021. In late April and early May, a sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery was opened in Tashkent, which combines "a showroom and sales centre, a service point and production facilities"<sup>136</sup>. There is also a branch of the bank, which is focused on providing services on lending and leasing of machinery. It is noteworthy that the Belarusian side plans to open similar centres in other Uzbek regions.

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

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<sup>132</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

<sup>133</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant has established the assembly of machinery in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-naladil-sborku-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-496181-2022/>

<sup>134</sup> "MAZ-Tashkent" signed a large contract with an Uzbek company for the delivery of 41 vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-tashkent-podpisal-krupnyj-kontrakt-s-uzbekskej-kompaniej-na-postavku-41-avtomobilja-498224-2022/>

<sup>135</sup> MTZ in the I quarter increased supplies of machinery to Uzbekistan by more than 23% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-v-i-kvartale-narastil-postavki-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-bolee-chem-na-23-499321-2022/>

<sup>136</sup> Sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery opened in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-prodazh-i-servisnogo-obsluzhivanija-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-otkrylsja-v-tashkente-499290-2022/>

partners for the supply of pharmaceutical products. At the end of 2021, exports of Belpharmprom Holding organisations' products to Uzbekistan amounted to \$14 million, in January-February 2022 - \$3 million"<sup>137</sup> .

If we talk about other prospects for co-operation, we can name several other areas. One of them concerns electric transport. The fact is that "Tashkent is considering the possibility of resuming tram service. The Belarusian side is ready to provide comprehensive solutions with the necessary infrastructure, planning and supply of rolling stock"<sup>138</sup> . If the decision on this matter is made, the creation of a joint production facility on Uzbek soil will become a real possibility. The issue of supplying wooden houses from Belarus to Uzbekistan, where "it is now a very fashionable trend <...> and there is a great demand"<sup>139</sup> . This may open up good prospects for the Belarusian Newsprint Plant, which has a conveyor belt production of such houses.

In the same context, it is worth recalling that in late April 2022, the parties considered "the possibility of organising supplies of Belarusian peat substrates to forestry enterprises in Uzbekistan for further use as a basis for growing plantation seedlings"<sup>140</sup> . Given the considerable experience of Belarusian peat enterprises in this area, and in 2021 exports of peat industry organisations of Beltopgaz grew by more than a quarter, it is quite predictable that Uzbekistan will become the 25th country to receive Belarusian peat as early as this year.

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

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<sup>137</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discuss deepening co-operation in the pharmaceutical industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obszhdajut-uglublenie-sotrudnichestva-v-farmotrasli-498163-2022/>

<sup>138</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

<sup>139</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is working out the supply of wooden houses to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-uzbekistan-prorabatvvaet-postavki-v-uzbekistan-derevjannyh-domov-498185-2022/>

<sup>140</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying peat substrates to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-torfiyanyh-substratov-v-uzbekistan-499019-2022/>

technical textiles for construction, polymer products, chemicals and fertilizers for agriculture, glass fibre"<sup>141</sup> . In short, everything that arouses a keen interest among partners from Uzbekistan and can become the basis for concluding new contracts.

Speaking about the participation of Belarusian exporters in foreign exhibitions, it should be noted that in 2021, participating in exhibitions and forums organised by Belinterexpo, the exhibition enterprise of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they signed 86 agreements and contracts worth more than \$80 million. At the same time, "agreements and contracts worth \$15 million were signed within the framework of national expositions"<sup>142</sup> . What is important here is that the most productive in terms of the amount of contracts signed included national expositions organised within the framework of exhibitions in Uzbekistan - "INNOPROM. Big Industrial Week" and UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo.

Speaking about the first of them, it should be noted that the "Big Industrial Week in Uzbekistan", held in April 2021 in Tashkent, was the largest event in this Central Asian country after a pause caused by the pandemic. At that time, the exhibition was attended by "more than 200 enterprises working in the fields of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry and medicine from Armenia, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the Czech Republic, the EAEU and Central Asia"<sup>143</sup> . As for the Belarusian pavilion, it included stands of 65 companies and organisations that presented engineering, metallurgical, chemical, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of their participation in this exhibition was "the signing by the subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC - of a letter of intent for the supply of chassis and machine kits for the assembly of vehicles to the Uzbek market for the amount of \$10 million. A contract was also signed with a private Uzbek company for the supply of 50 units of MAZ machinery for a total of \$3

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<sup>141</sup> Belarusian enterprises of light industry present their potential in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-predpriyatija-legkoj-promyshlennosti-prezentujut-svoj-potentsial-v-uzbekistane-498369-2022/>

<sup>142</sup> At the forums and exhibitions "Belinterexpo" domestic enterprises signed contracts for \$80 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-forumah-i-vystavkah-belinterekspo-otechestvennye-predpriyatija-podpisali-kontrakty-na-80-mln-476100-2021/>

<sup>143</sup> More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

million"<sup>144</sup>. Interestingly, in April 2022, this exhibition in the Uzbek capital was held under a new name - "INNOPROM. Central Asia" - and included six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, chemistry, industrial automation, pharmaceuticals and medicine. There was also a plenary session "Central Asia. Space of Technological Breakthrough" and specialised sessions on infrastructure projects, logistics, financial instruments, and education. Belarusian participation in this business forum was no less representative due to the fact that "exports of Belarusian goods to Uzbekistan have grown six times in five years. The greatest demand is for machinery from Belarus (tractors and tractors-tractors, trucks), chemical products, foodstuffs, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, energy carriers, and oil products. In total, Belarus supplies Uzbekistan with 360 commodity items of all industries"<sup>145</sup>.

As for the agriculture and food exhibitions UzAgroExpo and UzProdExpo, held in Tashkent in November 2021, they are the largest sectoral business forums in Uzbekistan, which this time brought together 120 companies from 18 countries. The national pavilion of Belarus, where 17 companies were represented, demonstrated export opportunities of domestic enterprises in three main areas: food industry; agrarian engineering; and science. Especially many original novelties were presented in the first of them - beef in lingonberry sauce, soft cheese made according to Italian technology from ricotta whey, high quality coffee made according to own patented technology, peanut paste with sea salt, fruit bars made from a mixture of dried prunes, dried apple, oat flakes and syrup, protein milk chocolate with increased protein content, as well as "Belarusian whisky, an alcoholic blended drink made from artesian water on the basis of national grain crops - rye, wheat and barley malt"<sup>146</sup>. The Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian-Russian University and Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies showed numerous visitors the scientific developments in agro-industrial and food spheres, including technologies of restoring damaged soils, methods of producing innovative fermented milk drinks and cosmetics. The Minsk Automobile Plant and the Lidselmash enterprise also brought innovative machinery to the Uzbek capital - a specially designed for the Uzbek market MAZ-65012K cargo dump truck,

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<sup>144</sup> Zaleskii, B. Key task - development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 40-41.

<sup>145</sup> Belarusian national pavilion will be presented at the exhibition 'INNOPROM' in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-natsionalnyj-paviljon-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-innoprom-v-uzbekistane-480872-2022/>

<sup>146</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus is presented at the exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-predstavlen-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-471340-2021/>

which "is equipped with a metal body tilted by a hydraulic mechanism and is designed for transporting bulk cargo, including agricultural goods"<sup>147</sup>, and new modifications of a cultivator for cultivating cotton, the most popular agricultural crop in this Central Asian country. The concrete result of the work at these exhibitions was "an agreement between MAZ-Tashkent, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, and Nurafshon Maxsus Texnika on the supply of engineering products worth \$1 million"<sup>148</sup>. At the Uzbekistan-Belarus agrarian forum, agreements were reached on the construction and reconstruction of a dairy complex using Belarusian technologies on Uzbek soil.

Another important area of interaction between the two countries is the intensification of partnership Belarusian-Uzbek regional ties, which are becoming one of the most important areas of cooperation in the current environment. The First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up new partnership opportunities in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, and food industry, and brought together "more than two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana, and Tashkent oblasts" from the Uzbek side alone<sup>149</sup>.

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

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<sup>147</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant presented a new gas dump truck at the exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-predstavil-novyj-gazovyj-samosval-na-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-471501-2021/>

<sup>148</sup> MAZ signed a contract for delivery of machinery to Uzbekistan for \$1 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-podpisal-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-471344-2021/>

<sup>149</sup> Zalesky, B. Sustainability as a formula for growth. Features of international co-operation based on the innovative component / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 37.

demand among them"<sup>150</sup>. In addition, the Vitebsk region successfully supplied the Uzbek market with baby food, a wide range of vaccines to combat diseases in domestic animals, and pharmaceuticals.

In 2021, the Belarusian region's mutual trade with this Central Asian country exceeded \$12.5 million, with Vitebsk's exports accounting for almost \$10 million, which were again based on medicines, cattle meat, milk and whey powder, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and glass fibre products, and fibre-optic cable. In addition, a joint venture of the Marco leather and footwear holding company began operations on Uzbek soil. Other projects in the sphere of production co-operation are in the pipeline. In particular, starting from 2020, Vitebsk region is negotiating the opening of a joint venture with BelVitunipharm OJSC in Uzbekistan, which will initially trade in medicines with a subsequent transition to their production. In December 2021, a representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent. And already "the issues of project financing are being worked out in order to reach the sales of medicines in the amount of \$2 million per year"<sup>151</sup>.

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

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<sup>150</sup> Tikhonov, A. Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum: afterword / A. Tikhonov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://produkt.by/story/belorusko-uzbekskiy-agrarnyy-forum-posleslovie>

<sup>151</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Uzbekistan can become for the enterprises of Vitebsk region a springboard for supplies to Asia / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlja-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinom-dlja-postavok-v-aziju-491940-2022/>

fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial and business circles"<sup>152</sup>.

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of the Vitebsk Free Economic Zones (FEZ) and Kosonsoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic, and investment interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions; it not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnership between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for combining the potential of the parties in holding joint events. Note that "Kosonsoy-Pharm" was among the seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. In addition to it, then appeared "in Karakalpakstan - "Nukus-pharm", Jizzak region - "Zomin-pharm", <...> Syrdarya region - "Sirdaryo-pharm", Surkhandarya region - "Boysun-pharm" and Tashkent region - "Bustonlik-pharm" and ""Parkent-pharm""<sup>153</sup>. They have special tax, customs and currency regimes on their territories. All of them specialise in the development of pharmaceutical enterprises. Several residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" are also engaged in the same sphere. That is why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines, medical products is one of the most promising areas of co-operation between the administrations of the two FEZs"<sup>154</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek free economic zones will further strengthen the emerging partnership ties between the Vitebsk and Namangan regions.

The documents signed during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Tashkent in April 2022 can also serve as an indication of what other areas of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation will be intensified in the very near future. Thus, the Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and an executive programme of scientific, technical and innovative cooperation for 2022-2023 with the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus also signed two significant documents: a memorandum of understanding with the State Committee for Veterinary Medicine and Livestock Development of Uzbekistan; a roadmap for further development of cooperation in agrarian

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<sup>152</sup> Namangan region will co-operate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya\\_oblast\\_budet\\_sotrudnichat\\_s\\_vitebskom.html](https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya_oblast_budet_sotrudnichat_s_vitebskom.html)

<sup>153</sup> Seven pharmaceutical FEZs are being created in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/05/pharm/>

<sup>154</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and Uzbek "Kosonsoy-farm" will develop investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>



science, education and innovation development for 2022-2023 with the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan, which, in turn, also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on further development of scientific and technical cooperation in the field of agrarian science, education and innovation for 2022-2023. Finally, an agreement on co-operation in the field of livestock breeding was concluded by Belplemzhivobedinenie and the Uzbekchorvanasl agency.

Back in autumn 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an intergovernmental agreement on socio-economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which "reflects the key agreements at the highest level on developing Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bringing them to a qualitatively new level"<sup>155</sup>. As we can see, the tasks set in this document are being fulfilled by the parties very actively and successfully.

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<sup>155</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 228.

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

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

Recall that back in 2018, the Belarusian-Armenian trade turnover had positive growth dynamics, increasing by more than 17 per cent and exceeding \$50 million. Investment cooperation has become an important element of bilateral interaction. Suffice it to say that "\$7.6 million of investments came from Armenia to Belarus in 2018, including \$7.5 million of direct investments. \$3.5 million of foreign direct investments were attracted in the first quarter of this [2019] year"<sup>156</sup>. This picture of partnership ties between Belarus and Armenia was significantly supplemented by more than 80 entities of the commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises operating on Armenian soil, as well as 57 enterprises with Armenian capital - 17 joint ventures and 40 foreign ones operating in Belarus. In addition, there are three enterprises with Belarusian capital operating in Armenia: Ar-Be Armenian-Belarusian Trading House "Ar-Be" LLC, BelAZ Caucasus Trans Service LLC and BelAR Trading House CJSC"<sup>157</sup>. Nevertheless, according to the parties, "so far there are few joint investment projects, and those that are being implemented are often in a sluggish mode"<sup>158</sup>. That is why several years ago Belarus and Armenia raised an urgent issue: not just to trade with each other, but to create joint companies so that the business of the two countries would work more actively with each other. And there are such opportunities in many vectors of co-operation.

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<sup>156</sup> Armenian President Sarkisian arrived in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-armenii-sarkisjan-pribyl-v-belarus-353322-2019/>

<sup>157</sup> Meeting with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8605>

<sup>158</sup> Myasnikovich offered Armenia to intensify investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-predlozhit-armenii-aktivizirovat-investsotrudnichestvo-343419-2019/>

Agriculture has become one of the priority areas of bilateral Belarusian-Armenian interaction, as the issue of saturating the market with safe and high-quality food products is currently very important for Armenia. That is why international co-operation in this area has great prospects. The Armenian partners want to "create a food safety platform on the basis of which certain agreements with producers from different countries will be implemented"<sup>159</sup>. And the partnership with the Belarusian side looks very promising in this regard. This is evidenced by the fact that in 2018, agricultural exports from Belarus to Armenia increased by 30 per cent to \$13 million. The parties considered not only joint actions in the area of food trade, but also the expansion of supplies of agricultural and other machinery, strengthening the role of Belarus' trade house in Yerevan, the establishment of Armenia's trade house on Belarusian soil, as well as the organisation of joint ventures and cooperation in the area of livestock farming as measures to promote the growth of trade turnover in agriculture. Understanding that the next step in the bilateral relations should be to reach a higher level of cooperation in the context of growing trade turnover, the Belarusian side also proposed, inter alia, "to take part in the renewal of Armenia's fleet of passenger vehicles and in the programme of renewal of lift facilities"<sup>160</sup>.

Another promising area of Belarusian-Armenian partnership is improving transport links between the two former Soviet republics. As is well known, there are no direct communications between Belarus and Armenia, but there is an opportunity to create them within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union along with the relevant infrastructure to ensure the delivery of goods and transit traffic between the countries. In particular, the parties are considering the possibility of transporting Armenian goods to Belarus and transit through its territory by rail. A promising logistical direction in this regard is the use of "the North-South road under construction, which will connect Georgia with Iran, and the FEZ in Meghri, where there is a free economic zone. This is a good opportunity to expand the geography of supplies of Belarusian goods"<sup>161</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> Armenia is interested in developing co-operation with Belarus in the field of agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 20190. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-353502-2019/>

<sup>160</sup> Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of Armenia's passenger vehicle fleet [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>

<sup>161</sup> Heads of transport departments of Belarus and Armenia outlined the points of growth of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glavy-transportnyh-vedomstv-belarusi-i-armenii-nametili-tochki-rosta-sotrudnichestva-354239-2019/>

In November 2021, the 15th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Armenian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, where the parties considered opportunities to strengthen the positions of Belarusian and Armenian exporters in each other's markets, expand the trade network, and cooperate in agriculture, science, and technology. A characteristic feature of the partnership ties between the two countries is the fact that trade turnover between them continues to grow annually. "Thus, if in 2016 it was a little over \$32 million, in 2020 - already over \$82 million. The growth of trade turnover was also recorded at the end of 9 months of this year [2021], it exceeded \$62 million"<sup>162</sup>. At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Armenian market are based on dairy products, furniture, computers for automatic information processing and medicines. This allowed Belarus to achieve a surplus in mutual trade of more than \$32 million in 2020. Another positive trend observed in the relations between the two republics is the further growth of Armenian investments in the Belarusian economy. In the first half of 2021, they received more than ten million dollars.

Discussing at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission the prospects for the development of partnership ties, the parties noted that there are significant reserves for increasing the volume of mutual trade. One of them is that "the economic way of developing trade by increasing supplies of traditional groups of goods is outdated and it is necessary to enter into co-operative projects"<sup>163</sup>, which will ensure long-term and fruitful cooperation, less dependent on various market fluctuations. The parties are already making certain practical steps in this direction. Thus, participating in the programme of modernisation of lift facilities in Yerevan, OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" supplied five hundred sets of lift equipment to Armenia. The issue of setting up a joint lift assembly plant in Armenia is already under consideration. Belarusian companies have great opportunities to participate in other Armenian government programmes on infrastructure and industrial development.

It should be noted that the volume of Belarusian-Armenian trade grew again in 2021 and totalled about USD 100 million. This trend continues in the current year as well. "Thus, in January-June 2022, trade turnover increased by

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<sup>162</sup> Belarus and Armenia have increased trade turnover by 2.5 times in 5 years [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-armenija-za-5-let-uvelichili-tovarooborot-v-25-raza-471337-2021/>

<sup>163</sup> Drozhzha: Belarus and Armenia have reserves for increasing mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/drozhzha-u-belarusi-i-armenii-est-rezervy-dlja-naraschivanija-vzaimnoj-torgovli-471650-2021/>

more than 70% to \$60.3 million"<sup>164</sup> . This applies to both exports of goods to Armenia and imports of Armenian goods to Belarus. In addition, the countries ensured mutual growth in the supply of agricultural and food products, outlined industrial co-operation projects and maintained a high frequency of air flights on the Minsk-Yerevan-Minsk route.

In October 2022, the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Armenian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Yerevan, where the parties again came to the conclusion that the extensive way of developing trade by increasing supplies of traditional groups of goods is outdated and it is necessary to develop cooperation projects that would guarantee long-term interaction. At the same time, "the key direction of this work should be the strengthening of production co-operation ties, joining efforts to create joint competitive products that are in demand not only in domestic and EAEU markets, but also in third countries"<sup>165</sup> .

In general, the signed protocol of the 16th meeting of the intergovernmental commission included a variety of measures aimed at strengthening and developing cooperation in a number of areas: mutual trade; industry and industrial cooperation; innovation, digital transformation and postal communications; transport and energy; agriculture; scientific and technical cooperation; education, culture, youth, sports, tourism, health care, labour and social protection; environmental protection; interregional cooperation. In particular, "Belarus and Armenia will work out the issue of using national currencies in settlements"<sup>166</sup> . The parties agreed to assist Armenian and Belarusian economic entities in expanding the trade network in the territory of the two countries. The Armenian side will work out the issue of establishing an "Armenia Trade House" in Belarus, which will have the status of exporter/importer. The partners will also "continue cooperation in the sphere of mechanisation of the Armenian agro-industrial complex, consider the possibility of creating cooperation projects in Armenia. It is planned to hold an agro-industrial forum where products of Belarusian and Armenian producers will be exhibited"<sup>167</sup> . In addition, the Armenian side expressed interest in the

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<sup>164</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying lumber products to Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-piloproduktsii-v-armeniju-523446-2022/>

<sup>165</sup> Kulik on the development of trade with Armenia: we need co-operation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kulik-o-razvitii-torgovli-s-armeniej-nuzhny-kooperatsionnye-proekty-526560-2022/>

<sup>166</sup> Belarus and Armenia are interested in the use of national currencies in settlements [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-armenija-zainteresovany-v-ispolzovanii-natsionalnyh-valjut-pri-raschetah-526881-2022>

<sup>167</sup> The 16th session of the Armenian-Belarusian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation was held in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

introduction of Belarusian experience in the use of innovative technologies in agriculture.

Speaking about Belarusian-Armenian production cooperation, in October 2022, "Minsk Automobile Plant signed a contract for the supply of 500 passenger vehicles to Armenia for \$73 million <...>. The passenger vehicles assembled in Armenia are intended for delivery to third countries"<sup>168</sup>. Belarus is also ready to further expand co-operation in the forestry sector. Construction and reconstruction of housing is actively underway in Armenia. The Belarusian side is ready to supply construction materials, including lumber products, to this South Caucasus country.

The Belarusian side sees another reserve for increasing trade with its Armenian partners in the active use of trade fairs and exhibitions that take place in this Transcaucasian country. Thus, the high interest of Belarusian manufacturers in the Armenian market was very eloquently demonstrated by the Made in Belarus exposition at the 20th universal regional trade and industrial forum Armenia EXPO, which was held in September 2021 in Yerevan. Suffice it to say that 17 enterprises of Belgospisheprom Concern became exhibitors of this one of the largest exhibitions in Transcaucasia: "Krasnyi Zhegovik", "Kommunarka", "Krasnyi Mozyryanin", "Spartak", "KF Slodych", "Maloritsky KOSK", "Gamma Vkusa", "Mashpischeprod", Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, Slutsk Sugar Refinery, Gorodeisky Sugar Refinery, Minsk Kristall - the managing company of Minsk Kristall Group holding, Krinitsa, Minsk Margarine Plant, Lidapischekoncentraty, Belkofe, Interferm. Their presence at this business forum in Yerevan can be explained by the fact that "almost all the products of the Concern's organisations are supplied to Armenia. In January-July 2021 the volume of export supplies to this country amounted to \$640.7 thousand or 215.4% of the level of the same period of the last year"<sup>169</sup>.

Having demonstrated the best samples of their products at the exhibition, Belarusian exporters continue to significantly expand their presence in the Armenian market. A good example in this regard was demonstrated by the unitary enterprise Kalinkovich Dairy Plant, which signed a \$55,000 contract

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[https://cis.minsk.by/news/24151/v\\_erevane\\_sostojalos\\_16-e\\_zasedanie\\_armjano-belorusskoj\\_mezhpravitelstvennoj\\_komissii\\_po\\_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu\\_sotrudnichestvu](https://cis.minsk.by/news/24151/v_erevane_sostojalos_16-e_zasedanie_armjano-belorusskoj_mezhpravitelstvennoj_komissii_po_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu_sotrudnichestvu)

<sup>168</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant will supply 500 passenger vehicles to Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-postavit-500-mashinokomplektov-passazhirskoj-tehniki-v-armeniju-527026-2022>

<sup>169</sup> "Belgospisheprom" presented its products at the exhibition Armenia Expo in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-predstavil-produktsiju-na-vystavke-armenia-expo-v-erevane-460163-2021/>

for the supply of skimmed milk powder for the production of ice cream within the framework of the exhibition. "The enterprise also has agreements on concluding more contracts for the supply of products for ice-cream production"<sup>170</sup>. Slutsk Cheese Factory is also planning to seriously increase its supplies to the Armenian market. Slutsk Cheese Factory demonstrated in Yerevan the products of the trademark "Yas Belous" - cheeses, milk powder and butter, which together with cream and cottage cheese dominated the export of Belarusian products to Armenia in 2020. Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural machinery also see good prospects here: Gomselmash, whose two machines under the Palesse brand have been operating in the fields of Armenia since 2020; JSC Managing Company of Grodnooblselkhoztehnika Holding, which produces tillage, forage harvesting, post-harvest machinery and milking units; and JSC Gomel Electromechanical Plant, a manufacturer of railway locomotives and rolling stock.

A year later - in September 2022 - companies from Belarus again took part in the regional trade and industrial forum Armenia EXPO, where "a wide range of thematic sections were presented: engineering, petrochemicals, construction, interior design, transport, trucking, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, woodworking, financial services, tourism and recreation"<sup>171</sup>. More than 170 companies, associations, unions and organisations took part in the exhibition. Among the participating countries were Armenia, China, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, India, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. The Made in Belarus exposition was also presented. In particular, 12 enterprises of Belgospisheprom Concern demonstrated their products. For example, the exposition presented a wide range of confectionery products, instant food, food concentrates, baby food, alcoholic beverages, sauces and vegetable oil, fruit and berry products, including a new line of morses and nectars, jams, jams, mushrooms and other food products. It should be noted that almost all the products manufactured by the organisations of the concern are supplied to Armenia this year. "For 7 months of 2022 the export volume increased 1.2 times compared to the same

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<sup>170</sup> Kalinkovichi dairy plant concluded a contract for \$55 thousand at Armenia Expo. [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kalinkovichskij-molochnyj-kombinat-na-armenia-expo-zakljuchil-kontrakt-na-55-tys-460231-2021/>

<sup>171</sup> The exposition of Belarus will be presented at the trade and industrial forum in Armenia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-torgovo-promyshlennom-forume-v-armenii-512548-2022/>

period last year, primarily due to increased supplies of malt, beer, food concentrates, potato products and oil and fat products"<sup>172</sup>.

The potential for interaction between Belarus and Armenia is still very extensive today in interregional co-operation as well. In particular, cooperation between Vitebsk Region and Armenian regions is intensifying in all spheres, from science to trade and culture. "The Vitebsk region's trade turnover with Armenia in January-March [2022] exceeded \$1.6 million. Almost all of these funds were exports of goods. Vitebsk region supplies meat and dairy products (accounting for more than 71 per cent), special purpose vehicles, medicines, carpeting, and imports fire detectors. A total of 8 organisations with Armenian capital operate in Vitebsk region"<sup>173</sup>. It is interesting that in Vitebsk region it is possible to set up production of Armenian medicinal product Narine, a fermented milk product created by Armenian scientists in the 60s and very popular in this country. The supplement helps regulate digestive problems. "The preparation has an EAEU certificate, it may well be applied in Vitebsk region, if there are those willing to create such a line at the dairy production. In Armenia, this product is produced in the form of paste, powder, kefir, tablets. This will be another good article of trade turnover between Armenia and Belarus"<sup>174</sup>. The proposal to master the production of Armenian sour-milk product, which is used as a medicine, in Vitebsk region was supported by Vitebsk authorities. The implementation of such a project will strengthen and expand the range of plants and make them even more competitive.

Another Belarusian region intends to intensify cooperation with its partners from Armenia - Brest Oblast. So far, the trade turnover between the parties is insignificant. "However, there has been a positive trend recently: in the first quarter of 2022, it increased by 71 per cent, and the region's enterprises increased exports by 50 per cent"<sup>175</sup>. Brest region intends to intensify cooperation with Armenian partners in the production of livestock products, machine building, woodworking, light industry. Another interesting fact: there has been a co-operation agreement between Brest region and Ararat marz for

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<sup>172</sup> "Belgospisheprom" presented its products at the exhibition "Armenia EXPO 2022" in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-predstavil-svoju-produktsiju-na-vystavke-armenia-expo-2022-v-erevane-524117-2022/>

<sup>173</sup> Trade, science and culture: Vitebsk region and Armenia intend to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-nauka-i-kultura-vitebskaja-oblast-i-armenija-namereny-aktivizirovat-sotrudnichestvo-505369-2022/>

<sup>174</sup> The Armenian ambassador offered to master the production of sour-milk product Narine in Vitebsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-armenii-predlozhit-osvoit-v-vitebskoj-oblasti-proizvodstvo-kislomolochnogo-produkta-narine-505390-2022/>

<sup>175</sup> Armenia is interested in interregional ties with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-v-mezhregionalnyh-svjazjah-s-belarusiju-502868-2022/>



more than 10 years. The pandemic was a hindrance for maintaining contacts between the regions, but there are already intentions to restore ties.

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

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

Azerbaijan is one of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the interaction with which is of strategic importance for the Republic of Belarus. For less than thirty years, while diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established back in June 1993, Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction has formed the traditions of the two peoples, which are based on "openness, trust, friendship and mutual assistance"<sup>176</sup>. Among the significant interstate documents that Minsk and Baku consider basic are: 1) the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Azerbaijan (2007); 2) the Treaty between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Azerbaijan on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2025 (2015).

In 2018, when Belarus and Azerbaijan celebrated the 25th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, the two sides noted high dynamics of expanding interaction in all areas, including trade and economic sphere, where the main priorities were production cooperation, joint projects in the fields of science and technology, and investment cooperation. This was evidenced, in particular, by the results of 2018, when the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover "totalled about \$465.3 million and increased threefold compared to 2017"<sup>177</sup>. The fact that Belarusian products were supplied to the Azerbaijani market in more than 220 commodity items at that time also spoke volumes.

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

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<sup>176</sup> Belarusian-Azerbaijani bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/political/](https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/political/)

<sup>177</sup> Igor Lyashenko made a working visit to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8786>

assembly line was opened at the Azerbaijani enterprise, "for the first time a grain harvester KZS-575 "Palesse GS575" and an electric bus E321"<sup>178</sup>.

Of particular interest in Ganja was the launch of electric buses - public transport for 83 passengers, equipped with 26 seats, air conditioning, an information monitor and a video control system. This technique is favourable both in terms of minimal environmental impact on the environment and saving energy consumption. "The time to fully charge the batteries of an electric bus capable of travelling up to 60 km/h <...> is only six minutes"<sup>179</sup>. The Ganja Automobile Plant is expected to produce up to 40 per cent of spare parts for these eco-friendly vehicles in the future. If demand is high enough, the plant's capacity will allow it to produce up to 150 electric buses a year. And projects to assemble and supply municipal vehicles from Minsk Automobile Plant and medium-capacity passenger vehicles were still under development. In addition, in July 2019, in the Turkish town of Kırıkkale, 80 kilometres from Ankara, with the support of the Ganja Automobile Plant, the assembly of Minsk tractors began with the expectation to produce one hundred machines by the end of the year and two hundred next year. And in the end "the capacity of the plant will allow to assemble up to three thousand tractors per year"<sup>180</sup>. The assistance of the Azerbaijani side in this matter made it possible to save about one million dollars only on the construction of one building of the future production in Turkey.

Another important area of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction, which received a strong boost in spring 2019, is the participation of Belarusian exporting companies in Azerbaijan's exhibition events. In May, the exposition of Belarusian producers "Belarus. Taste of Nature" was presented in Baku at the international agricultural exhibition Caspian Agro, which has already "proved to be an important platform for promoting Belarusian interests in agriculture in the Azerbaijani market"<sup>181</sup>. Among more than two hundred companies from 25 countries that presented their traditional products and novelties in various sectors of the agricultural industry, 25 organisations and

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<sup>178</sup> The President of Azerbaijan met with Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Lyashenko [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-azerbajdzhana-vstretilsja-s-vitse-premjerom-belarusi-ljashenko-347392-2019/>

<sup>179</sup> Azerbaijan has started to produce Belarusian grain harvesters and electric buses [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-azerbajdzhane-pristupili-k-vypusku-belorusskih-zernouborochnyh-kombajnov-i-elektrobusov-347363-2019/>

<sup>180</sup> Matievsky, M. The assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Turkey should start in July / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-traktorov-v-turtsii-dolzno-zarabotat-v-ijule-344079-2019/>

<sup>181</sup> Belarus is interested in developing cooperation with Azerbaijan in agro-industrial complex and industrial co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-razvivat-s-azerbajdzhanom-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promkooperatsiju-347429-2019/>

enterprises from Belarus showed their capabilities. For example, organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus demonstrated innovative equipment for agriculture - an energy-efficient harvester for berry harvesting, LED lights and greenhouse irradiators for growing plants in greenhouse farms. Belagro Bel offered visitors to the exhibition "a multi-brand portfolio of Belarusian-made agricultural machinery and integrated solutions for processing a wide range of crops"<sup>182</sup>.

Even more diverse Belarusian products could be seen at the exhibition in the section of confectionery, beverages and groceries. In particular, Krasny Izhevik from Bobruisk attracted attention with such novelties as: marshmallows - in the form of rose flower, pomegranate and duchesse flavours; marmalade - in the form of bottles with tequila, wine and cognac flavours. "Spartak" from Gomel demonstrated chocolate - bitter and milk chocolate, as well as white chocolate with almonds and coconut, with hazelnut and biscuit balls, with hazelnut and cereals. The Belarusian exposition in Baku was complemented by baby food, meat and poultry products, as well as products of the Minsk Margarine Plant. The business part of the Caspian Agro exhibition was also very effective for the Belarusian participants. In particular, a co-operation document was signed by the Belgospischeprom Concern and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation, in which the parties agreed to co-operate "in the sphere of tobacco products supply between the Azertabak agro-industrial complex and the Grodno tobacco factory, which is part of the Belgospischeprom Concern"<sup>183</sup>, as well as to exchange production experience.

Now let's look at the results of 2021. They show that Azerbaijan has become one of Belarus's main trade and economic partners, with which cooperation is developing particularly intensively today. This is evidenced by the fact that Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover in 2021 almost doubled to \$885.5 million. At the same time, "Belarusian exports of goods increased 2.5 times and totalled \$478.0 million, reaching record figures in the history of bilateral relations"<sup>184</sup>. The main export items from Belarus to Azerbaijan were railway trains, fibreboard, medicines, furniture, timber, electric transformers, as well as beef, butter, cheese and cottage cheese. "A reliable channel for the

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<sup>182</sup> Belarus presented the largest national exposition at the agricultural exhibition in Baku [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-krupnejshuju-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-selskohozjajstvennoj-vystavke-v-baku-347619-2019/>

<sup>183</sup> "Belgospischeprom" and Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospischeprom-i-azerbajdzhanskaja-promyshlennaja-korporatsija-podpisali-protokol-o-sotrudnichestve-347723-2019/>

<sup>184</sup> On the results of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade in goods in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a81fa7c9e40a3b23.html>

purchase of Azerbaijani vegetables and fruits has also been established, which have replaced imports from unfriendly countries. The Belarusian side is interested in further expansion and diversification of trade and economic cooperation"<sup>185</sup>.

The parties paid much attention to such a promising area of bilateral cooperation as agriculture **and food**. In September 2021, they even held the first meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security, where "issues of cooperation in the field of crop and livestock production, food security, agrarian education, expansion of trade and economic ties in agriculture... were discussed..."<sup>186</sup>. Coordination of joint efforts in this area allowed for good results in bilateral trade in agricultural goods and agricultural raw materials, the volume of which increased by almost 20 per cent to \$41.6 million in 2021, with Belarusian exports accounting for \$35 million. It is important that these positive trends continue now. "In January-February 2022, trade turnover of food products and agricultural raw materials between Belarus and Azerbaijan totalled \$5.7 million, Belarusian exports of goods amounted to \$4.6 million"<sup>187</sup>.

**Construction** is another promising area of Belarusian-Azerbaijani cooperation where serious positive developments are expected. The fact is that this segment of the economy ranks second after oil in Azerbaijan in terms of state investments. Belarusian companies may also be interested in the fact that there is a very high demand for sawn timber in this country, and a simplified tax is provided for companies in the industry. In 2021, reinforced concrete and metal structures, equipment and spare parts formed the basis of Belarusian construction exports to the Azerbaijani market. The dynamics of these supplies are illustrated by the following figures: "In the first quarter of 2021, organisations of the Belarusian construction industry supplied Azerbaijan with over \$3.5 million worth of products, which is 2.2 times more than in the same period in 2020"<sup>188</sup>. Further bilateral interaction in this area can be judged by some of the Belarusian exhibitors at the 26th International Specialised Exhibition BakuBuild, held in October 2021 in the Azerbaijani capital. In

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<sup>185</sup> Petrishenko: Belarus is interested in expanding trade and economic cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/petrishenko-belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-526693-2022/>

<sup>186</sup> On the meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Safety [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://azerbaijan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b29ba1099335e43e.html>

<sup>187</sup> Belarus and Azerbaijan in 2021 increased foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-v-2021-godu-uvelichili-tovarooborot-prodtovarov-i-selhozsyrija-pochti-na-20-496191-2022/>

<sup>188</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus will be presented at the BakuBuild exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-bakubuild-463807-2021/>

particular, the research and production company OKB TSP demonstrated there its own innovative technology for the erection of arch structures for various purposes, developed by specialists from the company Spetsmashinostroenie, which is part of OKB TSP. Interestingly, the company has already constructed 19 industrial buildings in Azerbaijan using this technology.

Belarusian regions also see their own prospects for developing co-operation with Azerbaijani partners. Thus, **Hrodna Region** is going to actively expand these ties. Recall that in 2021, exports of Hrodna enterprises to Azerbaijan doubled to \$17.4 million. In total, about 40 business entities of all forms of ownership supplied supplies from the Belarusian region to this country of the South Caucasus. At the same time, the Azerbaijani side remains highly interested in importing Belarusian agricultural machinery, woodworking products and food industry. According to the parties, "we have enough promising areas for co-operation. These are agriculture and machine building. We will redouble our efforts to develop the relationship"<sup>189</sup>.

Another interesting example in this context is **Brest region**, whose trade turnover with Azerbaijan in the first quarter of 2022 increased by almost half. For example, "the supplies of machines and mechanisms for harvesting and threshing of agricultural crops increased 15 times. Brest residents also export batteries, furniture"<sup>190</sup>. The main type of exports from the Belarusian region is food products, among which dairy products prevail.

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

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<sup>189</sup> Grodno region is interested in expanding co-operation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-494171-2022/>

<sup>190</sup> Azerbaijan is interested in co-operation with the regions of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbajdzhan-zainteresovan-v-sotrudnichestve-s-regionami-belarusi-499846-2022/>

educational and sports spheres"<sup>191</sup> . So, there are a lot of reserves for the development of co-operation here.

The 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission was held in June 2022. At the meeting, the parties named among the promising areas of cooperation: expansion of industrial cooperation, interaction in the spheres of machine-building, transport, agriculture, woodworking, healthcare, education and science. In particular, "it is necessary to fully implement the contract on supplying unassembled tractors to Ganja Automobile Plant, as well as to work out economic and technical aspects of the joint project of this plant and MTZ on entering the markets of third countries"<sup>192</sup> . It is also necessary to ensure the completion of tests of the grain harvester produced by Gomselmash and modified to meet the technical requirements of the Azerbaijani side, as well as to agree on the volume of supplies. Joint production of electric transport is among the proposals. Lift manufacturer Mogilevliftmash expects to take part in lift modernisation programmes in Azerbaijani cities. In the near future, preparatory work will also be completed to set up a joint production of veterinary drugs on Azerbaijani territory.

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

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<sup>191</sup> Ganja Automobile Plant is interested in joint production of combines with "Gomselmash" [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gjandzhinskij-avtozavod-zainteresovan-v-sovmestnom-proizvodstve-kombajnov-s-gomselmashem-333783-2019/>

<sup>192</sup> Machine building, construction, agro-industrial complex. Petrishenko on the plans of interaction with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-stroitelstvo-apk-petrishenko-o-planah-vzaimodejstviya-s-azerbajdzhanom-505333-2022/>

presented at the exhibition is polyester fibre of the conjugate type for use as a filler in textile products, which is produced by Mogilevkhimvolokno."<sup>193</sup> .

In the transport sector, in August 2022, the Belarusian Railway started delivering cargo by accelerated trains from Belarus to Azerbaijan. "This makes it possible to deliver cargoes produced in Belarus <...> to Azerbaijan in the shortest possible time (in a week) and at competitive tariffs. The first three trains loaded with timber products have already set off from Orsha-Zapadnaya station (Belarus) to Apsheron station (Azerbaijan)"<sup>194</sup> .

Bilateral contacts are also developing closely in the educational sphere. In particular, the Belarusian State University (BSU) is intensifying co-operation with institutions in Azerbaijan. In September 2022, BSU signed a cooperation agreement with Baku State University, which is the oldest and leading higher education institution in this South Caucasus country and includes 16 faculties of different profiles, two scientific institutes and the Confucius Institute. The document prescribes agreements in the field of education and science. "In particular, the parties agreed to implement joint projects in scientific, educational and cultural spheres, develop publication partnership, academic scientific and cultural mobility, exchange information, students, researchers and teachers"<sup>195</sup> . It is also envisaged to develop and implement joint research projects, educational programmes, courses and curricula, interaction in the field of scientific supervision of master's and postgraduate students. It should be noted that BSU is currently co-operating with other Azerbaijani scientific and educational institutions. Since 2019, there is an agreement on co-operation and exchange of students with ADA University (Baku). In 2021, the International State Environmental Institute named after A.D. Sakharov BSU signed a cooperation agreement with Hazar University (Baku) and an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with the Scientific Research Institute of Animal Husbandry of the Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan. Two joint projects were submitted for participation in the contest of joint scientific projects for 2022-2023, announced by the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Azerbaijan: the Institute of Nuclear Problems and the

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<sup>193</sup> Belarus presented a pavilion at the oil and gas exhibition in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-paviljon-na-neftegazovoj-vystavke-v-azerbajdzhan-505359-2022/>

<sup>194</sup> BZHD started to supply cargoes by accelerated trains from Belarus to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bzhd-nachala-postavljat-gruzy-uskorennymi-poezdami-iz-belarusi-v-azerbajdzhan-517606-2022/>

<sup>195</sup> BSU and Baku State University concluded a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-bakinskij-gosuniversitet-zakljuchili-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-525475-2022/>



Institute of Physics of the NAS of Azerbaijan; the Faculty of Chemistry and the Institute of Catalysis and Inorganic Chemistry named after Academician M. Nagiyev of the NAS of Azerbaijan. One more thing: six Azerbaijani students are currently studying at BSU.

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

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## **Belarus-Kyrgyzstan: the priority task is to accelerating co-operation**

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

Back in May 2013, the Kyrgyz side noted: "I would like the economic relations between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan to develop dynamically. Belarus has a number of goods in which Kyrgyzstan is interested. In turn, we are also ready to supply goods that are interesting for the Belarusian economy"<sup>196</sup>. In September 2015, at the meeting of the heads of government of the two countries, focusing on the need to increase mutual trade turnover, the parties agreed that "in addition to trade interaction, efforts should be directed at the development of production cooperation"<sup>197</sup>. And already in the first quarter of 2017, the Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade turnover increased by one and a half times, totalling \$15.2 million. The Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, whose sixth and seventh meetings were held in Bishkek in June 2016 and in Minsk in June 2017, played an important role in boosting bilateral interaction between the countries.

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

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<sup>196</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in the development of trade and economic relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.belvpo.com/ru/26710.html>

<sup>197</sup> Andrei Kobayakov met with the head of the Government of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6027>

joint ventures for the production of agricultural machinery, supplies of Belarusian lifts to Kyrgyzstan"<sup>198</sup>.

As far as mutual trade is concerned, Belarusian agricultural products are clearly in the lead, as evidenced by the figures: "At the end of 2016, exports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to Kyrgyzstan grew 3.1 times, and in the first quarter of 2017 - almost 14 times. The basis of export supplies is meat and dairy products"<sup>199</sup>. Agreeing to further increase mutual supplies of agricultural products, expand their commodity nomenclature, the parties also decided to consider the possibility of implementing joint projects in the development of livestock and crop production.

The flagship of Belarusian-Kyrgyz industrial cooperation is the tractor assembly production and service centre for agricultural machinery from Belarus opened in Bishkek in November 2016 on the basis of Avtomash-Radiator LLC. An important detail is that "about 90% of radiators for Minsk-assembled tractors are supplied from Kyrgyzstan. The same assembly shop has now started assembling combines of Gomselmash OJSC"<sup>200</sup>. In addition, the parties have been actively working on the issue of establishing joint ventures in the light industry, the prerequisite for which was the actualisation of trade relations in this area. Thus, in April 2017, the Kyrgyz company Opt-Invest first delivered a batch of textile products to Belarus, and in September 2017, it signed a contract with Belarus for the supply of garments.

In February 2020, Minsk hosted the ninth meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz commission on trade and economic cooperation, which addressed topical issues of developing and strengthening systemic mutually beneficial partnership ties. In Minsk and Bishkek, this meeting of the intergovernmental commission, where the status of co-chairs has already been raised to the level of deputy prime ministers, was seen as "a new impetus for the development of relations between our countries"<sup>201</sup>. Recall that in 2019, the volume of Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade totalled more than \$105 million with a surplus of over \$90 million for the Belarusian side, which

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<sup>198</sup> About the meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://kyrgyzstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b7a170b217ff5943.html>

<sup>199</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in the establishment of assembly facilities for Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-zainteresovan-v-sozdanii-sborochnyh-proizvodstv-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-251058-2017/>

<sup>200</sup> Omuraliev noted a positive trend in the development of relations between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/omuraliev-otmetil-pozitivnuju-tendentsiju-v-razviti-i-otnoshenij-mezhdu-kyrgyzstanom-i-belarusju-269017-2017/>

<sup>201</sup> The meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission will be held in Minsk on 21 February [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie-belorussko-kyrgyzskoj-mezhpravkomissii-proidet-v-minske-21-fevralja-378085-2020/>

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

In terms of **increasing the volume of mutual trade**, the Belarusian side made specific proposals to increase supplies of passenger, cargo, and municipal vehicles to Kyrgyzstan, which is in line with the plans of the Kyrgyz side to upgrade, for example, the fleet of passenger vehicles in Bishkek and other cities. In addition, in 2020, Belarus continued to actively participate in exhibition events in Kyrgyzstan to promote its products to the Kyrgyz market. Thus, in April, the exposition of Belarusian exporters was presented for the third time at the FoodExpo international food industry exhibition in Bishkek, where visitors could familiarise themselves with products and beverages from Belarus. The emphasis was placed on healthy food and products with Halal certificate. For the first time, the exposition "presented food additives, casings for meat and sausage products, baby food"<sup>202</sup>.

Speaking about **deepening production cooperation**, the Kyrgyz side suggested intensifying cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex. First of all, it is about the creation of a joint agro-cluster for milk processing in Kyrgyzstan using Belarusian technologies, as well as the "construction of dairy complexes with the necessary Belarusian-made equipment and supplies of pedigree cattle"<sup>203</sup>. To consolidate these agreements in the legal field, an agreement on cooperation in agriculture and food between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan was signed following the meeting of the intergovernmental commission. As for industrial cooperation, the plans voiced in Minsk look quite realistic: "assembly production of transformers may be established with the Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant,

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<sup>202</sup> Nemankova, Y. The exposition of Belarusian producers will be presented at the FoodExpo in Bishkek / Y. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsiya-belorusskih-proizvoditelej-budet-predstavlena-na-vystavke-foodexpo-v-bishkeke-378791-2020/>

<sup>203</sup> Kyrgyzstan offers Belarus to create an agrocluster for milk processing [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-predlagaet-belarusi-sozdat-agroklaster-po-pererabotke-moloka-380586-2020/>

lifts - with Mogilevliftmash, gas meters - with BelOMO<sup>204</sup>. The seriousness of these intentions of the parties is evidenced, in particular, by the fact of signing an agreement on co-operation between the V.I. Kozlov Minsk Electromechanical Plant and Mashelectrosnab LLC following the meeting of the intergovernmental commission.

Speaking about the **expansion of interregional cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan**, so far the tone has been set by the capitals Minsk and Bishkek, which signed an agreement on economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation back in 1997 and established twinning relations in 2008. In the language of figures, this interregional co-operation looks as follows: "The growth rate of trade turnover of Minsk enterprises with Kyrgyzstan in January-June 2017 to the level of the same period of 2016 was 306%, exports of goods - 393.7%, exports of services - 176.1%"<sup>205</sup>. At the same time, tractors, paving slabs, radiators, air heaters, refrigerators, and medicines were supplied to Kyrgyz partners. New goods exported from Minsk were dairy products, chipboard, and tools. In the future, cooperation between the two capitals in the development of public transport may become very promising. After all, Bishkek plans to buy about 400 large-capacity buses. And the authorities of the Kyrgyz capital are studying the market of suppliers. It should be assumed that Minsk manufacturers of transport equipment have good chances to become participants in the implementation of this project. After all, back in 2009 Minsk Belkommunmash delivered 20 trolleybuses to Bishkek, and later won a tender for the export of another 30 units of electric transport.

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

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

<sup>205</sup> Matveeva, N. Bishkek plans to buy equipment from Minsk enterprises for the development of public transport / N. Matveeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruet-zakupit-u-minskih-predpriyatij-tehniku-dlja-razvitiya-obschestvennogo-transporta-265609-2017/>

wallpaper. The promotion of products of the Turov Dairy Plant, in particular, soft cheeses, to the Kyrgyz market has begun"<sup>206</sup>.

It should be noted that in 2021, Belarus's trade turnover with Kyrgyzstan totalled almost \$100 million, including Belarusian exports of over \$86 million. The balance was positive in the amount of \$75.4 million. "Last year [2021], the nomenclature of goods supplied by Belarus totalled 749 commodity items (for comparison, in 2020 - 620). In January-June this year, bilateral trade turnover totalled \$56.4 million, up 44.3% compared to the same period in 2021, including Belarusian exports of \$42.8 million (up 24.8%)."<sup>207</sup>. The main Belarusian export commodities to Kyrgyzstan are fresh or chilled beef, sugar, poultry meat, medicines, finished meat products, carpets and other textile products, fibre optic cables, cheese and cottage cheese, diagnostic reagents, and chicken eggs. And there are reasons to believe that Belarusian enterprises have every chance not only to consolidate and increase their presence in the Kyrgyz market in terms of products already supplied, but also to expand the list of export items. In particular, Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural, passenger and municipal machinery have prospects for increasing supplies to Kyrgyzstan.

Another interesting component of exports from Belarus to this Central Asian country is medical products. "Belarusian pharmaceutical companies are active in the Kyrgyz market. Thus, in 2021, the volume of exports of medicines to Kyrgyzstan totalled \$4.3 million"<sup>208</sup>. In April 2022, Belarusian manufacturers took an active part in the 16th International Specialised Healthcare Exhibition MedExpo Kyrgyzstan-2022 in Bishkek. Their well-known and well-established drugs, as well as new products that have no analogues in the Kyrgyz market, were presented by LLC "Technology and Medicine 2030", RUE "Belmedpreparaty", OJSC "Borisov Plant of Medical Preparations", UE "Minskintercaps", OJSC "Exon", SE "Akadempharm" and NP LLC "Medbiotech". In particular, "JSC Exon presented a line of VITAX vitamins, haematogen with new flavours (apple, apple with cinnamon,

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<sup>206</sup> Gomel region will develop co-operation with the Chui region of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-region-budet-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-chuijskoj-oblastju-kyrgyzstana-381123-2020>

<sup>207</sup> NCM told about the prospects of promoting Belarusian goods and services in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ntsm-rasskazal-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-kyrgyzstan-519484-2022/>

<sup>208</sup> Belarusian enterprises presented their products at the exhibition of health care [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-predprijatija-predstavili-produktsiju-na-vystavke-zdravoohranenija-v-bishkeke-494393-2022/>

cranberry)"<sup>209</sup>. As a result, the Belarusian companies signed contracts for the supply of products and planned to organise training seminars for medical representatives to promote medicines in Kyrgyzstan.

In the second half of 2022 - in September - the 10th meeting of the intergovernmental commission was held in the city of Osh, during which it was stated that a promising direction for the development of Kyrgyz-Belarusian cooperation is to increase production potential, capacity to produce products with high added value, as well as the creation of joint ventures in all industrial sectors. "Currently, there are 54 representative offices of entities of the commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian enterprises in the country, including the assembly production of tractors of the joint-stock company Minsk Tractor Plant"<sup>210</sup>. The Kyrgyz side is also interested in attracting investment in such areas as information technology, agriculture, and tourism.

In this regard, the Kyrgyz-Belarusian Business Forum was also held in Osh in September 2022, which demonstrated the growing interest of Belarusian businesses in developing bilateral business contacts with Kyrgyzstan. Representatives of the Belarusian side - the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Belgospischeprom concern, and the Belkommunmash holding company - presented to the forum participants opportunities for co-operation with Belarusian agricultural, food, and industrial enterprises. A business contacts exchange was organised at the forum. "Meetings were held between Belarusian and Kyrgyz enterprises working in the food sector, mechanical engineering, health care and economy. As a result of the business forum, bilateral contracts totalling \$900 thousand were signed"<sup>211</sup>.

The international universal exhibition "South Expo-2022" was also held in Osh, where the Belarusian exposition was represented by the concern "Belgospischeprom" and its 16 enterprises, which combined export goods - "confectionery, snacks, instant food, food concentrates, baby food, strong alcoholic beverages - gaist, tinctures and balms on Belarusian herbs, distillates,

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<sup>209</sup> Pharmaceutical companies of Belarus plan to expand the range and volume of drug supplies to Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/farmpredprijatija-belarusi-planirujut-rasshirit-assortiment-i-objemy-postavok-lekarstv-v-kyrgyzstan-494553-2022/>

<sup>210</sup> Within the framework of the 10th meeting of the Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Belarusian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation in Osh a business forum was held [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://cis.minsk.by/news/24072/v\\_ramkah\\_10-go\\_zasedanija\\_mezhpravitelstvennoj\\_kyrgyzsko-belorusskoj\\_komissii\\_po\\_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu\\_sotrudnichestvu\\_v\\_oshe\\_sostojalsja\\_biznes-forum](https://cis.minsk.by/news/24072/v_ramkah_10-go_zasedanija_mezhpravitelstvennoj_kyrgyzsko-belorusskoj_komissii_po_torgovo-ekonomicheskomu_sotrudnichestvu_v_oshe_sostojalsja_biznes-forum)

<sup>211</sup> Contracts for \$900 thousand signed as a result of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kontrakty-na-900-tyis-podpisany-po-itogam-belorussko-kyrgyzskogo-biznes-foruma-523912-2022/>

whiskey of full cycle production from Belarusian grain, products from fruits and berries...."<sup>212</sup> . The world-famous Belarusian brands Gomselmash, MTZ and MAZ were represented at the exhibition by the local dealer AUTOMASH-RADIATOR. Among the exhibitors were other Belarusian enterprises: one of the largest European manufacturers of electrical equipment - V.I. Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant OJSC, leading medical institutions - N.N. Aleksandrov RNPC Oncology and Medical Radiology (OMR) and Cardiology RNPC, as well as a manufacturer of veterinary medicines - Belzoovetsnabprom OJSC. In particular, at the stand of RNPC MPA Kyrgyz specialists were offered educational services in radiology, surgery and ultrasound diagnostics. As a result of negotiations between the RNPC MPA and Osh State University, "a cooperation agreement was prepared, providing for the exchange of experience between the staff of the institutions on educational programmes of advanced training and internships; organisation of conferences, seminars, symposiums, round tables"<sup>213</sup> .

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

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<sup>212</sup> 16 enterprises of Belgospisheprom presented their products at the exhibition "Yug Expo" in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/produksiju-na-vystavke-jug-ekspo-v-kyrgyzstane-predstavili-16-predpriyatij-belgospisheprom-523807-2022>

<sup>213</sup> 6th International Universal Exhibition-Fair "Yug Expo-2022". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://omr.by/news/news-main/6-ya-mezhdunarodnaya-universalnaya-vystavka-yarmarka-yug-ekspo-2022>



## **Belarus-Tajikistan: from the decisions of the Commission to the priorities of the road map**

Belarus and Tajikistan have traditionally enjoyed close relations, and the countries have been consistently strengthening their mutually beneficial strategic partnership. The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (IGC), established back in 1999, plays a key role in the development of effective Belarusian-Tajik bilateral interaction. The scope of its interests "touches upon such priority areas as: supply of machine-building products on the basis of new leasing schemes; cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and energy sector; participation in joint economic projects; creation of a network of joint production enterprises in both countries"<sup>214</sup>.

In April 2021, the 14th meeting of the IGC was held in Dushanbe to discuss topical issues of interaction in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, healthcare and education, investment and information technologies. At the same time, an exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, a business forum Belarus-Tajikistan-Afghanistan, and a forum TajBelAgro were organised in the capital of Tajikistan. All these events once again demonstrated that "despite the crisis phenomena in the world, the Belarusian-Tajik trade and economic cooperation shows a positive and dynamic character. Since 2016, mutual trade turnover has grown 5.5 times and totalled \$111.7 million in 2020"<sup>215</sup>. At the same time, Belarusian exports to the Tajik market increased more than sixfold over the same period of time and reached almost \$110 million, while the positive balance totalled \$107.5 million due to supplies from Belarus of cars, sugar, tractors and tractor-trailers, flour, meat by-products and fish, stationery made of paper and cardboard, chipboard.

Among the major joint projects implemented recently is the shipment to Afghanistan of the first batch of Belarusian tractors assembled at Agrotekhservis in the Tajik city of Gissar, where it is planned not only to produce modern machinery for the agro-industrial complex - forage harvesters, attachments, and expand the model range of assembled tractors, but also to

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<sup>214</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 211.

<sup>215</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan need to more actively implement projects in agriculture - Krupko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-i-tadzhikistanu-nuzhno-aktivnee-realizovyvat-proekty-v-selskom-hozjajstve-krupko-435795-2021/>

create more than a hundred more qualified jobs, taking into account the further development of this project. In this regard, within the framework of the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, an agreement on the expansion of assembly production through the development of tractor semi-trailers PST-9 at the site in Gissar was signed by JSC "UKH Bobruiskagromash" and JSC "Agrotekhservis". "In addition, the companies signed a contract for the supply of the first batch of machine kits, the shipment of which is scheduled for the second quarter of 2021"<sup>216</sup>. It should be recalled that in Gissar, with Belarusian assistance, "a training centre is also functioning to train specialists for efficient operation and maintenance of machinery and equipment working in the fields of Tajikistan"<sup>217</sup>. The contract for the delivery of one hundred Belarusian autonomous trolleybuses to Dushanbe is in its final stages.

Belarusian-Tajik co-operation in agriculture was also very dynamic in 2020. Suffice it to say that the volume of mutual trade in agricultural products and foodstuffs between the two former Soviet republics reached almost ten million dollars. An important detail is that "Belarusian food exports to this country increased 1.4 times to \$9.5 million <...>. In January 2021, domestic agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$775 thousand were supplied to Tajikistan (a sevenfold increase over the same period last year)"<sup>218</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this positive trend will continue in the medium term. Bellegprom Concern is also working on the possibilities of supplying flax to this Central Asian country, which is of great interest to Tajik business circles. In particular, the IGC discussed "the issue of supplying products of Orsha Flax Factory and flax-containing fabrics of Kamvol to the Tajik market"<sup>219</sup>.

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

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<sup>216</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" will expand assembly production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-rasshirit-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-v-tadzhikistane-436621-2021/>

<sup>217</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation and industrial co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-obsudili-razvitie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-promkooperatsiju-436006-2021/>

<sup>218</sup> Export of Belarusian agricultural products to Tajikistan in 2020 increased 1.4 times [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozprodukcii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-v-14-raza-434869-2021/>

<sup>219</sup> "Bellegprom" is working on the possibility of supplying flax to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnosti-postavok-lina-v-tadzhikistan-435980-2021/>

products; Health - healthcare and pharmaceuticals; and FMCG - consumer goods. Tajik partners were also able to learn about the export opportunities of the Belarusian agro-industrial complex and prospects for bilateral cooperation in crop and livestock farming at the agricultural forum TajBelAgro, where they discussed not only the conclusion of contracts for mutual supplies of agricultural products and machinery, but also the elaboration of cooperation options. Finally, within the framework of the business forum "Tajikistan-Belarus-Afghanistan", which was attended by more than two hundred enterprises from the three countries, "eight documents were signed on the development of partnership in the spheres of industry, education, food and beverage supplies"<sup>220</sup>, which indicates the growing dynamics of partnership in this trilateral format as well.

It should be noted that in June 2022, Minsk hosted the 15th meeting of the IGC, where the parties noted the most significant areas of bilateral interaction: investment, industry, agriculture, transport, social, cultural and scientific-technical spheres. Recall that "in 2021, Belarus' trade turnover with Tajikistan totalled more than \$126 million and increased by 12.6% compared to 2020, exports - just over \$122 million (up 11.1%), imports - \$4 million (up 90.5%)"<sup>221</sup>. Today, the two countries are mutually interested in expanding areas of cooperation, which could include the development of assembly production of Belarusian lifts in Tajikistan, the establishment of a joint venture to produce carpets, supplies of Belarusian passenger, quarry and construction equipment, as well as pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection, and increasing exports of food products, including those certified according to Halal standards. Belarus, in turn, is interested in importing from Tajikistan raw materials for the Belarusian light industry, as well as in continuing co-operation in education, culture, and sports.

In this context, it is important that in Tajikistan 2022-2026 are declared the years of industrial development. "During this period, it is planned to ensure average annual economic development at the level of at least 7 per cent and double GDP per capita, create more than 500,000 new jobs and reduce poverty to 15 per cent. Belarusian companies were invited to take an active part in solving these tasks. A separate wish was expressed to continue training Tajik

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<sup>220</sup> Belarus, Tajikistan and Afghanistan signed 8 documents on partnership development at the business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-tadzhikistan-i-afganistan-podpisali-na-biznes-forume-8-dokumentov-o-razvitii-partnerstva-435998-2021/>

<sup>221</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan are interested in expanding areas of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-zainteresovany-v-rasshirenii-napravlenij-sotrudnichestva-506166-2022>

specialists in Minsk for different areas of the economy"<sup>222</sup>. In this regard, the Belarusian side is ready to provide Tajik partners with any types of engineering machinery, primarily quarry and road machinery, for the implementation of infrastructure projects in the country's mining and electric power industries. There is a possibility to significantly increase supplies of new models of Belarusian buses, trucks, woodworking, petrochemical and metallurgical products to the Tajik market, as well as to open joint production facilities for assembling lifts, household appliances and furniture.

In the agro-industrial sector, Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery and meat and dairy products. In particular, significant work is underway on the shipment of agricultural machinery from Belarus, which is badly needed by the Tajik agrarian sector. "In 2021, 411 units of tractors of various brands and more than 124 agricultural machines were delivered to Tajikistan"<sup>223</sup>. At the same time, the Tajik side expresses interest in continuing co-operation in this area. In addition, partners from Tajikistan plan to expand the range of supplies of beef meat products, dairy products and raw materials. Within the framework of the 15th IGC meeting, the parties also noted "the potential for growth in supplies of pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection and the possibility to provide Tajik agrarians with highly productive, balanced mixed fodder and admixtures"<sup>224</sup>.

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

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<sup>222</sup> Pivovarov, E. Krutoy stated about the readiness of Belarus to provide Tajikistan with any types of engineering equipment / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krutoj-zajavil-o-gotovnosti-belarusi-obespechit-tadzhikistan-ljubymi-vidami-mashinostroitelnoj-tehniki-523859-2022/>

<sup>223</sup> Tajikistan is interested in increasing supplies of Belarusian meat and dairy products and agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tadzhikistan-zainteresovan-v-uvlichenii-postavok-belorusskoj-mjaso-molochnoj-produktsii-i-506657-2022/>

<sup>224</sup> Belarus is ready to supply halal products to Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-postavljat-v-tadzhikistan-haljalnuju-produktsiju-506619-2022/>

and technical universities for their studies. Many of them study at the Academy of Aviation and various faculties of the Belarusian State University. In addition, there are four joint faculties of Belarusian and Tajik universities. So the two capitals are developing many mechanisms of co-operation. And "in the future, a document will be signed to regulate further development of relations between Minsk and Dushanbe"<sup>225</sup>.

Another example of regional cooperation is the Homiel and Khatlon regions, which intend to develop co-operation in agriculture and industry. Thus, Gomel specialists are ready to build turnkey farms in the Tajik region. Partners from Khatlon region have "intentions in purchasing mineral fertilisers, timber, cattle, as well as fodder for poultry farms"<sup>226</sup>. Khatlon Oblast is a large region of Tajikistan, where 48 to 78 per cent of the total republican volume is grown for some agricultural products. These include vegetables, early fruits, melons, and citrus fruits.

Another important document was signed by Belarus and Tajikistan in Dushanbe in October 2022 - a roadmap for 2022-2026. In the context of implementing the accelerated industrial development programme of this Central Asian country, Tajik partners are interested in developing cooperation with the Belarusian side in the light, food, pharmaceutical, chemical and mining industries. In addition, "the agrarian sector in the sphere of industrial cooperation and interregional cooperation were identified as priority areas of economic interaction"<sup>227</sup>. In addition, the two republics adopted a number of important bilateral documents. These include intergovernmental agreements on a system of mutual trade facilitation and on co-operation in the field of youth policy. The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus and the Agency for State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption of Tajikistan adopted a document on cooperation in combating corruption. The Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus and the Committee for Tourism Development under the Government of Tajikistan agreed to develop co-operation in the tourism sector. The National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of Belarus and the Agency for Export under the Government of Tajikistan also signed an agreement on cooperation. The National Academies of Sciences of the two countries agreed

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<sup>225</sup> Co-operation between Belarus and Tajikistan was discussed in Minsk city executive committee [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-obsudili-v-mingorispolkome-525441-2022/>

<sup>226</sup> Gomel and Khatlon regions intend to develop co-operation in agro-industrial complex and industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-hatlonskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promyshlennosti-507131-2022/>

<sup>227</sup> Rakhmon outlined priority areas of co-operation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/rahmon-oboznachil-prioritetnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusju-528619-2022/>

to train personnel in virology, microbiology, molecular biology, epidemiology, biotechnology and pharmacology. In addition, an action plan for the development of trade, economic and humanitarian co-operation between the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Dushanbe City Executive Body for 2023-2024 was approved. Mahiliou district established twinning ties with Spitamen district of Sughd region of Tajikistan..."<sup>228</sup>

During these October days, a Tajik-Belarusian business forum was also held in Dushanbe, attended by representatives of 73 enterprises from Belarus, almost fifty of which showed their products at the Made in Belarus exhibition. "Almost all sectors of the Belarusian economy were represented at the business forum: machine building, metallurgy, foodstuffs, woodworking, light industry. The total amount of contracts signed was about \$46 million. In addition, another \$2 million was secured during online negotiations"<sup>229</sup>.

In particular, Minsk Tractor Plant signed contracts with Tajik companies for \$11 million. "Thus, 170 units of BELARUS tractor equipment worth about \$4 million will be delivered to Madadi Tursunzoda. A trade agreement was signed with Agrotekhservis for the delivery of 320 tractors worth more than \$7 million"<sup>230</sup>. It should be noted that about 370 Belarusian tractors have already been delivered to Tajikistan in the first three quarters of this year. This is more than in January-September 2021 by almost 50 per cent. For reference: in November 2017, an assembly facility for BELARUS tractors was opened in the city of Hissar and contracts were signed for the production of seven models.

Another fact: Minsk Automobile Plant will supply 14 units of motor vehicles to the Tajik market for almost \$500,000. The contract within the framework of the Tajik-Belarusian business forum was signed by MAZ and CJSC Obi Zulol - "the largest producer of bottled water, carbonated beverages and natural juices in Tajikistan". In 2019, MAZ supplied the company with 18 units of machinery, including road trains and flatbed trucks with trailers"<sup>231</sup>.

Another participant of the Tajik-Belarusian business forum was the Belgospisheprom concern, eight enterprises of which took part in the Made

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<sup>228</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan signed a road map for 2022-2026 and several other important documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-na-2022-2026-gody-i-esche-neskolko-vaznyh-dokumentov-528597-2022/>

<sup>229</sup> Tajik-Belarusian business forum is held in Dushanbe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/fotofakt-tadzhiksko-belorusskij-biznes-forum-prohodit-v-dushanbe-528500-2022/>

<sup>230</sup> MTW signed contracts with companies from Tajikistan for \$11 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zakljuchil-kontrakty-s-kompanijami-iz-tadzhikistana-na-11-mln-528650-2022/>

<sup>231</sup> MAZ will supply machinery to Tajikistan for almost \$500 th. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-tehniku-v-tadzhikistan-pochti-na-500-tys-528637-2022/>

in Belarus exhibition and even signed a number of contracts with Tajik partners for the supply of sugar, brewing malt and confectionery products. By the way, "Tajikistan ranks first among the Concern's trading partner countries in Central Asia and the Middle East in terms of exports this year"<sup>232</sup> .

Representatives of Bellegprom Concern explored the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan as part of a business forum. The heads of the Orsha Flax Mill and the Baranovich Cotton Production Association, who visited Dushanbe, held talks on possible imports of cotton yarn and fibre, as the price of cotton yarn has become more acceptable for Belarusian producers in Tajikistan in recent years. Note that there are other interests in light industry co-operation between the two countries. "This [2022] year, the Belarusian company Mogotex supplied Tajikistan with its products for the first time. The exports included technical fabrics, with the transaction amounting to \$250,000. The Mogilev residents have agreed to supply Tajikistan in 2023 as well. <...> "Mogotex" will supply technical fabrics for \$300 thousand"<sup>233</sup> .

Vitebsk Carpets Holding, which is setting up a joint production facility in Khujand, Sughd Region, with Tajik partners, will also be represented on the Tajik market. Interestingly, in mid-April 2022, this city hosted the official opening ceremony of the joint Belarusian-Tajik assembly plant of lifts of OJSC "Mogilevliftmash", whose partner was Khujandtorgmash LLC. The new lift production shop provided jobs for 50 residents of Khujand, where "using modern equipment and technologies, production of different types of lifts will be carried out - passenger lifts for high-rise buildings, production enterprises, as well as health care institutions"<sup>234</sup> .

As for cooperation in education and science, at the forum of rectors of universities of Belarus and Tajikistan held in October 2022, the parties saw great potential in the innovation sphere, in the implementation of joint educational programmes, and in the training of Tajik students at Belarusian universities and institutes. In particular, the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) signed a number of co-operation agreements with Tajik universities. These include the Dangara State University and the Tajik

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<sup>232</sup> Zhidkov: Tajikistan is one of the key partners for Belgospisheprom in the Central Asian market [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zhidkov-tadzhikistan-odin-iz-kljuchevyh-partnerov-dlja-belgospisheproma-na-tsentralnoaziatskom-rynke-528642-2022/>

<sup>233</sup> Belarus is studying the possibility of investing in cotton production in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-izuchaet-vozmozhnost-investirovaniya-v-proizvodstvo-hlopka-v-tadzhikistane-528489-2022>

<sup>234</sup> Emomali Rahmon took part in the opening of the assembly production of lifts "Mogilevliftmash" in Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/emomali-rahmon-prinjal-uchastie-v-otkrytii-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-liftov-mogilevliftmash-v-496483-2022/>

Agrarian University, the Tajik National University and the Technological University of Tajikistan, as well as the Mining and Metallurgical Institute of Tajikistan. Belarusian and Tajik partners already see a number of joint points for co-operation. "Interaction with the named universities is a new level of entering the Tajik market of educational services. <...> Opening new horizons of co-operation..."<sup>235</sup>. As a result, the parties believe that innovative interaction is the key to the creation of new joint ventures on the territory of Tajikistan and Belarus. And in general, all these facts "show the growing interest of the two former Soviet republics in fruitful co-operation in a wide variety of areas"<sup>236</sup>, which are reaching a new level in the form of comprehensive measures of the Road Map of Belarus and Tajikistan for 2022-2026.

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<sup>235</sup> BNTU and universities of Tajikistan to cooperate in the field of science, education and innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bntu-i-vuzy-tadzhikistana-budut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-nauki-obrazovanija-i-innovatsij-528871-2022>

<sup>236</sup> Zalesky, B. International relations and media. Features of multi-vector international co-operation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 129.



## **Belarus - Asia:**

### **There are opportunities for interaction, we need to use them**

Asia is currently the most important area of trade and economic cooperation for the Republic of Belarus. For instance, Belarusian exports to the countries of this continent totalled about USD two billion in 2020 alone. Nevertheless, there are still many opportunities for promoting Belarusian economic interests in this area. "In order to successfully utilise them, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts, as is actually the case in the development of partnership ties with a number of Asian countries"<sup>237</sup>, which include **Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.**

Referring to **Pakistan** in this context, we would like to recall that in October 2021, the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Pakistani Business Council was held, which was attended by representatives of more than 60 companies from this South Asian country representing such areas of economy as the chemical industry, pharmaceuticals, textiles, food production, construction, transport, logistics, and tourism. On the Belarusian side, representatives of almost one hundred enterprises and companies took part in the meeting. Such a composition of the participants of the business council very eloquently demonstrated the fact that "the relations between Belarus and Pakistan are currently at a high level, especially in trade, investment and industry"<sup>238</sup>. This is largely facilitated by a very extensive legal and contractual framework, which already includes more than 80 agreements. Another "about 20 agreements / memoranda of understanding are at the final stage of negotiations"<sup>239</sup>. The established mechanisms for the implementation of partnerships in the form of commissions and working groups, as well as the existing system of interregional co-operation, are also active.

As for the business council, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Pakistan and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and

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<sup>237</sup> Zaleskii, B. The goal is stable growth. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 66.

<sup>238</sup> Pakistan is interested in strengthening economic co-operation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-zainteresovan-v-ukreplenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-462939-2021/>

<sup>239</sup> Khan, S.H. About business plans, tractor deliveries and a masterclass on van painting / S.H. Khan // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/posol-pakistana-o-biznes-planah-postavkah-tractorov-i-master-klasse-po-rospisi-furgonov-7887/>

Industry held its fourth online meeting in April 2021. At the meeting, the parties "discussed not only the development of bilateral trade, but also opportunities to increase investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, and the creation of joint companies and production facilities, noting among the priority areas of interaction industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as education, information technology and logistics"<sup>240</sup>. At the fifth meeting of the Council, the Belarusian side made the key areas of cooperation with its Pakistani partners more specific, noting among them "increasing mutual sales of traditional products, setting up joint production facilities for Belarusian machinery in Pakistan, as well as joint production facilities for surgical instruments and leather goods in Belarus. The creation of joint clusters for the production of pharmaceuticals in demand is promising; this can take place both in Belarus and Pakistan"<sup>241</sup>. Besides, the issues of attracting Pakistani capital for the implementation of projects on modernisation of Belarusian textile enterprises, development of joint production of agricultural products, implementation of joint projects in science and technology with access to the production cycle are topical now. The project to set up a university of applied technologies in Pakistan is also relevant in order to raise the level of professional and technical training of Pakistani specialists using Belarusian educational technologies to a qualitatively new level.

If we take into account such a priority of interaction as agriculture, we note that in 2020, about three hundred units of Belarusian agricultural machinery - tractors and combines - were sold to Pakistan. In 2021, Minsk and Islamabad intend to increase this figure to three thousand units. At the same time, the fifth meeting of the business council discussed the idea of setting up an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors on Pakistani soil. "We are talking about assembling 10 thousand tractors a year in Pakistan, this project is in the works today and preliminary documents have been signed,"<sup>242</sup>.

Another promising area of Belarusian-Pakistani business interaction is the development of exchange trade, which can give new impulses to the development of bilateral trade and economic relations. In particular, the Pakistani side sees significant potential here "primarily in such areas as

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<sup>240</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Key task - realisation of cooperation potential / B.L. Zaleskii // Proceedings of the XVII International Scientific and Practical Conference, Novinata za nadrednala nauka - 2021, 17 - 25 May 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 19.

<sup>241</sup> Barysevich: the relations between Belarus and Pakistan are becoming strategic [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevich-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistan-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakter-462932-2021/>

<sup>242</sup> Belarus and Pakistan are considering the possibility of creating an assembly production of Belarusian tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-rassmatrivajut-vozmoznost-sozdaniya-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskih-tractorov-462934-2021/>

agriculture, woodworking, metallurgy, and petrochemicals"<sup>243</sup>. The fact is that, according to both sides, the Belarusian-Pakistani trade turnover is still small - just over \$50 million for 2020. The significant potential for its growth through the exchange mechanism lies in the fact that "Pakistan is one of the world's largest exporters of rice, wheat and other grain crops"<sup>244</sup>. The textile industry is also developed there. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) is ready to relieve Pakistani companies of most of the problems associated with entering the Belarusian market and minimise their possible risks. Besides, exporters from Pakistan could use the Belarusian exchange platform to supply their goods to the European Union countries, where BUTB has about four thousand accredited participants. In turn, Belarusian companies could successfully export chemical and petrochemical products to the Pakistani market, which are traditionally in high demand there.

We would like to remind that in the first eight months of 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan exceeded \$53 million. At the same time, "exports of Belarusian goods totalled \$44.3 million..."<sup>245</sup>, while the trade surplus for the Belarusian side was more than \$35 million. The dynamics of these indicators shows that the growth potential here is far from being exhausted. The opportunities for expanding trade and economic cooperation between the parties are quite diverse, and the plans for their implementation are concrete and realistic.

As for the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), trade and economic relations with this state, located in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region, have been developing particularly intensively for the Republic of Belarus in recent years. "Belarus has been steadily increasing supplies of goods and services to the UAE <...>. The main items of Belarusian exports are petrochemical products, wood processing, food products and various types of equipment. In the services sector, computer and transport services are actively exported"<sup>246</sup>. The dynamics of the development of these bilateral ties is eloquently illustrated by

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<sup>243</sup> Pakistan is ready to trade with Belarus through the BUTB platform [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-gotov-torgovat-s-belarusiju-cherez-ploschadku-butb-462927-2021/>

<sup>244</sup> BUTB opens wide prospects for the development of mutual trade between Belarus and Pakistan - Ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-otkryvaet-shirokie-perspektivy-dlja-razvitiya-vzaimnoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-pakistana-posol-453692-2021/>

<sup>245</sup> Trade and Economic Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade\\_and\\_economic\\_bilateral\\_relations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relations/)

<sup>246</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is interested in expanding cooperation with the UAE in trade and investment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-oe-v-sfere-torgovli-i-investitsij-470873-2021/>

the fact that "trade turnover has tripled over the past five years, while investments have increased more than 10-fold since 2011"<sup>247</sup>.

A good example of the expansion of bilateral Belarusian-Emirati interaction in the investment sphere in recent years is "the largest construction and real estate project being implemented in Minsk under the patronage of the founder of the world-famous Emaar company"<sup>248</sup>. Recall that Minsk City Executive Committee signed an agreement with the Emirati company Riverside Development Holdings Limited on the construction of the object "Experimental multifunctional complex "North Bank", which will be located within the boundaries of Minsk Ring Road - Pobediteley Avenue - Orlovskaya Street - Tsnyansky reservoir. The cost of the project is four billion dollars. In this complex will be built "residential buildings with all the necessary engineering and transport infrastructure, social facilities and public purposes with a total area of more than 6 million sq. m. It is also envisaged to build the National Exhibition Centre, the Institute of Artificial Intelligence and the Minsk International Trade Centre"<sup>249</sup>.

Among other Belarusian regions successfully developing mutually beneficial ties with partners from the UAE is Brest Region. "Over the past [2021] year, the foreign trade turnover between Brest region and the UAE increased 1.5 times and exceeded \$5 million. This is a small amount against the background of \$3 billion of exports in the region as a whole. But the market is promising..."<sup>250</sup>. The high interest of Brest region enterprises to the Emirati market is evidenced by the fact that the heads and leading specialists of almost ten large companies of the region have travelled to Dubai in January 2022 to take part in the "Expo 2020" events. Among them are JV "Santa Bremore" Ltd, JSC "Barhim", IAK-GROUP, group of companies "STiM", Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Brest Meat Processing Plant, Concern "Brestmyasomolprom", Brest Science and Technology Park and National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha". As a result, they signed contracts worth \$18 million at the world exhibition. Including four contracts with residents from the UAE - for eight million dollars. "In particular, contracts have been concluded for the supply of

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<sup>247</sup> Chervikov: National Day of Belarus at Expo 2020 will allow to show the capabilities of enterprises [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervikov-natsionalny-den-belarusi-na-ekspo-2020-pozvolit-pokazat-vozmozhnosti-predpriyatij-470830-2021/>

<sup>248</sup> Roman Golovchenko: At the EXPO we are working on cooperation with the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10068>

<sup>249</sup> Construction of the exhibition centre in the complex "North Bank" in Minsk is planned to start this year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/stroitelstvo-vystavochnogo-tsentra-v-komplekse-severnij-bereg-v-minske-planirujut-nachat-v-etom-godu-470841-2021/>

<sup>250</sup> Foreign trade turnover between Brest region and the UAE increased 1.5 times [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vneshnetorgovij-oborot-mezhdu-brestskoj-oblastju-i-oae-vyros-v-15-raza-479871-2022/>

milk powder and ice-cream powder <...> to the Arab market. Santa Bremore and STiM Group of Companies will increase sales of products." "Barkhim" signed an agreement with a Dubai company to promote its products on the UAE market"<sup>251</sup> .

The exhibition in Dubai did not leave aside the topic of attracting foreign investments in innovative projects of Brest region. Thus, about two dozen Arab companies - logistics, investment, food distributors, raw materials trading, and companies operating in the petrochemical industry - were able to learn in detail about the proposals of the Brest Free Economic Zone, including the production of chargers for electric cars and ultrasound machines. And Brest Science and Technology Park - the largest innovation centre and the main incubator of small business in the region - demonstrated the SmartBrest smart city project at Expo 2020, showing not only modern technologies and solutions that already exist and work in Brest, but also what may interest major investors. In particular, they talked about the territory of innovative development, into which "the current factory quarter, bounded by Moskovskaya, Pionerskaya and Ya. Kupaly. The area of the site is about 120 hectares. The production buildings remain unused on it"<sup>252</sup> . Potential investors are offered to create here enterprises with clean production in such areas as IT, artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, electronics, quantum computing. The attention with which this smart city project was met by the participants of the presentation allows us to hope that SmartBrest will be able to find interested investors not only in the UAE, but also in other countries.

If we talk about the relations between the Republic of Belarus and the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, we should recall that 2022 marks a quarter of a century since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It is true that their level is, of course, far from what it could be. But the fact is that in January 2022, the parties expressed their mutual desire to deepen and develop contacts and intensify dialogue. Minsk proceeds from the fact that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a recognised leader in the Arab world, and Belarus is interested in developing relations in all directions"<sup>253</sup> . Today, the parties consider several vectors of joint work as the first priorities

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<sup>251</sup> Contracts for \$18 million concluded by the enterprises of Brest region at the exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kontrakty-na-18-mln-zakljuchili-predpriyatija-brestskoj-oblasti-na-vystavke-v-dubae-481397-2022/>

<sup>252</sup> Brest Technopark presents the project of smart city at the exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnopark-prezentuet-proekt-umnogo-goroda-na-vystavke-v-dubae-480835-2022/>

<sup>253</sup> Andreichenko: Belarus is interested in deepening and developing contacts with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-belarus-zainteresovana-uglubljati-razvivat-kontakty-s-saudovskoj-araviej-480335-2022/>

of interaction: firstly, it is necessary to significantly expand the legal framework of relations; secondly, partnership ties in the economic sphere require significant activation, as the parties "have a serious potential in trade and economic cooperation"<sup>254</sup>.

<sup>255</sup>As for the legal framework of the Belarusian-Saudi relations, today it consists of the General Agreement, intergovernmental agreements on the avoidance of double taxation and mutual protection of investments, on cooperation in science and technology, interdepartmental memoranda in the field of sports, education, cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the King Abdulaziz Science and Technology Campus, as well as the "agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Council of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the KSA, the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of science and technology, and the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the King Abdulaziz Science and Technology Campus.

Speaking about the need to intensify Belarusian-Saudi trade and economic cooperation, it should be noted that back in December 2020, the parties agreed to "work out the next meeting of the joint intergovernmental committee"<sup>256</sup>. The fact is that the first two meetings of this committee were held in 2015 and 2016 in Riyadh and Minsk, respectively. At the first one, the parties agreed to set up the Belarusian-Saudi Business Council to make it a platform for fruitful interaction between representatives of business circles of the two countries. At the same time, "a contract was concluded for the supply of soil mixtures by the Belarusian company EridGrow Production"<sup>257</sup>. Within the framework of the second meeting of the intergovernmental committee a wide range of issues of co-operation in the field of economy, trade, investments, industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, water resources, higher education, science and technology, and business circles of the two countries were considered. The Belarusian-Saudi business forum and contact and cooperation exchange were held at the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and

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<sup>254</sup> Kochanova: Belarus attaches great importance to friendly relations with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-belarus-pridaet-bolshoe-znachenie-druzheskim-otnoshenijam-s-saudovskoj-araviej-480404-2022>

<sup>255</sup> Political co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/KSA/politics/](https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/KSA/politics/)

<sup>256</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia will work on holding a meeting of the joint intergovernmental committee [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-prorabotajut-provedenie-zasedanija-sovmestnogo-mezhpravkomiteta-420253-2020/>

<sup>257</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia agreed on the establishment of a joint business council [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-sovmestnogo-delovogo-soveta-2523-2015>

Industry. 18 Saudi and more than 70 Belarusian companies and organisations took part in the forum. At that time, "Belarus supplied Saudi Arabia with 37 commodity items, including machinery and complex technical equipment"<sup>258</sup>. At the forum, the Saudi partners were offered a much wider range of machine-building products, including specialised ones, as well as high-tech goods in the field of instrumentation. The Saudi side, in turn, expressed "interest in cooperation with Belarusian companies in the areas of information and communication technologies, real estate, security, agriculture, and engineering"<sup>259</sup>.

One of the most promising areas for intensifying trade and economic cooperation is to increase food supplies from Belarus to the Saudi market. Suffice it to say that "exports of Belarusian food products and agricultural raw materials to Saudi Arabia in 2020 grew 3.1 times against 2019 and totalled \$6.2 million. Belarus supplied Saudi Arabia with skimmed milk powder, whey, jams, fruit purees, and eggs. In January-March 2021, \$1.7 million worth of products were exported (24.3% growth)"<sup>260</sup>. Belarusian producers are now planning to continue co-operation with the Saudi Food and Drug Agency on accreditation for their supplies. In the first place, this involves such dairy products as butter, cheese, skimmed and whole milk powder, and, in the future, meat products such as beef and poultry produced in accordance with Halal requirements.

It should be noted that a number of Belarusian exporters have already successfully tapped the market of the Persian Gulf country. Thus, in July 2021, the first batch of concentrated milk was shipped to Saudi Arabia by Rogachev Dairy Canning Plant. "This happened thanks to a contract signed with one of the leaders in this country in distribution, which covers retail chains, shops, restaurants, cafes"<sup>261</sup>. Another interesting example in this series is the Polotsk Dairy Plant, which more than doubled its export volumes in 2021, the

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<sup>258</sup> Kiseleva, O. Belarus intends to seriously expand the range of products in the market of Saudi Arabia / O. Kiseleva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-seriezno-rasshirit-assortiment-produktsii-na-rynke-saudovskoj-aravii-193602-2016/>

<sup>259</sup> Business forum "Belarus - Saudi Arabia". [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudovskaya-araviya/#>

<sup>260</sup> Belarus is interested in increasing food supplies to Saudi Arabia - Krupko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-narashchivanii-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-saudovskuju-araviju-krupko-441447-2021/>

<sup>261</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Export of food and agricultural products: growth of supplies and geographical expansion / B.L. Zaleskii // Proceedings of the XVII International Scientific Conference, Scientific Potential for Light - 2020, 17 - 25 September 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 5.

geography of which is already 22 countries. "There are also plans to ship milk powder to Saudi Arabia in the near future"<sup>262</sup>.

All these facts show that the parties have a certain groundwork for the successful development of mutually beneficial relations in the post-Cold War period, the starting point for which may well be 2022. There are many proposals, directions and initiatives on both sides.

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<sup>262</sup> Polotsk Dairy Plant has more than doubled its exports in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-uvelichil-eksport-v-2021-godu-polotskij-molochnyj-kombinat-479923-2022>



## Belarus - Asia: growth points yield results

In 2021, Asian countries continued to be the growth points of Belarus's foreign policy and foreign trade activity. The implementation of the policy of reorienting the trade and economic cooperation of our republic towards the countries of the far arc "made it possible to increase Belarusian exports to this region to USD 2.4 billion in 2021 (114.3% compared to USD 2.1 billion in 2020"<sup>263</sup> . At the same time, active engagement with many countries on the Asian continent is also observed in 2022. These include Vietnam, India and Syria.

The year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and **Vietnam**. This Southeast Asian country is among those with which the Belarusian side is developing large-scale interaction in all areas of bilateral cooperation, and "diversification of trade and deepening of economic cooperation with them are important prerequisites for the growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy"<sup>264</sup> . This is evidenced, in particular, by the fact that in 2021, in order to expand its diplomatic presence in the financial and industrial centres of the Asian continent, the Belarusian government decided to open a consulate general in the Vietnamese city of Ho Chi Minh City.

Recall also that in 2021, trade turnover between the two countries exceeded \$200 million. "Belarus exported potash fertilisers, livestock products, instrumentation products, medicines and cosmetics"<sup>265</sup> . And in terms of industrial cooperation in Hungien province, "key Belarusian-Vietnamese projects are being implemented, including the assembly production of MAZ trucks (JV Maz-Asia LLC) and the production of dairy products from Belarusian raw materials (Au Viet Milk)"<sup>266</sup> . And important in this regard was the entry into force in 2021 of "an additional protocol to the agreement on industrial assembly with Vietnam, which creates favourable conditions for

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<sup>263</sup> Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/c0b615e3c82db7a8.html>

<sup>264</sup> Zaleskii, B. Journalism of regional communities. Theory and practice / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 99-100.

<sup>265</sup> Ambassador of Vietnam sees the potential for doubling trade turnover with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-vjetnama-vidit-potentsial-dlja-udvoenija-tovarooborota-s-belarusiju-493021-2022/>

<sup>266</sup> Belarus and Vietnam discussed the prospects for the development of joint ventures [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitijsovmestnyh-predpriyatij-478965-2022/>

localisation and development of assembly production of MAZ<sup>267</sup>. The issues of supplying Belarusian tractors to work in Vietnamese rice fields and quarry equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant are under consideration. In addition, Vietnam is interested in organising the production of firefighting equipment and sewing protective clothing for firefighting services using Belarusian technologies. In particular, in April 2022, the parties have already discussed "practical steps of cooperation to organise joint production of Belarusian special-purpose equipment in Vietnam, as well as the manufacture of outfits for Vietnamese firefighting services"<sup>268</sup>.

Another area of Belarusian-Vietnamese interaction that is likely to be significantly intensified in 2022 is food supplies from Belarus. Back in 2020, after passing all the stages of approval and certification, the full-fledged work on the supply of Belarusian dairy products to Vietnam began. Now, similar work is underway to certify meat products from Belarus - pork and beef - in the Vietnamese market. There is every reason to believe that 2022 will become a kind of "growth point" in the development of this type of Belarusian supplies.

The collective stand of Belgospisheprom Concern at the 31st International Exhibition Vietnan Expo - one of the largest in this region of the Asian continent, held in April 2022 and attended by more than 350 companies from 16 countries, including Russia, China, the USA, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cuba - is an indication of what exports from Belarus to this Southeast Asian country will be like in the near future. Thirteen enterprises of the concern "presented their products in Hanoi: "Krinitsa", "Belsolod", "Spartak", "Minskcrystal", Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, "Slodych", "Kommunarka", "Red Foods", "Mashpischeprod", "Lidapischekoncentraty", Malorita Canning and Vegetable Washing Plant, Minsk Margarine Plant and Pinsk Winery"<sup>269</sup>. And not just presented. For example, Belsolod OJSC even signed a contract for the supply of light malt with Trust & Future Viet Nam Joint Stock Company.

An important detail: at this exhibition, the Belarusian national exposition received the status of "Special Guest", which "implies central placement in the exhibition pavilion, active advertising and information

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<sup>267</sup> Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/c0b615e3c82db7a8.html>

<sup>268</sup> Belarus and Vietnam are working out the possibility of joint production of equipment for fire services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-prorabatyvajut-vozmozhnost-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-ekipirovki-dlja-pozharnyh-sluzhb-494398-2022/>

<sup>269</sup> Enterprises of Belgospisheprom presented their products at an exhibition in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belgospisheproma-predstavili-produktsiju-na-vystavke-vo-vjetname-495887-2022/>

support and large-scale congress events, including the Belarusian-Vietnamese business forum"<sup>270</sup> , the purpose of which is to find business partners and conclude export contracts. And this status was very useful for the scientific and technical section of the Belarusian exposition, where more than a hundred innovative developments in the field of high-tech equipment were presented. About 30 of them were presented by the Belarusian State University - food additives, pharmaceuticals, technological equipment. Among them are "antitumour drugs Cisplacel, Prospidelong, Temodex, aimed at counteracting malignant tumours of the head, neck, stomach cancer, and a medical unit of general hyperthermia "Ptich-M" for treatment of oncological diseases of internal organs"<sup>271</sup> . An innovative series of biopreparations for the treatment and prevention of diseases in farm animals also attracted the attention of the visitors. Finally, another exhibition novelty of BSU specialists is "Smart Windows". This invention, which has no analogues in the post-Soviet space, protects the room from sunlight, penetration of ultraviolet radiation and partially blocks infrared radiation, which makes it possible to refuse curtains and blinds. So, in the field of scientific and technological and innovative developments, the Belarusian side has something to offer to its Vietnamese partners, which will certainly be reflected in new contracts.

Speaking about **India**, it should be recalled that April 2022 also marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and this South Asian country. Minsk considers the development of co-operation with India "as one of the priorities of Belarus's foreign policy in Asia. Today India is a powerful modern state with a developed economy, a large market, and serious scientific and industrial potential"<sup>272</sup> . And the existing experience of diplomatic relations in both multilateral and bilateral formats shows that "India is one of the partner countries of Belarus in Asia, large-scale interaction with which is developing in all areas of cooperation"<sup>273</sup> .

By developing interaction based on the principles of equality, trust and respect, the two sides were able to achieve an annual trade turnover

<sup>270</sup> The national exposition of Belarus will be presented at the Vietnam Expo in April [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-vietnam-expo-v-aprele-485336-2022/>

<sup>271</sup> About 30 scientific and technical developments will present BSU at the International Exhibition VietnamExpo-2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-vietnamexpo-2022-495450-2022/>

<sup>272</sup> Andreichenko: the relations between Belarus and India are developing on the principles of equality, trust and respect [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-otnosheniya-belarusi-i-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenija-479047-2022/>

<sup>273</sup> Zaleskii, B. International relations and media. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 452.

consistently exceeding half a billion dollars in 2019-2021. But "as in any relationship, there are areas that are not fully developed. This is especially true of trade and economic relations"<sup>274</sup>. That is why the year 2022 can be called the time of defining new spheres of development in the cooperation between Belarus and India. Belarusian regions are now very active in this process.

For example, **Hrodna** Region plans to significantly strengthen cooperation with India in pharmaceuticals, high technology and education. In this regard, the project to build a pharmaceutical plant in Skidel with Indian capital has great potential. The enterprise has been built. Now <...> it is important to jointly bring it to sustainable operation, ensure the expansion of the range of products, and realise its export potential"<sup>275</sup>. As for co-operation in the field of education, 150 Indian citizens are studying at Grodno State Medical University alone this academic year. There are also them at the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno. And their number, to all appearances, will continue to increase there. New joint projects in the fields of pharmaceuticals, chemical industry, production of agricultural machinery and food products, including dairy products, will not go unnoticed in the near future.

Innovative technologies, IT and medicine should become the main points of growth in cooperation with India in **Homiel** Region. Experience shows that the interaction of the Belarusian southeastern region with Indian partners in recent years has been, as they call it, on the rise. "Since 2018, the growth rate of trade turnover has more than doubled. In 2021, the figure stood at 508.4 per cent. Such products of the Gomel region's industrial sector as cellulose, timber, electric current control apparatus, stone products are in demand in India"<sup>276</sup>. In 2022, the parties put the issue of resuming the production of Gomel combine harvesters for Indian agriculture into practical terms. A separate topic is partnership in the educational sphere, which already has its own history. The fact is that the first Indian graduate graduated from Gomel State Medical University (GSMU) back in 2005. Since then, only 178 representatives of India have received a diploma from this university. In 2022, 51 more graduates will be added to them. In total, 290 students from this South Asian country are currently studying at the State Medical University. And in

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<sup>274</sup> Kochanova: India is a long-standing friend and reliable partner in Asia for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-indija-dlja-belarusi-davnij-drug-i-nadezhnyj-partner-v-azii-482540-2022/>

<sup>275</sup> Pharmaceuticals, IT-sphere and education: Grodno region increases cooperation with India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/farmatsevtika-it-sfera-i-obrazovanie-grodnenskaja-oblast-naraschivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiej-485022-2022/>

<sup>276</sup> Innovative technologies, IT and medicine: India and Gomel region are ready to develop new spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/innovatsionnye-tehnologii-it-i-medsina-indija-i-gomelskaja-oblast-gotovy-razvivat-novye-sfery-492016-2022>

the nearest plans - more active involvement of Gomel State University named after Francysk Skaryna in this co-operation.

**Mogilev** Region is also planning to expand the areas of co-operation with India in the near future. Among the promising areas here are agriculture, education, textile industry and innovative technologies. In 2021, the trade turnover between the two sides totalled almost six million dollars. The bulk of supplies from the Belarusian region was made up of carbon black, newsprint and timber, while from India - complex synthetic yarns, medicines, shoe parts, and parts for internal combustion engines. And there is every reason to believe that this list of mutual supplies will only expand. In particular, Technolit, which specialises in the production of components and spare parts for various machinery, is successfully cooperating with the Indian market. It receives from India "blanks, which are processed here on high-precision equipment and then sent to other countries. Exports have been set up to more than 30 countries <...>. In addition, discussions have already started on supplying finished products of Technolit to the Indian market"<sup>277</sup>. Another interesting example of co-operation in the field of innovative technologies is Energitechgreen LLC operating in Mogilev with Indian capital, registered in August 2021. "The main area of activity is environmentally friendly innovations. Here they are engaged in the recovery (regeneration) of all types of batteries used in road, railway and river transport, special vehicles, industry and communications, wind turbines and solar panels"<sup>278</sup>. The FEZ "Mogilev" is significantly intensifying its cooperation with India, which in March 2022 at the World Expo 2020 exhibition in Dubai signed agreements with two companies from this country on the implementation of investment projects on the basis of the FEZ.

All these facts testify to the fact that the Indian direction of co-operation is becoming more and more in demand for Belarusian regions. And significant prospects of foreign economic activity are opening up for them there.

As for **Syria**, 30 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and **Syria** will be marked in August 2023. All this time, political interaction with this country has been characterised by a high level and regularity of interstate contacts, coincidence of approaches of Minsk and Damascus to solving most international problems, and mutual

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<sup>277</sup> Strahar: Mogilev "Tekhnolit" in difficult conditions shows its efficiency [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/strahar-mogilevskij-tehnolit-v-neprostyh-uslovijah-pokazyvaet-svoju-effektivnost-493160-2022>

<sup>278</sup> Agriculture, textile industry: Indian ambassador on the need to expand co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-tekstilnaja-promyshlennost-posol-indii-o-neobhodimosti-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-492918-2022>

support in international organisations. In the economic sphere, cooperation between the two countries has been developing on its own steady trajectory and has been manifested in the supply of hundreds of Belarusian trucks to the Syrian market and thorough elaboration of a project for the assembly of Belarusian automotive equipment. Due to the aggravation of the internal situation in Syria in 2011, the implementation of these plans had to be slowed down. However, even in the most difficult time for Damascus, the Belarusian side expressed its conviction in Syria's successful recovery from the crisis and interest in further developing and strengthening bilateral relations in all areas.

The highest level of Belarusian-Syrian interaction was recorded in 2008, when bilateral trade totalled \$85.5 million. Five years later, this indicator decreased almost tenfold to \$8.9 million due to the well-known events in that country. But already 2014 showed the dynamics of the beginning of overcoming the crisis on Syrian soil, which awakened hopes in Minsk to restore the previously existing level of bilateral cooperation. And this was immediately reflected in the rapid growth of Belarusian exports to Syria to \$32.2 million, with the total trade turnover reaching \$33.8 million. Belarusian semi-finished products made of non-alloyed steel, instrumentation, medicines, and liquid crystal devices began to find their niche in the Syrian market. Against this background of an obvious revival of trade and economic ties in 2015, Minsk and Damascus actively searched for new areas of cooperation in order to "not only restore the previous level of trade turnover in the best years, but also to surpass it many times over"<sup>279</sup>. At the same time, the parties decided to adhere to the principle of mutual complementarity, whereby Belarus produces products in which Syrians are interested, while Syria has a number of goods in which Belarusians are interested.

It should be recalled that when a trend towards stabilisation in the security sphere emerged in the central regions of Syria and around Damascus in 2014-2015, the government of this country immediately expressed its interest "in developing trade and investment cooperation, in resuming and expanding cooperation ties with countries that during the most difficult moments of the ordeal <...> did not cease political, economic and other support"<sup>280</sup>. Among these states was Belarus, which already then saw significant opportunities in intensifying co-operation with its Syrian partners

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<sup>279</sup> Materials of the press conference following the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Vladimir Makei to Syria (9 February 2015, Damascus) [Electronic resource]. - 2015. URL: [http://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/b49e0d253459ccba.html](http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b49e0d253459ccba.html)

<sup>280</sup> The project of creating an assembly plant of Belarusian automobiles in Syria has been resumed [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozobnovlena-prorabotka-proekta-sozdanija-v-sirii-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskoj-avtotehniki-155561-2015/>

across the whole range of bilateral relations, which are based on a legal framework of a dozen and a half documents. Among them are agreements on trade, economic and technical cooperation; on promotion and mutual protection of investments; on avoidance of double taxation; on military-technical cooperation; on cooperation in the field of education, science and culture; on air communication; on scientific and technical cooperation; on international road transport of passengers and cargo. There are also agreements on bank payments, in the field of agro-industrial complex, veterinary medicine, quarantine and plant protection.

Today, Minsk is well aware of the challenges facing the Syrian government in restoring the country's infrastructure and economy, finding resources that would make it possible to finance the most important projects for the state, and in this connection sees two directions for further development of bilateral Belarusian-Syrian interaction. Firstly, it is necessary "to organise framework or umbrella agreements at the level of the governments, to determine the principal schemes for organising joint work. The second level is the level of business, which should build mutually beneficial and safe schemes for their implementation on the basis of these agreements"<sup>281</sup>.

It should be noted that in the first 11 months of 2021, Belarusian-Syrian trade turnover increased by more than 40 per cent, while exports from Belarus increased by almost 45 per cent. The bulk of Belarusian supplies was made up of medicines, condensed and dried cream, and milk whey. At the same time, the Belarusian side expressed confidence that it could meet most of Syria's needs not only in these commodity items, but also in machine-building products, passenger, agricultural, cargo and construction machinery, as well as "in the construction of high-quality and comfortable housing"<sup>282</sup>. The fact is that today in this country works are unfolding to restore industry, agriculture, construction and services. Suffice it to say that "115 projects are being implemented here to recreate water and electricity supply systems, transport infrastructure, oil and gas industry, telecommunications. The total cost of the work is estimated at \$540 billion. In this regard, the country needs a wide range of materials, services and technologies"<sup>283</sup>.

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<sup>281</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus can meet most of Syria's needs in machine-building products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10143>

<sup>282</sup> Belarus and Syria are interested in co-operation in the construction sector [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-sirija-zainteresovany-sotrudnichestvom-v-stroitelnoy-sfere-481516-2022/>

<sup>283</sup> Belarusian companies will take part in the largest industrial exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-kompanii-primut-uchastie-v-krupnejshj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-sirii-458048-2021/>

To attract the attention of the wider international community to address these issues, the Rebuild Syria International Industrial Exhibition was organised in Damascus in September 2021, bringing together 190 companies from 25 countries, including Russia, China, India and Cuba. It included ten thematic sections: "Construction technologies and building materials"; "Finishing and decorative products"; "Kitchens, bathrooms, plumbing, water supply technologies"; "Air conditioning, heating, lighting, power generation and electrical engineering"; "Oil and gas"; "Ecology and infrastructure management"; "Insurance and banking"; "Communication systems"; "Information technologies and software"; and "Food and beverages".

For the first time at this exhibition, which has been held since 2015, an exposition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus was organised, where a number of domestic companies presented their products. For example, Minsk Tractor Plant, more than two thousand machines of which are currently working in the fields of Syria, demonstrated new models of tractors adapted to work in a hot climate. Minsk Motor Plant showed a line of modern diesel engines and spare parts for them, and Minsk Automobile Plant showed the capabilities of its products. The Brest Electrotechnical Plant presented railway automation, telemechanics and communication equipment, which, as it turned out, fully meets the requirements of the Syrian market, as "Syria's railway infrastructure was designed according to Soviet standards. Today, Syria's railway communication system is 80% destroyed, so its restoration has become an important task for the government"<sup>284</sup>.

Another participant of the Belarusian exposition, the European Agrarian Agency Spetsstroy, aroused considerable interest on the Syrian side due to the fact that it specialises in the construction of buildings and structures, including multi-storey buildings, dismantling and demolition, sorting and recycling construction waste, and building dairy farms. Belagro Bel', a group of companies supplying agricultural complexes of various manufacturers, took part in this business forum in a remote format, which did not prevent it from holding business negotiations with potential partners.

In general, during this international exhibition forum, representatives of the Belarusian side were able to discuss with representatives of the Syrian business community a wide range of issues related to cooperation "in water treatment plants, construction works in Syria, supplies of agricultural

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<sup>284</sup> Sluka: Syria today needs modern achievements of the Belarusian economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sluka-sirija-segodnja-nuzhdaetsja-v-sovremennyh-dostizhenijah-belorusskoj-ekonomiki-462466-2021/>



equipment"<sup>285</sup>, in the field of breeding in livestock breeding and creation of dairy farms, as well as promising areas for promoting exports of Belarusian goods and services to the Syrian market. All these facts show that the participation of Belarusian companies in the Rebuild Syria industrial exhibition was another concrete step forward towards the development of the Syrian market both in machine building and tractor construction, as well as in housing, industrial and road construction.

Another important aspect in the context of this topic is the relations in the information sphere between Belarus and Syria, which are based on the provisions of the relevant agreement of 11 March 1998, as well as the Agreement on Cooperation between the National State Television and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus and the General Organisation for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Syria of 12 November 2007 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) of 27 November 2008. These documents note "the importance of objective information support for inter-State co-operation. The role of the mass media in strengthening mutual understanding between the countries and peoples is particularly emphasised"<sup>286</sup>. After all, the thematic spectrum of the Belarusian-Syrian interaction should be actively expanded today. These include cooperation in the electric power industry; resumption of supplies of Belarusian motor vehicles to the Syrian market; establishment of an assembly plant of Minsk Automobile Plant machinery in Syria; expansion of regional cooperation; supply of Belarusian construction machinery for the needs of public works related to the reconstruction of Syria. Finally, cooperation in science and technology, within the framework of which "Belarusian and Syrian scientific institutes have signed 7 'pilot' contracts for joint research and development work"<sup>287</sup>. In this regard, the task of journalists is to comprehensively reflect these trends in the media sphere.

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<sup>285</sup> Syria will study the experience of building dairy farms in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sirija-izuchit-opyt-stroitelstva-molochno-tovarnyh-ferm-v-belarusi-462158-2021/>

<sup>286</sup> Co-operation between Belarus and Syria in the information sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mininform.gov.by/special/ru/news-ru/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-sirii-v-informatsionnoj-sfere-275/>

<sup>287</sup> Co-operation in the field of science, education, culture [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: [http://syria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/cooperation/ec5318cc4fb8b9c5.html](http://syria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cooperation/ec5318cc4fb8b9c5.html)

## **Belarus-China: development of an industrial park and regional co-operation**

Directive No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China", adopted in December 2021, lists building up trade and economic, financial, and investment interaction and expanding interregional ties among the priority tasks until 2025. Within the framework of the declared course to raise the status of Belarusian-Chinese relations to the level of iron brotherhood, exemplary all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, an important component is the activity of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", one of the main tasks of which is to ensure the efficient operation of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovative activities, startups, cluster cooperation, as well as attract Belarusian enterprises to participate in the industrial park "Great Stone". At the same time, a specific goal is outlined: "To ensure that by 2025 the number of park residents is not less than 170 companies..."<sup>288</sup>

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to fulfil this task were taken in Veliky Kamen back in 2021. In particular, over the three quarters of this year, residents of the industrial park increased investment in fixed assets by more than a third. At the same time, "the volume of industrial production increased more than 2.5 times to Br222.6 million. <...> Exports of residents' products and services increased by more than 16% and are exported to 20 countries of the world"<sup>289</sup>. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020, 68 companies from 14 countries were registered [in the park]"<sup>290</sup>, then by mid-November 2021, 81 companies from 15 countries were already registered as residents. The work on the expansion of Veliky Kamen continues unabated.

Thus, in October, the Belarusian-Latvian SMD Bai LLC was registered here, which "plans to create a high-tech production of electronic products (boards) of small and medium series"<sup>291</sup>, widely used in telecommunications,

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<sup>288</sup> Directive of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China". - Minsk, 2021. - C. 6.

<sup>289</sup> In "Velikiy Kamen" for 9 months by more than a third increased investment in fixed capital [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-za-9-mesjatsev-bolee-chem-na-tret-uvlichilis-investitsii-v-osnovnoj-kapital-470611-2021/>

<sup>290</sup> Zaleskii, B. With the aim of sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 13.

<sup>291</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce electronic boards [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platy-465743-2021/>

medicine, automotive industry, instrumentation, to supply them to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. In November, the list of residents of the industrial park was supplemented by several more business entities. One of them is Rufais LLC. The investment project of the new resident is related to the production and application of the latest polymer materials in construction. The innovative approach here is that "the composite material is the company's own development and differs from its analogues by higher operational properties. It has a wide sphere of application, including the production of roofing and other elements of buildings and structures"<sup>292</sup>, which gives good reason to hope for the realisation of this product not only in the domestic market, but also in Russia and the countries of the European Union.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian InKata LLC, which was previously registered in Veliky Kamen as an investor to build facilities here to support subjects of innovative activities of the industrial park. "The project will provide design, prototyping, and technical documentation development services, as well as workplaces and equipment"<sup>293</sup>. Another November resident of Veliky Kamen is the China-Belarus Centre for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies LLC, which intends to cooperate closely with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "The company will produce reagents for diagnostics of coronavirus and some other diseases, as well as for food safety diagnostics"<sup>294</sup>, which are supposed to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic and European Unions, as well as to China.

In the first half of December, the industrial park registered a new subject of innovation activity - Needle Med LLC, which is going to implement in Veliky Kamen a project to create an ideal simulator for practicing practical manual skills by workers of various specialties - surgeons, tattoo masters, medical students. Interestingly, this project was created in 2019 by a group of students. "Its idea is to create a simulator, as close as possible to real human tissues, to prepare specialists for practical activities"<sup>295</sup>. Thanks to the opportunities that the industrial park provides to innovators, the development of young specialists, it must be assumed, will find a wide application in real

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<sup>292</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce composite materials [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-469205-2021/>

<sup>293</sup> LLC "InKata" became a resident of "Veliky Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ooo-inkata-stalo-rezidentom-velikogo-kamnja-471320-2021/>

<sup>294</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce reagents for disease diagnostics [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-reagenty-dlja-dagnostiki-zabolevanij-471849-2021/>

<sup>295</sup> The new company "Great Stone" will create simulators for practising manual skills in surgery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaja-kompanija-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazhery-dlja-otrabotki-manualnyh-navykov-v-hirurgii-474239-2021/>

life. In the second half of December, Veliky Kamen registered another resident - Tianyu Changying UAV Science and Technology Company (MSC) LLC, whose founder is one of China's leading enterprises in the development and production of intelligent unmanned systems - Beijing Tianyu Changying UAV Science and Technology Company. The purpose of this investment project in the industrial park is to "establish a high-tech production facility for universal logistics systems of unmanned aerial vehicles and equipment for them"<sup>296</sup>.

Speaking about the development of cluster co-operation in Veliky Kamen, it should be recalled that back in June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Veliky Kamen. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the park administration more independent by transferring additional powers from local authorities in terms of administrative procedures; 2) expanding the types of activities of the industrial park; 3) supporting start-ups; 4) creating preferential conditions for large investment projects with investments of more than \$50 million.

Among the new areas of Veliky Kamen's activities are, first of all, the creation and development of production facilities in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, medical products and medical services. A very attractive innovation in this regard is the special conditions for the development of medical activities on the territory of the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services using medicines, medical equipment and products, treatment methods from foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a licence for medical services. The terms and procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as clinical trials will be significantly reduced and simplified for manufacturers. In other words, all these changes "open wide opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>297</sup>.

Focusing on the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of medicine in the context of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic is very timely. After all, Chinese traditional medicine "has unique advantages in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases. <...> It not only has

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<sup>296</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will start to produce unmanned aerial vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnya-nachnet-proizvodit-bespilotnye-letatelnye-apparaty-476043-2021/>

<sup>297</sup> Koroteev, K. Support for startups, preferences for investors, simplification of land relations - about the innovations of the decree on the development of the park "Great Stone" / K. Koroteev // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/podderzhka-startapov-preferentsii-investoram-uproschenie-zemelnyh-otnoshenij-koroteev-o-novatsijah-ukaza-po-7805/>

a good curative effect on mild COVID-19, but also has obvious advantages in treating critically ill patients, which has reduced the lethality rate of severe cases from 21% to 5%"<sup>298</sup>. The use of the Great Stone platform to realise the existing potential of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of public health could have a serious positive result in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

Recall that the Velikiy Kamen industrial park has 12 residents operating within the medical direction. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia, and the USA"<sup>299</sup>. An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be Novoera Biotech, which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include the Jingtai Institute of Culture and Economics, Xishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic LLC (Beijing) and Xishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company LLC (Beijing). The new resident will undertake a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "Medicines, supplements that are planned to be produced are based on environmentally friendly natural material. They will be in demand not only to help in the treatment of coronavirus, but also in the treatment of colds, flu, asthma"<sup>300</sup>. In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, a drug aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be organised. It was assumed that at the first stage the produced medicines, the production of which was planned to start in 2021, would be exported to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

In March 2021, plans were also announced to establish a Eurasian Centre of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Veliky Kamen, which will provide medical services to residents of the industrial park, its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions, healthcare institutions of Belarus and neighbouring countries to share experience in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a memorandum of cooperation was signed by the Industrial Park Development Company and the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. In July, an agreement was signed in Veliky Kamen to establish a Sino-Belarusian zone of in-depth cooperation and an

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<sup>298</sup> Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: the growth of business cooperation and interaction in the release of drugs in the treatment of coronavirus / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-i-kitaj-rost-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-i-vzaimodejstvie-v-vypuske-lekarstv-pri-lechenii-koronavirusa-7873/>

<sup>299</sup> The Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare and the Great Stone Park agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-ekspertiz-i-ispytaniy-v-zdravoohraneni-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

<sup>300</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" starts the project in the sphere of Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-meditsiny-433283-2021/>

international park of traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare, which imply a new model of cooperation between Belarus and China in the above-mentioned area.

All these facts testify to the active steps to deploy in the industrial park "an extensive cluster, which will bring together developments in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> A medical centre for diagnostic services is expected to appear in the future. This direction is already in the works"<sup>301</sup>. In addition, the development of medical tourism is also envisaged here, for which a kind of medical village will be built near the Volmyanskoye reservoir - clinics and various medical institutions in the field of rehabilitation. It should also be reminded that in the complex of measures for the development of the national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025 the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Veliky Kamen" is defined "as a platform for the organisation of innovative productions"<sup>302</sup>. Judging by the above facts, this site is developing quite successfully, confidently and dynamically in the current five-year period.

Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations, one can note the successful experience of such Belarusian regions as Minsk and Homiel Oblast in addressing this task. Speaking about the Belarusian capital, it is enough to say that "in January-May of this [2021] year, Minsk's trade turnover with the PRC totalled \$730.6 million, while last year it was \$613.8 million for the same period"<sup>303</sup>. The main exporters were RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company LLC, Meat and Dairy Company CJSC, Mobiora CJSC, Integral OJSC. The basis of Minsk supplies to the Celestial Empire were timber, meat and food by-products of poultry, milk and condensed cream, rapeseed oil, electronic integrated circuits and microassemblies, tanned or dressed fur pelts, measuring or control devices, collections and collectibles on zoology, equipment for measuring or controlling electrical values, ready-made carriers for sound recording. In terms of consolidating this trend in the future, it is important to intensify the Belarusian capital's ties with Chinese sister cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

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<sup>301</sup> Kryzhevich, I. Two new residents of "Great Stone" will be engaged in the development of artificial intelligence and the development of equipment for data processing and storage / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/zvanyy-biznes.html>

<sup>302</sup> Measures for the development of the national innovation system up to 2025 are defined [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opredeleny-meropriyatija-po-razvitiyu-natsionalnoj-innovatsionnoj-sistemy-do-2025-goda-475735-2021>

<sup>303</sup> Kukharev and the Ambassador of China discussed cooperation between Minsk and the cities of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource] - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kuharev-i-posol-kitaja-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-minska-s-gorodami-knr-453612-2021/>

Changchun, the administrative centre of Jilin Province, located in the north-east of China, where science, automotive and optical instrumentation industries are developed and about eight million people live, occupies a special place in this list of sister cities. May 2022 will mark 30 years since the signing of the Agreement on the establishment of twinning ties between Changchun and the Belarusian capital. In 2010, a Belarusian-Chinese technopark was opened in the high-tech manufacturing zone of this Chinese city to become a platform for working on joint projects and further promotion of products not only in China but also in neighbouring countries. It was based on about 15 enterprises that were part of the zone and had long-standing sustainable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovation enterprises. At that time, among the joint projects planned in the technopark were "the establishment of an enterprise for the production of medical laser equipment, an agreement on the creation of a joint venture for the production of high-precision electric motor. At the first stage, about 30 hectares of land for construction of office and production premises have been allocated for the project, and another 30 hectares may be allocated in the future"<sup>304</sup>. More specifically, the technopark is divided into six functional zones: a research and development centre, a project incubator, a museum, as well as three complexes - international cooperation, regional cooperation and service. In addition, it is planned to create an art gallery, bookshop, exhibition and concert halls on its territory. But the main thing is that here "the developments are based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"<sup>305</sup>.

Today, "a complex of technopark buildings has already been built there, and one of the pressing issues at present is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"<sup>306</sup>. And it has already accepted its first three residents: Sino-Belarusian Centre for Research and Development of Precision Medical Equipment of BNTU Technopark "Polytechnik" and Belarusian-Chinese Technopark in Changchun; Belarusian-Chinese Centre for Joint Development and Application of Carbon-Carbon Composite Materials between SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC and Jilin Lenke Company; Belarusian-Chinese centre for the development of functional berry crops between the

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<sup>304</sup> Palezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese technopark opened in the city of Changchun / T. Palezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorussko-kitajskij-tehnopark-otkrylsja-v-gorode-changchun-134192-2010>

<sup>305</sup> Chinese-Belarusian technopark is being built in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-stroyat-kitajsko-belorusskij-tehnopark-08-07-2019-05-00-12>

<sup>306</sup> Technopark in Changchun will make a significant contribution to the development of relations between Belarus and China - Shumilin [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tehnopark-v-chanchune-vneset-suschestvennyj-vklad-v-razvitiye-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-shumilin-405335-2020/>

Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences, Polesskie Zhuraviny Ltd. and the Northeast Institute of Geography and Ecology of Agriculture of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. To support this growing dynamics of bilateral interaction, the Belarusian and Chinese sides set the task to "focus on improving conditions for mutually beneficial co-operation, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"<sup>307</sup>. And today, the main thematic areas of the technopark already include "photo-electronics, laser technology, new materials, construction and energy, agricultural technology and biotechnology, informatics"<sup>308</sup>.

The Belarusian-Chinese technology park in Changchun is not the only area of cooperation between Minsk and this sister city. Back in June 2014, the parties agreed to develop business co-operation, for which they planned to hold business forums. "During such events, businessmen will have an opportunity to agree on the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will contribute to further strengthening the economic basis of our co-operation"<sup>309</sup>. In June 2017, in order to expand twinning ties, the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Changchun People's Government adopted an agreement to establish cooperation in the field of tourism and the development of cultural ties. And within the framework of the bilateral business forum held in the Chinese city at the same time, "memoranda of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by SOAO Kommunar'ka, KUP Minsk'khlebprom, KUP Small Wholesale Base on Western, OJSC Belryba, OJSC Minotel"<sup>310</sup>. So the opportunities for expanding co-operation between the two twin cities are undoubtedly very extensive. It is only necessary to use them without wasting time and with mutual benefit.

As for Homiel Region, it has already signed documents on bilateral cooperation with four Chinese regions - the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016), Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016). Naming Sichuan Province in this list, we note that in April 2021, the two sides raised the level of their friendly relations by signing "an agreement

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<sup>307</sup> About 300 applications are submitted to the Chinese-Belarusian youth competition of innovative projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-300-zajavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-molodezhnyj-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/>

<sup>308</sup> Belarusian-Chinese Science and Technology Park in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://changchun.park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/>

<sup>309</sup> Minsk and Chinese Changchun plan to develop business co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-planirujut-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

<sup>310</sup> Minsk and Chinese Changchun signed an agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kulturny-250871-2017/>



on the establishment of twinning ties, which provides for the expansion of co-operation in the economic, social and cultural spheres"<sup>311</sup>.

Such a variety of partnership and twinning ties could not but affect the interaction between Homiel Region and China in general. Suffice it to say that over the past three years, supplies from this Belarusian region to the Chinese market have grown 20(!) times. And "the export of Gomel enterprises to China in January-November last year [2021] exceeded \$100 million. The main export positions to China are wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionery products"<sup>312</sup>. And this level in the region is not considered the limit, as they see serious potential in increasing supplies to this East Asian country of beef, meat and edible by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, milk, condensed and dried cream, whey powder. For this purpose 16 enterprises of the region have already been accredited in the Celestial Empire: 6 meat processing, 7 milk processing, 2 distilleries and one confectionery. And three enterprises with Chinese capital have already been registered in the Belarusian region itself - one for the production of electricity by hydroelectric power plants, one for the production of concrete and one engaged in restaurant activities.

An important detail: Homiel will continue to actively expand ties with Chinese regions in 2022. Thus, in January, they held a round table on multifunctional cooperation with Hebei Province, whose business entities have been interacting with Homiel partners in terms of production cooperation for quite a long time. In particular, in September 2015, Chongqing Agricultural Machinery Enterprise Zongshen - Homel LLC was established in Hebei Province to assemble cob harvesters, forage harvesters and grain harvesters. The investor on the Belarusian side was Gomselmash OJSC and the investor on the Chinese side was Zongshen Industrial Corporation Ltd. This co-operation project enabled the Belarusian manufacturer to strengthen and expand its presence in the Chinese market. "In 2016, the amount of machine parts supplied to the PRC totalled about USD 2.6 million," the company said. In 2016, the amount of machine parts supplied to the PRC was about USD 2.6 million, in 2017. - USD 10 million. In 2017, the amount of machine kits

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<sup>311</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Gomel region: Chinese vector of partnership / B.L. Zalesky // *Materialy XVIII Mezinárodní vědecko-praktická konference "Efektivní nástroje moderních věd - 2021"*. Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

<sup>312</sup> Gomel region has increased exports to China 20 times in three years [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-za-tri-goda-uvelichila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-raz-481090-2022/>

supplied to the PRC was about USD 2.6 million, in 2018. - USD 7 million. USD"<sup>313</sup>.

As a follow-up to this project, in March 2017, the construction of a new plant for the production of combines for harvesting maize, grain and rapeseed was launched in Weixian County of Handan City District of the same Hebei Province by the Belarusian-Chinese joint venture Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise. And at the same time "the first contracts were signed with agricultural companies of Hebei and Heilongjiang provinces for the purchase of Belarusian-Chinese-made combines"<sup>314</sup>. And in June 2019, a new contract was signed to supply another batch of forage harvester kits to China for more than \$1.5 million. And by mid-2019, "the company produced 500 harvesters"<sup>315</sup>.

A logical continuation of these partnerships was the adoption in October 2019 by the cities of Gomel and Handan of a memorandum of intent on the establishment of twinning ties to promote the development of mutually beneficial cooperation. In particular, the topic of increasing exports of food products, the same beef, was very relevant for the Gomel side in this context. It was also mentioned that "the parties should develop industrial co-operation on a partnership basis, in particular between Gomselmash and Hebei agricultural machinery enterprise Zongshen-Gomel. There are prospects for the implementation of joint ideas in tourism, culture and education"<sup>316</sup>.

In this regard, it should be said that the twinning ties between the cities of Gomel region and Chinese partners very organically complement the whole complex of interregional interaction between this Belarusian region and China. At the beginning of 2022, seven bilateral documents were concluded between the administrative-territorial units of Gomel region and China. The eighth was the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations between Svetlogorsk district and the city of Baoding, located in Hebei province and having more than ten million inhabitants, signed in January 2022. This document "envisages the development of mutually beneficial co-operation in various spheres -

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<sup>313</sup> Interregional ties between Belarus and China: state, problems and prospects of development / T.S. Vertinskaya [et al.]. - Minsk: Belaruskaya nauvuka, 2020. - C. 221-222.

<sup>314</sup> Grishkevich, A. A new Belarusian-Chinese plant for the production of combines started to build in the province of Hebei / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-belorussko-kitajskij-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-kombajnov-nachali-stroit-v-provintsii-hebej-237889-2017>

<sup>315</sup> Gomselmash will supply China with machine sets of forage harvesters for the amount of more than \$1.5 million. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://export.by/news/gomselmash-postavit-v-kitay-mashinokomplekti-kormouborochnih-kombaynov-na-summu-bolee-15-mln-dol>

<sup>316</sup> Gomel and Chinese Handan intend to develop twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-handan-namereny-razvivat-pobratimskie-svjazi-366580-2019/>

economic, trade and humanitarian"<sup>317</sup>. The parties certainly have the necessary potential for the development of effective co-operation. And let's hope that the next step in the development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic relations of Gomel region will be the establishment of twinning ties with the whole province of Hebei.

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<sup>317</sup> Svetlogorskiy district and Chinese Baoding signed an agreement on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svetlogorskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-baodin-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-otnoshenijah-481071-2022/>

## **Belarus - China: prospects for co-operation identified**

In May 2022, the sixth meeting of the Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee was held, where its participants discussed the status and prospects of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, transport and logistics partnership, and the implementation of the joint project - the China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park. Recall that in 2021, the volume of mutual trade in goods and services between the two countries came close to six billion dollars, while the share of Belarusian supplies to the Celestial Empire has more than doubled. At the same time, "the capabilities of Belarusian producers make it possible to ship almost \$2 billion worth of Belarusian-made goods to the Chinese market by the end of this year [2022]. This requires consolidation of the parties' efforts to accelerate the opening of the Chinese market for new Belarusian producers, create joint trading companies, and develop China's largest electronic trading platforms."<sup>318</sup>

During the commission meeting, the Belarusian side proposed to deepen trade co-operation in five promising areas. The first is the expansion of direct contacts between the business circles of the two countries. The second is to increase the range of products supplied to China from Belarus. The third is the promotion of new mechanisms for expanding bilateral trade with a focus on establishing joint export-import companies and positioning Belarusian goods on Chinese electronic trading platforms. Fourth, developing logistics through prompt delivery of goods by railway. Fifth - building up investment cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral projects and joint work on the creation of new import-substituting enterprises "through the prism of developing the Veliky Kamen industrial park and deepening interregional cooperation"<sup>319</sup>.

The results of the first quarter of 2022 testify to the fact that the work in these areas is quite active. In particular, Belarusian-Chinese trade turnover totalled \$1.2 billion over this period. The fact that Belarus is among the top ten largest suppliers of potash fertilisers, dairy whey, meat products and rapeseed

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<sup>318</sup> Chervjakov: friendly and partnership relations with China are especially significant for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-druzhestvennye-i-partnerskie-otnosheniya-s-kitaem-osobo-znachimy-dlja-belarusi-504062-2022>

<sup>319</sup> Trade turnover between Belarus and China totalled \$1.2 billion in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-i-kvartale-sostavil-12-mlrd-504056-2022/>

oil to China is also indicative of a lot. The agreements reached during the work of the commission should contribute to the successful implementation of the planned areas of cooperation. For instance, the Ministry of Industry of Belarus intends to closely cooperate with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce on import and export of machine-building and electronic products. The memorandum signed by the parties "is aimed at strengthening the Belarusian-Chinese partnership in industry"<sup>320</sup>. The memorandum of co-operation in the import and export of woodworking products was also adopted by Bellesbumprom Concern and the Chinese Association for the Circulation of Wood and Forest Products. The document is aimed at increasing the effectiveness of partnership ties, "analysing the problems of mutual trade and finding mutually acceptable ways to solve them"<sup>321</sup> by holding joint exhibitions, fairs, business meetings, exchange of economic, legal and scientific and technical information in all areas of cooperation.

The Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Velikiy Kamen has been identified as a site for the organisation of innovative production facilities in the set of measures for the development of the national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025. One of the main tasks set for the park for the next five years is "to ensure the efficient operation of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovation activities, startups, cluster co-operation..."<sup>322</sup>. The record increase in residents in 2021 - 21 - is evidence of how this task is being solved here. To be more precise, 85 residents were registered here at the end of 2021. By the beginning of 2022, "more than \$718 million has already been invested in the park, with 37 companies producing products, conducting research and development, and providing services. Velikiy Kamen enterprises have created more than 1,700 jobs <...>. The volume of exports has also grown - by almost 17 per cent compared to 2020. Deliveries are made to 20 countries of the world"<sup>323</sup>. In the last days of 2021, the 85th resident was the Belarusian SinRubEnerg LLC with a research and development project in the field of

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<sup>320</sup> Belarus and China strengthen partnership in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-ukreplajut-partnerstvo-v-promyshlennosti-504071-2022/>

<sup>321</sup> "Bellesbumprom" will cooperate with the Chinese association for the export of woodworking products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-budet-sotrudniczat-s-kitajskoj-assotsiatsiej-po-eksportu-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-504024-2022>

<sup>322</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": new projects bring the future closer / B.L. Zalesky // *Materiály XVIII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej dzialalnosci - 2022"*, Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 3.

<sup>323</sup> Yaroshenko: Velikiy Kamen enterprises supply products to 20 countries of the world [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-predpriyatija-velikogo-kamnja-postavljajut-produktsiju-v-20-stran-mira-479114-2022/>

creating digital energy facilities and smart city. "The company will develop complex automation and dispatching systems" .<sup>324</sup>

With the arrival of 2022, the industrial park continued to work actively to expand the number of residents and increase the volume of their economic activities. Thus, as of mid-April 2022, 89 residents from 15 countries were "already registered here. The volume of declared investments amounts to \$1.24 billion, of which more than \$750 million has already been invested in the development of the park. Residents have created more than 1.8 thousand new jobs. In addition, almost half of the companies have started their business activities in the park"<sup>325</sup> .

The 86th resident of the industrial park in March 2022 was the Scientific and Technical Company Bel Samoyed Cloud LLC, which "will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems. It is also planned to create an e-commerce centre in Belarus and provide Belarusian and Chinese companies with services in this area"<sup>326</sup> . An important detail: the initiator of this project is one of the largest providers of cloud solutions in China - Samoyed Cloud Technology Group Holdings Limited.

April 2022 was particularly "fruitful" for Great Stone in terms of registering new residents. For example, earlier this month, the 87th resident was Yuzhou Science and Technology Company LLC from Hong Kong, whose founder works in the field of product targeting and branding and has branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Wuhan. The new resident "plans to establish a digital promotion centre for e-commerce using Internet marketing technologies"<sup>327</sup> , will cooperate with Belarusian manufacturers to promote their goods in China and intends to provide training on e-commerce.

A little later, the 88th resident - the Belarusian Cuby RND LLC - was registered in the industrial park with an investment project for the production of equipment and components for modular construction of smart houses. "The

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<sup>324</sup> A new resident of Velikiy Kamen will be engaged in the creation of digital energy facilities [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-sozdaniem-tsifrovyyh-energoobjektov-477402-2021/>

<sup>325</sup> Yakimov, P. "The Great Stone" opens wide opportunities for strengthening cooperation between Belarus and China / P. Yakimov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikij-kamen-otkryvaet-shirokie-vozmozhnosti-dlja-ukreplenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kitaja-8150/>

<sup>326</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will deal with digital technologies and mobile payment systems [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-tsifrovymi-tehnologijami-i-sistemami-mobilnyh-platzhej-490657-2022/>

<sup>327</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will be engaged in digital promotion of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-tsifrovym-prodvizheniem-tovarov-493650-2022/>

production is based on the innovative Cuby technology, which is the company's own development. It allows to produce high-tech structures with high ecological characteristics"<sup>328</sup>. It is expected that 90 per cent of the products manufactured in Veliky Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

The 89th resident was another Belarusian company, HomeLand Group LLC, which plans to produce multifunctional noise-insulated Aerocapsule cabins with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things - the concept of data transfer - in the industrial park. Interestingly, this project in 2021 won second place at the national competition of innovative developments. Aerocapsules, created with the use of smart technologies and equipped with innovative built-in facilities, "can be widely used in open-air offices, airports, shopping centres, production plants and allow creating optimal conditions for recreation and work"<sup>329</sup>.

By mid-May 2022, the number of residents increased to 90 with a declared investment volume of \$1.24 billion. In May 2022, a new resident of the industrial park was the Chinese company Transport Complex - AF LLC, which will create a transport monitoring centre using Internet of Things technology. At the same time, a letter of intent was signed for Hongju Corporation JSC to enter the park, which "plans to engage in biotechnology activities in Veliky Kamen"<sup>330</sup>. According to the results of the first quarter of 2022, the industrial park managed to ensure "growth of revenue from the sale of goods 1.8 times compared to the first quarter of last year (Br123.4 million), production of industrial products of residents 1.7 times (Br95.4 million), export of goods 1.4 times (\$22.6 million), investment in fixed assets 1.1 times (Br30.4 million)"<sup>331</sup>.

An important area of Great Stone's activity is the creation of subparks, which are understood as the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of iconic companies under the leadership of a separate management company, which opens up broad prospects for large corporations. Interaction with the Chinese province of Guangdong is developing particularly well in this respect. Recall

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<sup>328</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will start to produce equipment for smart homes [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-vypuskat-oborudovanie-dlja-umnyh-domov-495324-2022/>

<sup>329</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce innovative aerocapsules [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-innovatsionnye-aerokapsuly-495913-2022/>

<sup>330</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will create a centre for monitoring cross-border traffic [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-tsentr-monitoringa-transgranichnyh-perevozok-501098-2022/>

<sup>331</sup> The number of residents of "Great Stone" has increased to 90 with the declared volume of investments in \$1.24 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-vozroslo-do-90-s-zajavlennym-objemom-investitsij-v-124-mlrd-502265-2022/>

that "back in January 2017 in its administrative centre - the city of Guangzhou - held a ceremony of signing an agreement on the establishment of the Chinese (Guangdong) subpark of LED products in the Industrial Park "Great Stone", as well as five more documents on the intention to join this subpark of specific companies"<sup>332</sup>. Today, this subpark already has 15 residents specialising in areas such as LED production, integrated logistics, electric transport, unmanned systems and research and development. They will soon be joined by a joint innovation centre established by the Guangdong Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which will focus on R&D in industrial and digital technologies, as well as new materials, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. So, in this direction too, we see the successful realisation of the plans outlined several years ago.

The planned interaction of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park with similar preferential economic zones in other countries should also contribute to further unlocking the potential of the Great Stone's innovative areas. In particular, in Cuba and Uzbekistan. Thus, back in January 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone (SDZ), which provides for cooperation "in attracting investment, strengthening ties between the business communities of Belarus and Cuba, and also provides for information interaction"<sup>333</sup>. The priority areas of activity of the Cuban ZOR, established in November 2013, located 45 kilometres from Havana, where at the end of 2021 there were more than 60 residents from 21 countries, are electronics, logistics, pharmaceuticals, energy, as well as financial and banking industries. In January 2022, the parties have already started discussing specific areas of co-operation, "particularly in the area of attracting residents and developing interaction with Cuban pharmaceutical companies"<sup>334</sup>. If we take into account that the pharmaceutical sector in Great Stone is on the rise, it is easy to assume that the emergence of concrete results from this co-operation will not be long in coming.

Another interesting example in this context is the Uzbek free economic zones (FEZ) "Jizzak" and "Syrdarya". In early April 2022, the Velikiy Kamen administration discussed with their representatives areas of possible

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<sup>332</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. "Great Stone": development perspective - subparks / B.L. Zaleskii // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilisation - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 21.

<sup>333</sup> "Great Stone" and Cuban special development zone "Mariel" will cooperate in attracting investments [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiya-mariel-budut-sotrudnicat-v-privlechenii-investitsij-426316-2021/>

<sup>334</sup> "Great Stone" intends to develop co-operation with Cuban pharmaceutical companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kubinskimi-farmpredpriyatijami-487548-2022/>



cooperation, including "establishing interaction between residents of the park, free economic zones and enterprises in the field of import and export of component materials and finished products"<sup>335</sup>. The parties agreed to sign a memorandum of co-operation, which will enshrine their desire to implement joint projects. The specialisation of Uzbek FEZs indicates that there may well be such projects.

In particular, FEZ "Jizzak" was established in March 2013 in Jizzak region to attract direct investment in the creation of high-tech and innovative industries. And today there are already several interesting examples in this regard. Thus, in March 2020, an agreement was signed here on the establishment of production of Volkswagen light commercial vehicles on the basis of LLC "Jizzak Automobile Plant". The implementation of this project is divided into two stages. In 2020-2021, German cars were delivered here in a ready-made form for market research and marketing analysis. From 2022, "a full production cycle will begin, which includes welding, painting and assembly processes <...>. Dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded"<sup>336</sup>.

Another interesting example is the Uzbek enterprise ADM Jizzakh, located in the Jizzakh FEZ and producing KIA and Lada models there. In October 2021, it announced that in early 2023 it would start small-unit assembly of these vehicles. In total, "it is planned to organise the production of 314 parts and components, as well as launch welding and painting shops"<sup>337</sup>. This will make it possible to produce 100 thousand of these models a year, to create three thousand new jobs and to bring the localisation of production up to 30 per cent. It is believed that such experience may be of great interest to the Belarusian side as well.

As for FEZ "Syrdarya", it was established on the basis of FEZ "Jizzak" branch in Syrdarya region in April 2018. One of its main objectives is to ensure the comprehensive and efficient use of the production and resource potential of this Uzbek region "on the basis of deep processing of mineral and raw material resources, expanding the production of products in demand in foreign

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<sup>335</sup> "Great Stone" and FEZ of Uzbekistan intend to develop co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-sez-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-493658-2022/>

<sup>336</sup> Production of Volkswagen cars in Uzbekistan will begin in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/>

<sup>337</sup> Plant in Uzbekistan for the production of KIA and Lada in 2023 will increase localisation to 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20211022/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povysit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

markets, as well as import-substituting products with high added value"<sup>338</sup>. Such production areas for attracting investments and advanced technologies as deep processing, storage and packaging of fruit and vegetables and other agricultural products, textile, footwear, leather goods, chemical, food, electrical industry, agricultural machine building, construction materials industry have been identified as the main ones. With the help of the FEZ they intend to significantly strengthen the export component of the region, where "more than 80 exporters' enterprises, which supply abroad more than 50 types of products" are already operating<sup>339</sup>. So here, too, the range of joint interests with Great Stone can be quite extensive. All this indicates that the China-Belarus industrial park retains its strategic importance as a country-scale growth point for Belarus.

As regards interregional cooperation, in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, adopted in September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China positively assessed the expansion of in-depth trade and economic interaction between Belarusian regions and cities and provinces of the Celestial Empire. Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, "which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations"<sup>340</sup>, one can note the successful experience of its fulfilment in 2022 by such Belarusian regions as Vitebsk, Grodno and Brest regions.

Thus, in October 2022, **Vitebsk Region** and the Chinese **province of Jiangxi** signed an agreement on cooperation in economy, education, healthcare, sports and will establish contacts in trade, science and technology. The parties will interact in a comprehensive manner. For example, it is planned to organise meetings via videoconference, at which the Chinese partners will be presented the leading enterprises of Vitebsk, their developments and technologies that may be useful and interesting to companies from Jiangxi. In particular, we are talking about joint projects for the development of agriculture, mechanical engineering, as well as scientific parks and university developments. It should be noted that the two regions - Belarusian and Chinese - have previously held events: a conference on vocational education and training of engineering specialists, as well as on the fight against COVID-19. In addition, "there are regular container trains to Nanchang, the urban district

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<sup>338</sup> A new free economic zone is being created in Syrdarya [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/94899784?q=%2Fru%2F94899784>

<sup>339</sup> Mirzaev, G. Syr Darya opens its doors to investors / G. Mirzaev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/amp/2019/08/29/v-syrdarinskoj-oblasti-uzbekistana-gotovy-k-milioniym-investiciiam.html>

<sup>340</sup> Zaleskii, B. Time of concrete decisions. Chronicle of international co-operation / B. Zaleskyy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. !00.

where the authorities of Jiangxi are located, which are formed, among other things, by a logistics company from Orsha. Nanchang and Orsha have established partnership ties, and another city of the province - Funzhou - with Polotsk<sup>341</sup> ". The signed agreement seems to help the northern region of Belarus and the Chinese province located in the south-east of China to reach a new level of relations. In the context of this topic, it is interesting that in September 2022, within the framework of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China, Days of Vitebsk Oblast were held in another Chinese province - **Heilongjiang**, where "the potential for cooperation between the twin regions in trade and economic, production, tourism and investment spheres" was presented<sup>342</sup> . By the way, this region of China is home to more than 30 million people.

And in October 2022, an agreement on establishing friendly exchanges and cooperation was also signed by the cities of **Grodno** and **Lanzhou** - the administrative centre of the Chinese province of Gansu, where the parties envisaged "deepening of bilateral interaction, expansion of exchanges and cooperation between the regions in trade and economic, scientific and technical, cultural and tourist and other spheres. The document is also aimed at strengthening friendly ties between the residents of the two cities"<sup>343</sup> . Recall that the memorandum on the establishment of twinning relations between **Gansu Province** and **Grodno Region** was signed in 2007. For 15 years more than 10 different agreements have been concluded between the regions, with trade and economic co-operation developing especially dynamically. In April 2022, Gansu and Hrodna signed the Cooperation Programme for 2022-2023, which is filled with concrete joint projects. It "further elaborated those areas where co-operation is not yet so actively developing <...>. These are agriculture, tourism, technology exchange, traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>344</sup> . And Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang from Gansu

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<sup>341</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Trade, science, sport: Vitebsk region signed a cooperation agreement with Chinese Jiangxi / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-nauka-sport-vitebskaja-oblast-podpisala-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kitajskoj-tsudzansi-532401-2022>

<sup>342</sup> Days of Vitebsk region are held in the Chinese province Heilongjiang [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-vitebskoj-oblasti-prohodjat-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-hejluntszjan-525147-2022/>

<sup>343</sup> Hrodna and Chinese Lanzhou signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodno-i-kitajskij-lanchzhou-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-obmenov-532444-2022/>

<sup>344</sup> Grodno region intends to expand co-operation with the Chinese province of Gansu [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-namerena-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-gansu-498323-2022/>

Province agreed to "conclude an agreement on establishing co-operation"<sup>345</sup>. For reference, Hrodna Region has also signed an agreement on twinning relations with **Hainan Province**.

And another interesting example: **Brest Oblast and Hubei Province**. In May 2022, the parties signed an action plan for the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation for 2022-2024, which outlines the development of international interregional cooperation in four main areas: mutual trade, investment, medicine and education. In particular, the Chinese province has been receiving foodstuffs and woodworking products from Brestchyna producers for a number of years. But there are plans to significantly expand this interaction, including by establishing direct business relations between economic entities. For example, it is a question of establishing investment cooperation between the free economic zone "Brest" and enterprises of the automotive industry in Hubei province, as well as between the Berezovsky engine repair plant and manufacturers of diesel engines in this region of China. Also, "the possibility of participation of Chinese investors in the implementation of Brest region projects on the organisation of production of electric car charging units, production of powder and liquid detergents on the basis of JSC "Barkhim", technical re-equipment of Baranovichy cotton production association, production of clinker products on the basis of Goryn Construction Materials Plant, development of glass sands deposit "Gorodnoe" will be worked out"<sup>346</sup>. As for the medical sphere, the prospects of cooperation between Brest region and Hubei province are associated with the joint production of ultrasonic diagnostic devices, organisation of production of disposable systems for blood transfusion and medical solutions. There are also plans to establish a centre of traditional Chinese medicine on the basis of the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital, for which the physiotherapy building may be reconstructed.

All these facts are a good illustration of how the multifaceted Belarusian-Chinese interaction is now reaching the level of all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, as it is written in Directive No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China" signed in December 2021.

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<sup>345</sup> Novogrudok district and the Chinese city of Dunhuang intend to conclude an agreement on establishing co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogrudskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-gorod-dunhuan-namereny-zakljuchit-soglashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-495725-2022/>

<sup>346</sup> Brest region and Hubei province signed a road map of cooperation for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-hubej-podpisali-dorozhnyju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-2024-gody-503065-2022/>

## **Belarus - China: priorities for a new stage of partnership**

In September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which contains Belarusian-Chinese agreements to intensify scientific and technical cooperation, expand practical interaction between research institutes, higher education institutions and enterprises, and encourage the establishment of platforms as joint centres of applied scientific research and laboratories. It is noted that the development of bilateral relations has moved to a new stage where "the interaction between research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in the field of innovation has been continuously strengthened. The spheres, mechanisms and methods of scientific and technological co-operation are constantly being expanded, improved and enriched"<sup>347</sup>. In this regard, three priority components can be identified. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation, where a network of joint innovation centres and scientific laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships of specialists, teachers and students take place"<sup>348</sup>.

In particular, the National Academy of Sciences [NAS] of Belarus alone has already established more than 20 joint international research centres and laboratories with Chinese partners, which are engaged in the development and adaptation of advanced technologies, as well as their promotion in the markets of Belarus, China and third countries. "Contractual documents have already been signed by NAS of Belarus with leading scientific organisations of China - the Chinese Academy of Sciences, academies of sciences of a number of provinces of the PRC, major manufacturing corporations of China - Huawei, AVIC..."<sup>349</sup>. In particular, in April 2022, the NAS of Belarus signed an agreement on scientific and technical co-operation with the Chinese company "SAMSE. Environmental Technologies", which specialises in environmental

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<sup>347</sup> Xie Xiaoyun: cooperation between Belarus and China in science and technology is continuously strengthening [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-sjajun-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-sfere-nauki-i-tehnologii-nepreryvno-ukrepljaetsja-534171-2022>

<sup>348</sup> Zaleskii, B. Frontiers of multi-vectorism. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskyy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 471.

<sup>349</sup> NAS has established more than 20 joint centres and laboratories with partners from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-nan-sozdano-bolee-20-sovmestnyh-tsentrov-i-laboratorij-s-partnerami-iz-kitaja-494752-2022/>

protection issues. The signed agreement, which is designed to promote scientific and technical cooperation and practical implementation of joint scientific and technical developments in the field of environmental protection, primarily concerns soil remediation technologies, which are of particular interest to the Chinese partners. The fact is that the Chinese company, uniting designers, scientists, equipment manufacturers, investors, operators in the field of ecology, is now concentrating its efforts on the expansion of activities in the field of municipal water supply and wastewater disposal, industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, energy saving and management of cyclic use of waste as a resource raw material. At the same time, China SAMS Engineering Corporation was established, which also signed a co-operation agreement with NAS of Belarus. In this document, the priority areas of cooperation are defined as "energy saving and environmental protection, new energy sources, new materials, optics, precision instruments, semiconductors and biomedicine, as well as the expansion of commercial application of the results of joint scientific activities"<sup>350</sup>.

When it comes to interaction between higher education institutions of the two countries, the parties will develop cooperation "on the basis of the development of joint educational programmes with the subsequent establishment of joint educational structures (faculties, institutes) between leading institutions of higher education, including with the use of distance learning technologies..."<sup>351</sup>. Suffice it to say that Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct co-operation agreements. "To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in the PRC, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000 people. The parties have developed more than 30 joint educational programmes..."<sup>352</sup>. Belarusian universities actively developing cooperation with China in science and education include Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian State Technological University, Brest State Technical University, and Polesky State University.

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<sup>350</sup> Biomedicine and new energy sources. NAS of Belarus signed an agreement with the Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/biomeditsina-i-novye-istochniki-energii-nan-belarusi-podpisala-soglasenie-s-kitajskoj-korporatsiej-498676-2022/>

<sup>351</sup> China and Belarus issued the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-Weather and All-Round Strategic Partnership Relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/16/kitaj-i-belarus-opublikovali-sovmestnuiu-deklaraciju-ob-ustanovlenii-otnoshenij-vsepodobnogo-i-vsestoronnego-strategicheskogo-partnerstva.html>

<sup>352</sup> Belarus and China held a videoconference on cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-proveli-videokonferentsiju-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-526453-2022/>

For example, the first agreement between Belarusian State University (BSU) and Chinese partners was signed in 1990 with Chengdu University of Science and Technology. Today, BSU has more than 80 agreements with more than 50 Chinese institutions. Among the partners are Harbin University of Science and Technology, Henan, East China Normal University and Foshan University. "In 2019, bilateral partnership documents were signed with Peking University and Shanghai University of Transport"<sup>353</sup>. BSU has received the honourable right to host the Confucius Institute. The Chinese partner in this case is also Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU), co-operation with which has been developing since 2007. A significant result of co-operation was the opening of two joint institutes at BSU and DPU. Today there are 244 Chinese students in the Chinese-Belarusian institute. Two graduations have already taken place. "In 2021, 78 Chinese graduates and five Belarusians received diplomas of BSU and DPU, in 2022 - 74 Chinese and two Belarusian citizens. There are 142 Belarusian students studying at the Belarusian-Chinese joint institute. The first graduation will take place in 2023"<sup>354</sup>.

In May 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSU and Tsinghua University, which is ranked 17th among the best universities in the world. The Memorandum "provides for the exchange of students, invitation of teachers and scientists, implementation of joint research, educational projects, exchange of publications, information, teaching materials, organisation of scientific, educational and cultural events"<sup>355</sup>. This university was founded in 1911. It is located in the northwest of Beijing in the Haidian student neighbourhood. Today about 53 thousand students are studying in Tsinghua, more than 3200 of them are foreigners. The educational process is provided by more than 3600 teachers. The university structure includes 21 institutes and 59 faculties.

And in September 2022, another BSU partner appeared in China - Huzhou University of Zhejiang Province. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities "provides for the implementation of joint research projects, educational programmes, student exchanges and other areas of

<sup>353</sup> Kreinina, O. BSU on the development of cooperation with leading universities of China / O. Kreinina // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/bgu-o-razviti-i-sotrudnichestva-s-veduschimi-universitetami-kitaja-8187/>

<sup>354</sup> Cooperation between BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University is depicted in the bronze tetrapod din [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotrudnichestvo-bgu-i-dalianskogo-politehnicheskogo-universiteta-zapechatleli-v-bronzovom-tetrapode-514967-2022/>

<sup>355</sup> BSU and Tsinghua University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-universitet-tsinhua-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-441298-2021/>

cooperation"<sup>356</sup>. Huzhou University has a history of more than 100 years. Currently, the university specialises in a wide range of academic disciplines and has achieved internationally recognised results in research and teaching in mathematics, clinical medicine and engineering. In 2017, the university established the Intercultural Research Centre engaged in international projects, including with the Belarusian side.

As for the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), in February 2022, the Belarusian university signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with Shenyang Technological University (STU) on the establishment of the China-Belarus Innovation Training, Research and Production Centre for Peening, Rehabilitation and Corrosion Peening, Rehabilitation and Corrosion Protection of Machine Parts, which will concentrate new technologies and equipment in one place, and will promptly produce prototypes of parts e "The centre will concentrate all new methods of hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts. There is no such centre in China in this form and of this type"<sup>357</sup>. At the request of STU, the centre includes such Belarusian technologies as: gas-flame spraying of thermoplastic polymer powders; hypersonic metallisation; deformation cladding with flexible tools; gas-flame spraying of metal, ceramic, polymer and composite powders; laser cleaning of the surface of materials from organic and inorganic contaminants, rust, scale and paint coatings; plasma coating with metal, ceramic and composite powders; restoration of working powders; and the use of plasma-assisted coating. And already in October 2022, this centre was opened at Shenyang University of Technology.

In addition, in October 2022, a conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was held in Changchun. Recall that in December 2019, the parties signed an agreement on the establishment of a joint Chinese-Belarusian laboratory of advanced materials and production "One Belt - One Road", which began its activities in February 2020. This structure is "engaged in the development of high-performance sodium-ion and potassium-ion batteries, catalysts for water electrolysis, hydrogen production, and research in solid oxide electrolysis for the efficient production of green hydrogen and

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<sup>356</sup> BSU and Chinese Huzhou University signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-kitajskij-universitet-huchzhou-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-524518-2022/>

<sup>357</sup> Kravchuk, M.A. Opening of the Chinese-Belarusian innovative educational and research-production centre of hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts / M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11923-otkrytie-kitajsko-belorusskogo-innovacionnogo-uchebno-nauchno-proizvodstvennogo-centra>



green ammonia"<sup>358</sup>. During the conference, Belarusian specialists drew attention to BNTU's experience in modifying the surfaces of machine parts by high-energy impact methods and studying their structure and properties, which in the future will allow expanding the scope of scientific research and application of its results in the Chinese industry.

Speaking about the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), it has already signed 17 cooperation agreements with universities and organisations in China, which are located in many regions of the country, including Guangdong Province. "In cooperation with Chinese partners, joint educational programmes have been created and are successfully functioning in such areas as "Machines and apparatuses of chemical productions and enterprises of construction materials", "Automation of technological processes and productions", "Mechatronics"<sup>359</sup>. In addition, in March 2022 BSTU signed memoranda: with "Guangzhou Knowledge City - Technological Industrial Service Company" on strategic cooperation in the field of energy saving and environmental protection to promote the construction of "carbon-free community"; with JSC "Guangzhou Hengyun Group of Companies" - in the field of hydrogen technologies for the joint construction of the industrial park of hydrogen energy.

Another example in this context is Brest State Technical University (BrSTU), where a joint Belarusian-Chinese project in the field of information technologies, funded by the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Basic Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China, was launched in 2022. And in April 2022 it became known about the launch of a joint educational programme between BrSTU and Xinxiang University, which concerns the training of students in mechanical engineering technology. "The training will take place in a full-time format on the territory of the PRC on the materials presented by Brest university. A large block of the programme will be presented to Chinese students directly by Brest State Technical University professors"<sup>360</sup>. In October 2022 Brest university also established cooperation with Guangdong Construction Vocational College to create long-term

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<sup>358</sup> Sheleg, V.K. Conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences / V.K. Sheleg, M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11931-konferenciya-po-nauchnomu-obmenu-bntu-i-institut-prikladnoj-himii-an-kitaya>

<sup>359</sup> BSTU and Belarusian companies signed memoranda of co-operation with Guangzhou [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bgtu-i-belorusskie-kompanii-podpisali-memorandumy-o-sotrudnichestve-s-guanchzhou-489362-2022>

<sup>360</sup> BrSTU and Xinyang University have started the implementation of the joint programme [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-i-sinsjanskij-universitet-nachali-realizatsiju-sovmestnoj-programmy-496937-2022/>

conditions for the training of qualified personnel in Belarus in the interests of the construction sector of China and to cooperate in organizing a joint educational programme for training specialists in architecture and construction. It should be noted that the Chinese partner of BrSTU is "the only state college in Guangdong province, which trains highly qualified specialists in the field of construction. The college was founded in 1979 and for 43 years has graduated more than 200 thousand highly qualified personnel"<sup>361</sup>.

As for the interaction between Polesky State University and colleagues from China, in September 2022, the Belarusian university held the first international scientific conference called "Pinsk Readings". Together with Belarusian and foreign partners, Pinsk residents discussed topical issues for the economy, banking sector, development of biotechnology, engineering, healthy lifestyle, preservation of historical and cultural heritage. At the conference PolesSU signed a cooperation agreement with the Shanxi Institute of Science and Technology, which "specialises in nature management, engineering, biotechnology. We aim to build serious partnerships"<sup>362</sup>. In addition to joint research projects, the universities see prospects for cooperation in academic mobility.

The high scientific, technical and innovation cooperation between Belarus and China is also evidenced by the fact that at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai - the largest exhibition event in the Celestial Empire, where almost three thousand companies from 127 countries took part in 2021 - in November 2022, the Belarusian country pavilion "High-Tech Equipment and Information Technologies" presented 126 scientific and technical developments of scientists from 32 organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of Belarus.<sup>363</sup> In particular, the exposition of the Ministry of Education section included such areas of co-operation as "digital information and communication and interdisciplinary technologies and production based on them; biological, medical, pharmaceutical and chemical technologies and production; energy, construction, ecology and environmental management; mechanical engineering, engineering technologies, instrumentation and

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<sup>361</sup> BrSTU and Guangdong construction vocational college agreed to establish co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/brgtu-i-guandunskij-stroitelnyj-profitehkolledzh-dogovorilis-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-530263-2022/>

<sup>362</sup> PolesGU will co-operate with the Institute of Science and Technology from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/polesgu-budet-sotrudniczat-s-institutom-nauki-i-tehnologii-iz-kitaja-524605-2022/>

<sup>363</sup> Universities of Belarus at the V China International Import Expo China International Import Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11970-vuzy-belarusi-na-v-china-international-import-expo>

innovative materials; agro-industrial and food technologies; ensuring the safety of man and society" xml-ph-0000@d

Among the novelties presented were ultra-small orbital spacecraft created by the Belarusian State University (BSU). The first nanosatellite was launched into orbit four years ago. Under the State programme "Science-intensive technologies and engineering", the second nanosatellite has already been created, "the design of which implements an innovative modular layout of on-board subsystems of a small spacecraft. BSU is also presenting anti-tumour drugs Temodex, Prospidelong, Cisplacel"<sup>364</sup>. Another interesting novelty is an electric scooter produced by Optron Instrument-Making Plant of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Its maximum speed is 60 kilometres per hour, and its carrying capacity is 200 kilograms. In addition, such advanced developments as "unmanned aerial vehicle Burevestnik (Scientific and Production Centre of Multifunctional Unmanned Complexes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), automated system of registration of welding processes (Belarusian-Russian University), heat-resistant impact-resistant coatings (Gomel State University named after F. Skaryna), bread of increased nutritional value (Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies) were presented in Shanghai..."<sup>365</sup>

Also. In November 2022, at the IX Belarusian-Chinese Youth Innovation Forum "New Horizons - 2022" held in Minsk, it was noted that this year the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus together with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China held a competition of Belarusian-Chinese scientific and technical projects. "Based on its results, 35 projects will receive state support from the two countries"<sup>366</sup>. All these facts show that multifaceted scientific, technical and innovation co-operation between the two countries with systematic and purposeful work of the partners to develop ties yields fruitful results.

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<sup>364</sup> More than 120 Belarusian developments are presented at the China International Import Exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/bolee-120-belorusskikh-razrabotok-predstavleny-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-533702-2022/>

<sup>365</sup> Novelties of the food industry and spacecrafts: what Belarus will present at the import exhibition in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novinki-pischeproma-i-kosmicheskie-apparaty-cto-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-533240-2022/>

<sup>366</sup> Young scientists of Belarus and China develop cooperation in the field of innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/molodye-uchenye-belarusi-i-kitaja-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-innovatsij-534160-2022/>

## Belarus - China: strategic partnership enters a new era

In March 2023, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted 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, which include mutual support for the state course and on issues affecting each other's indigenous interests. In addition to this joint statement, "Belarus and China during the state visit concluded 27 intergovernmental, interdepartmental and interregional agreements and more than 10 commercial arrangements in various fields"<sup>367</sup>, and the cumulative economic effect of the visit is estimated at more than three and a half billion dollars.

Among the signed documents is the **Programme of Belarusian-Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation for 2023-2024**, which aims the two countries at creating joint innovative industries. After all, "a developed engineering base, a modern system of training highly qualified personnel, and many years of advanced experience of leading Belarusian design bureaus all form the basis for future high-tech industries"<sup>368</sup>. In this regard, we would like to emphasise that Chinese investors invested over USD 100 million in projects in Belarus in 2022. In addition, more than forty projects were implemented with the participation of Chinese companies, and about twenty more promising initiatives are being worked on this year. In this context, we should mention the Great Stone industrial park, where in 2022 "Belarusian resident enterprises launched production of glass for all types of land transport, innovative photographic printing products, automated process control systems in industry and energy. The InKata science and technology park was put into operation to accommodate companies carrying out scientific research and experimental development"<sup>369</sup>.

It should be recalled that in the last days of 2022, the number of residents in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Velikiy Kamen reached the mark of

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<sup>367</sup> Foreign Ministry: the state visit of the President of Belarus to Beijing has become a significant event in the relations with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid-gosvizit-prezidenta-belarusi-v-pekina-stal-znachimym-sobytiem-v-otnoshenijah-s-knr-557851-2023/>

<sup>368</sup> Belarus and China are aimed at creating joint innovative industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-natseleny-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-innovatsionnyh-proizvodstv-556688-2023/>

<sup>369</sup> Abramenko: "Great Stone" is a colossal opportunity for doing business on the platform of "Belt and Road" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-velikij-kamen-eto-kolossalnye-vozmozhnosti-dlja-vedenija-biznesa-na-platforme-pojas-i-put-556679-2023/>

100. For reference, we note that "as of the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"<sup>370</sup>. In particular, the 99th resident was Yunchenbel LLC, the founder of which is a large Chinese company SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform to enable the import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"<sup>371</sup>. And Belarusian company Human Kraft will produce medical products - customised bone tissue prostheses based on 3D printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and cancer treatment. Also at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent to enter the industrial park as residents of Foryu Information Technologies LLC and Tontun Information Technologies LLC (People's Republic of China) were signed.

In addition, at the end of 2022, the resident company IPD Group LLC signed a lease agreement for a 5.5 thousand square metres universal production building in the industrial park. This deal became one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial property market. "On these premises, a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices will be realised. In particular, the company will produce computer hardware, server equipment, monitors, interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-substituting products"<sup>372</sup>. In total, by the end of 2022, 19 residents were registered in Velikiy Kamen. Also. Last year, residents of the park exported their products for more than \$100 million to 20 countries.

In 2023, Veliky Kamen is expected to attract at least 20 residents. In January alone, several investors from Belarus have already been registered. In particular, "very interesting projects in the field of production of products for veterinary medicine. And the second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy"<sup>373</sup>. At the end of January, Veliky Kamen registered a new resident - BaikaiGroup LLC. "The company with Chinese capital will create a transport and logistics centre <...> in the park. The park resident plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging,

<sup>370</sup> Zalesky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Features of Eurasian cooperation dialogue in the conditions of global threats / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 5.

<sup>371</sup> The number of residents of "Great Stone" has reached 100 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-dostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

<sup>372</sup> Velikiy Kamen" finished the year with the largest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejshej-sdelkoj-542635-2022/>

<sup>373</sup> "Great Stone" this year plans to attract at least 20 residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-privlech-ne-menee-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

tracking, labelling..."<sup>374</sup> . Goods will be delivered to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three more new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. Heprotrade LLC will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tonnes per month. Realisation of the project will make it possible to provide the domestic market with such products and reduce imports, as well as to supply them for export"<sup>375</sup> . The second February resident, Rivex LLC, will produce innovative dressing materials and for sterilisation, which are intended for both the domestic market and Eurasian Economic Union countries. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, founded by a Chinese international logistics company, one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, intends to "develop logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introducing a wide range of services in this area. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organised"<sup>376</sup> . This initiative will also help in addressing the most important strategic task - expanding the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already registered in Veliky Kamen. And in general, already during the life of the industrial park, "the total number is 107 residents with a planned investment volume of \$1.3bn"<sup>377</sup> . It is expected that in order to create additional conditions for attracting new investors, work will continue in 2023 to further improve the special legal regime of the park with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that on the sites of Veliky Kamen "it is possible to quickly increase the level of localisation in the

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<sup>374</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will create a transport and logistics centre [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskij-tsentr-547574-2023/>

<sup>375</sup> Two more residents with Belarusian capital registered in "Veliky Kamen" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-belorusskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovany-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

<sup>376</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

<sup>377</sup> This year "Great Stone" registered 7 new residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, to promptly replace falling imports with these products. In order to maximise the available potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build infrastructure and announce the project on a global scale"<sup>378</sup>. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the residents of the industrial park - in particular, and also create additional competitive advantages for the prospective development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

Another important document adopted in March 2023 is the **Comprehensive Strategy for Joint Industrial Development**, implemented by the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Informatisation of China, which provides for the creation of incentive mechanisms for Belarusian and Chinese enterprises to intensify and strengthen and technological cooperation. A roadmap with specific projects and initiatives has been prepared to implement this strategy. "It is planned to establish joint ventures in China, use Chinese technologies and competences to modernise Belarusian industries and attract Chinese investment to implement projects in Belarus"<sup>379</sup> in such key areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, woodworking, opto-mechanical, pulp and paper and chemical production.

In particular, **Minsk Tractor Plant** is ready to intensify co-operation with China. The project to organise the assembly of BELARUS tractors with a capacity of 350 horsepower is currently underway in the Celestial Empire. The first prototype was tested in 2020-2021. Last year, two more BELARUS 3523 tractors were delivered to China for certification, after which a decision will be made on localisation of the assembly of Belarusian tractors. And in Minsk, testing of the BELARUS 3523 model with a diesel engine from the Chinese corporation Weichai continues. It is expected that 100 such engines will be delivered to the plant in the near future. "Another direction is related to the supply of components from China. Last year, imports from China totalled \$1.8 million, at the end of two months of the current [2023] year - \$400 thousand."<sup>380</sup>. So the parties are interested in joint investment projects.

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<sup>378</sup> Chervjakov: the current challenges of the economy - a window of opportunity for the residents of the Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>

<sup>379</sup> Abramenko, A. On the peculiarities of doing business in CCW, joint projects and prospects for co-operation / A. Abramenko // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ob-osobennostjah-vedenija-biznesa-v-knr-sovmestnyh-proektah-i-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-8633/>

<sup>380</sup> General Director of MTZ told about intensification of cooperation with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ob-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-kitaem-rasskazal-gendirektor-mtz-553348-2023/>

During the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to China, several documents were signed concerning the development of production and **agro-industrial complex**. In particular, "the largest pig breeding complex in Belarus for 300,000 heads will be built in Minsk Region. <...> And we will modify our beef cattle breeding on the basis of Mogilev region. First of all - construction of a separate slaughterhouse. About a thousand lightweight sheds will be built for keeping cattle of Aberdeen-Angus or Limousin breeds"<sup>381</sup>.

Belarus also plans to almost double the volume of food supplies to China in 2023. Last year, these exports exceeded more than \$500 million. Belarusian supplies "increased in poultry meat (3 times), rapeseed oil (3.1 times), milk and cream (1.4 times) <...>. At present, 148 Belarusian producers are accredited to supply China with 171 categories of goods"<sup>382</sup>. And by the beginning of 2024, the goal is to reach \$900 million in product exports. In general, in trade and economic cooperation with its partners from China, this year Belarus has every chance to increase the volume of exports to \$2.2 billion.

Two more interesting documents signed in Beijing in early March 2023 concern the topic of **regional cooperation**. The first: it is the **plan of the Year of Regions between Belarus and China for 2023**, which "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives"<sup>383</sup> to attract at least \$150 million of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026. Second: it is the **Agreement between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the Ministry of Commerce of China on deepening trade and economic cooperation between the regions of the two countries**, in which the parties emphasise three Chinese regions. Firstly, **Tianjin** is a city of central subordination, where the production and logistics orientation prevails. Secondly, **Qingdao**, located in **Shandong** province, where enterprises of production and medical orientation are especially developing and where the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** free trade zone is being actively used. Thirdly, **Chongqing** is another centralised city. "It is the heart of logistics, transit. Here it is mainly e-commerce, emphasis on transport and logistics, including green corridors. This is when a train is not checked at the border, but

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<sup>381</sup> Belarus expects to almost double the volume of food supplies to China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-pochti-v-dva-raza-narastit-objemy-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-553023-2023/>

<sup>382</sup> Export of Belarusian goods to China almost doubled in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/za-2022-god-eksport-belorusskih-tovarov-v-kitaj-praktichieski-udvoilsja-556681-2023/>

<sup>383</sup> Abramenko: Belarus and China seek to deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-belarus-i-kitaj-stremjatsja-k-uglubleniju-dvustoronnego-vzaimodejstvia-vo-vseh-oblastjah-556675-2023/>



controlled at the destination, which gives a big advantage in cost and time."<sup>384</sup>

Also in early March 2023, Belarus and China signed a **plan to develop cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025**, which notes that "the parties will develop cooperation in the field of health care, science and education based on the principles of national legislation of the countries, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance"<sup>385</sup>. The two countries will give priority to cooperation in such areas as: organisation of joint scientific research in the field of medicine, exchange of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organisation of seminars and master classes for experts; cooperation in epidemiology and microbiology and exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; cooperation in surgery, transplantation and haematology; and participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus.<sup>386</sup> It is important to note that as early as in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, issued in September 2022, Belarus and China agreed to develop cooperation in the field of high-tech medicine, vaccines and pharmaceuticals and "prioritised the formation of a joint pharmaceutical cluster, commercialisation of new pharmaceutical products and technologies, as well as the establishment of a high-quality centre of traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus" xml-ph-0.

For reference: the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on cooperation in healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese Ministries of Health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, a decree of the Belarusian government "On the state registration of strategically important medicines" was adopted, which allows for their accelerated registration to fight a pandemic. And at the same time, the Ministry of Health for the first time carried out the state registration of the Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) - soft capsules "Qingyi". And today "810 items of medical equipment, 502 medical devices and 480 medicines produced in China are registered in Belarus. From April 2020 to the present day, the PRC has provided gratuitous assistance in the amount equivalent to \$30 million.

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<sup>384</sup> . Nikolai Snopkov: The cumulative economic effect of the Belarusian-Chinese agreements is estimated at more than \$3.5 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10547>

<sup>385</sup> The plan for the development of cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025 between Belarus and China has been signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobytiya/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-gody-mezhdu-bela/>

<sup>386</sup> China and Belarus adopted the Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://vziazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-kitay-i-belarus-prinyali-sovmestnuyu-deklaraciyu>

Belarus has received personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment, vaccine against COVID-19<sup>387</sup>.

Our country has already established TCM centres and the necessary business conditions for setting up pharmaceutical production facilities. In particular, for the residents of the Velikiy Kamen park, the Ministry of Health of Belarus has developed a compendium "Main Aspects of Admission to Circulation of Medical Devices and Medicines" in Russian and Chinese languages to inform them about opportunities and preferences. In addition, work has already been completed on the architectural project "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the Veliky Kamen Park, taking into account the creation of a regional centre for the promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine", and work is being completed on the inclusion of the specialty "doctor of traditional Chinese medicine" in the job nomenclature, which will give an additional impetus to the promotion of this topic in Belarus.

At the end of February 2023, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China said that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM issues, which should reflect the creation of a TCM centre in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster and the development of traditional Chinese medicine in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". It should be noted that "reflexotherapy methods, diagnostic methods, therapeutic gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies - electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, ultrasonic acupuncture <...> are used in Belarus. Centres of traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centres of Belarus. Co-operation has been established with a number of universities - Tianjin, Changchun, the University of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Zhejiang Province..."<sup>388</sup>. In addition, the educational process in this specialty is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexology. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained annually. The staff of the department has been repeatedly trained in Beijing, Taiyuan and Tianjin. These methods have shown their effectiveness, including in the treatment of postcoccygeal syndrome.

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<sup>387</sup> The Ministry of Health of Belarus and the Weigao Company signed a co-operation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompanija-weigao-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552445-2023/>

<sup>388</sup> Belarus and China are preparing a memorandum on traditional Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-knr-gotovjat-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoj-kitajskoj-medsiny-552902-2023/>

Reflexologists perform about 900 thousand reflexotherapy procedures in Belarus every year.

In 2023, the parties continue to actively co-operate in this context. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of co-operation agreements with Chinese partners. Firstly, in the city of Weihai, Shandong Province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies Chinese-made medical devices and spare parts. Second, in Shijiazhuang City in Hebei Province, with North China Pharmactutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been selected as a strategic partner to represent the interests of Belpfarmprom Holding Company in the procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as to perform the functions of studying market conditions and submitting proposals for the supply of substances and raw materials to the holding company's management company in accordance with applications"<sup>389</sup>.

As for the development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the new era in the **field of education**, in February 2023, Beijing hosted the China Education Expo, which included a thematic exposition "Education in Belarus", where leading Belarusian universities made presentations of their educational programmes: the Belarusian State University of Economics, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Minsk State Linguistic University, and the Minsk State University of Economics and Radioelectronics. It should be noted that the Belarusian exposition was the only foreign one presented at this educational forum, which was visited by more than two thousand young men and women from China interested in studying in Belarus.

In addition, during the talks in the Chinese capital at the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, the possibility for Belarusian higher education institutions to join the International Engineering and Architectural Consortium of Educational Institutions was discussed. In general, "as a result of meetings of representatives of Belarusian universities in Chinese universities and consulting companies, 17 agreements on co-operation in the field of educational services were signed, 16 agreements are

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<sup>389</sup> Agreement on co-operation signed by the Ministry of Health of Belarus and Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-552543-2023>

being worked out for signing"<sup>390</sup>. For reference, we note that "Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct co-operation agreements. To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000 people"<sup>391</sup>. In addition, Belarus and China are actively promoting the creation of joint educational structures. For example, seven joint projects are already functioning: three laboratories, two centres and two institutes. There are 40 joint educational programmes at the first and second levels of higher education, 10 of which have been developed over the last two years.

In this context, an important participant of international co-operation with the People's Republic of China in the field of education is the **Belarusian State University** (BSU), which already co-operates with more than 50 Chinese higher education institutions, and its classrooms are currently attended by more than three thousand citizens of the Celestial Empire. In March 2023, BSU identified new vectors and forms of cooperation with leading Chinese universities to strengthen, intensify and expand the areas of partnership.

In particular, BSU is entering a new level of co-operation with Peking University, which is the oldest university in China and was founded back in 1898, where the local library has more than eight million books and where more than 46,000 students, including more than four thousand foreigners, study. Recall that the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019. In March 2023, the parties initiated cooperation in the field of mathematical sciences. "The development of joint research projects, academic exchange for lecturing on modern advances in probability theory, mathematical statistics and data analysis are seen as promising"<sup>392</sup>. Besides, co-operation in the sphere of joint training of master's and postgraduate students will be expanded. For this purpose, this topic will be analysed in detail in the near future to identify the specialities and scientific fields of knowledge in which they plan to cooperate.

Another partner of BSU in China is Beijing Foreign Studies University, one of the leading universities in the country in the field of linguist training. In

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<sup>390</sup> Belarus - China: 17 new agreements in the field of education signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-kitaj-podpisano-17-novyh-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-553144-2023/>

<sup>391</sup> Zalesky, B. The route of interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 19.

<sup>392</sup> BSU enters a new level of co-operation with Beijing University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bgu-vyhodit-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-s-pekinskim-universitetom-557082-2023/>

March 2023, BSU signed an agreement on exchange of students to develop academic mobility of undergraduate and graduate students studying Chinese, Belarusian and Russian languages. The parties will also develop joint innovative pedagogical methods.

As a result of the meetings held in March 2023, the Chinese University of Political Science and Law became a new partner of BSU. The universities signed a memorandum of understanding, which will allow co-operation in the field of jurisprudence in numerous vectors. "These include exchange of students, opening joint educational programmes, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching materials and scientific reports, organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and preparation of joint publications"<sup>393</sup>.

**Brest State Technical University (BrSTU)** is also among the active Belarusian universities developing co-operation with Chinese partners. In January 2023, BrSTU signed an agreement on cooperation in education, science, and culture with Guangdong Construction Vocational Technical Institute to combine the efforts of the two educational institutions to jointly train qualified specialists for the benefit of the economies of the two countries. The two sides plan to create a joint educational programme to train Chinese students. It is a question of recruiting training groups, where students will study in China for the first two years and then in Belarus. The Chinese side was particularly interested in the speciality "architecture". "These joint educational programmes are very popular because they allow students to get two diplomas in one cycle of study"<sup>394</sup>.

It should be noted that Guangdong Construction Vocational Institute is the largest and the only state higher vocational education institution that trains builders and architects and is located in the industrial centre of southern China. It has 22,000 students. With the support of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, an industrial and educational integration base has been built on the basis of the institute, where students study various innovative and traditional construction technologies, design methods, water supply systems, BIM-technologies, and property management. As for BrSTU, more than 200 Chinese citizens are studying in

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<sup>393</sup> Student exchange, joint programmes: BSU and leading universities of China have identified new vectors of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-sovmestnye-programmy-bgu-i-veduschie-vuzy-kitaja-opredelili-novye-vektory-557224-2023/>

<sup>394</sup> Brest University and Guangdong Institute will jointly train architects and builders [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-universitet-i-guandunskij-institut-budut-sovmestno-gotovit-arhitektorov-i-stroitelej-543128-2023/>

Brest today. The most popular among them are specialities in economics, construction and mechanical engineering.

Finally, another set of documents signed in early March 2023 in Beijing concerned cooperation in the **media sphere**. This included an **agreement on co-operation between the news agencies of Belarus and China - BELTA and Xinhua**. In this regard, we note that the cooperation agreement between BELTA and Xinhua was first signed back in January 1993, then re-signed in June 2018. The new document - already the third - "implies the exchange of text news, photos and videos, mutual support and promotion on the Internet and social networks"<sup>395</sup>. The agencies agreed to exchange experiences and train journalists, editors and technical staff to improve their skills.

All these initiatives and projects adopted this spring in the relevant documents show that cooperation between Belarus and China in general tends to strengthen in all directions, but there is still a great unrealised potential, which will be implemented already in a new era - the exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two states.

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<sup>395</sup> BELTA and Xinhua signed an agreement on strengthening co-operation and intensifying news exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belta-i-sinhua-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ukreplenii-sotrudnichestva-i-aktivizatsii-obmena-novostjami-553192-2023/>

## Belarus-Indonesia: action plan aims at maximise results

In April 2022, the seventh meeting of the Belarusian-Indonesian Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Co-operation was held. Within its framework, the parties discussed topical issues of bilateral partnership "with a focus on the development of cooperation in the spheres of industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, education, tourism, digital economy and creative industry"<sup>396</sup>. Recall that the sixth meeting of this Commission was held in October 2017 in Jakarta. At that time, an agreement was reached "to intensify trade, economic and investment cooperation between the countries, including the prospects for increasing supplies of MAZ, BelAZ and MTZ products to Indonesia"<sup>397</sup>.

Many facts prove that the Indonesian market is very promising for Belarus. Firstly, more than 270 million people live here now. Secondly, "Indonesia is an industrial and agrarian country where more than half of the gross domestic product is created in industry, agriculture and fishing, where the main industries are oil and gas processing, metallurgy, machine building, chemical, food and textile industries"<sup>398</sup>. And which is very interested in significantly increasing economic co-operation with Belarus, in increasing the supply of potassium chloride, automotive and tractor machinery, and dairy products from our country. In November 2019, at the Belarusian-Indonesian forum held in Minsk and attended by more than 30 enterprises and organisations of the two countries, it was noted that "the task set by the government to reach \$1 billion of mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Indonesia is quite realistic in the near future"<sup>399</sup>.

It is true that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the countries totalled only \$181 million, which, according to the parties, did not correspond to the existing partnership potential. But even then, 25 new items were supplied to the Indonesian market. And in 2021, the trade turnover already totalled

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<sup>396</sup> On the seventh meeting of the Belarusian-Indonesian Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html)

<sup>397</sup> Belarus and Indonesia agreed to intensify trade and investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-torgovoe-i-investitsionnoe-vzaimodejstvie-271768-2017/>

<sup>398</sup> Zaleskii, B. Partnership Journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 69.

<sup>399</sup> BelCCI: increasing trade turnover with Indonesia up to \$1 billion is a real task for the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beltp-uvelichenie-tovarooborota-s-indoneziej-do-1-mlrd-realnaja-zadacha-na-blizhajshuju-perspektivu-368953-2019/>

\$232.3 million with the share of Belarusian exports - more than \$200 million. At the same time, there was a "growth of non-resource exports to Indonesia by more than 2 times, including dairy products - by more than 4 times"<sup>400</sup>. Thus, further increase in the Belarusian-Indonesian trade turnover continues to be a priority area of bilateral cooperation, which should be filled with new content. In fact, this was the subject of the seventh meeting of the joint commission, the concrete results of which were: the adoption of the Plan of Practical Actions for the development of key areas of cooperation for 2022-2023; the decision to establish a working group in the field of agriculture, the first meeting of which will be held within the framework of the international agricultural exhibition Belagro-2022; reaching an agreement to hold a large-scale cooperation between Belarus and Indonesia in 2023, when the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Indonesian diplomatic relations will be celebrated.

It should be noted that the signed memoranda supplemented the legal framework of the bilateral relations, which already includes more than 30 documents, in the area that is extremely relevant for Belarus today. The first of the memorandums signed by the State Committee for Standardisation of the Republic of Belarus (Gosstandart) and the National Agency for Standardisation of Indonesia provides not only for the exchange of information and experience, but also for the implementation of joint activities and projects. In particular, the Belarusian side is interested in the official distribution of Indonesian national standards. The second document, signed by the Belarusian State Standard and the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, concerns cooperation in the field of quality assurance of halal products and the readiness of the Belarusian partners "to demonstrate to their colleagues from Indonesia the infrastructure of quality of halal products created in the country, to confirm the possibility of implementing the Indonesian requirements to halal products and carrying out the necessary procedures for assessing their conformity in Belarus"<sup>401</sup>. An important detail: the only halal certification body in our country - BelHalal LLC - has already placed the necessary documents for registration in the Indonesian national system for certification of halal products. And the signed memorandum should officially launch the process of its accreditation in this Southeast Asian country.

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<sup>400</sup> Trade and economic relations with the Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/)

<sup>401</sup> Belarus and Indonesia signed memorandums in the field of standardisation and quality assurance of products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandumy-v-oblasti-standartizatsii-i-obespecheniya-kachestva-497060-2022>



Speaking about other areas of the food sector, a number of Belarusian enterprises have already been accredited as suppliers of dairy products to Indonesia. In particular, "the products of Savushkin Product OJSC, Babushkina Krynka OJSC, and Verkhnedvinsk Creamery OJSC have received the necessary certificates and have already entered the capacious Indonesian food market"<sup>402</sup>. And this immediately affected the results of mutual Belarusian-Indonesian trade in 2021. They are going to be joined by Bellakt OJSC, which is ready to "work out the issues of product supplies to Indonesia, as well as to expand the product mix and work out the supply of baby food"<sup>403</sup>, as well as Milkavita OJSC, Gluboka Dairy Canning Plant OJSC, and a number of other companies that took part in the third Belarusian-Indonesian videoconference on business and trade held in December 2020 and dedicated to the promotion of dairy products exports from Belarus to Indonesia. Now, exporters of halal products from Belarus should also become growth points in this regard, complementing such traditional positions as potassium chloride and dump trucks.

Speaking about other areas of Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation, we would like to recall that in February 2021, the National Marketing Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Indonesia Trade, Tourism and Investment Club signed a memorandum of cooperation and mutual support in the development of trade and economic relations. In the context of this document, the Belarusian side sees its goals in "activating contracts on a legal basis, exchanging information on bilateral export-import supplies and deepening cooperation between our countries"<sup>404</sup>. The development of partnership ties between the regions of the two countries has considerable potential in this regard. All the more so as "co-operation has already been established between the Brest region and the province of West Sumatra, the Mogilev region and the province of South Sumatra, the Minsk region and the provinces of East Kalimantan and East Java, as well as the cities of Minsk and Jakarta"<sup>405</sup>. With the help of regional branches of chambers of commerce and

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<sup>402</sup> Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZs to the revival of the tourism market / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indoneziya-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

<sup>403</sup> The third Belarusian-Indonesian videoconference on business and trade is devoted to the dairy industry [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ncmps.by/news/tretya-belorussko-indoneziyskaya-videokonferentsiya-po-voprosam-biznesa-i-torgovli-posvyashchena-mol/>

<sup>404</sup> Belarus and Indonesia signed a memorandum on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indoneziya-podpisali-memorandum-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/>

<sup>405</sup> Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZs to the revival of the tourism market / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indoneziya-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

industry, cooperation has also been established with such provinces as Central Java, North Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, and the special district of Yogyakarta, where they see considerable potential for the development of trade and economic cooperation, educational and tourist exchanges with Belarusian partners.

For example, Brest region and the province of West Sumatra announced their intention to establish close contacts back in November 2015. At that time, such areas as "fish farming, processing industry, tourism, healthcare, pharmacy" were named as promising in terms of mutually beneficial cooperation<sup>406</sup>. Some other Indonesian provinces have long been familiar with the products of the Belarusian Automobile Plant. For example, since 2012, the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan has been successfully operating a batch of nine Belarusian dump trucks with a load capacity of 45 tonnes. In 2016-2017, 40 dump trucks with a 110-tonne capacity were delivered to the South Sumatra province for the needs of the largest state-owned coal mining company PT Bukit Asam. In 2018-2019, seven more 130 tonne capacity dump trucks were shipped to PT Tambang Raya Usaha Tama, a private coal mining company. And in 2020, another "eight 130-tonne dump trucks BELAZ-75131 started working at the coal mine on the island of Kalimantan"<sup>407</sup>, where the machines from Belarus with a payload capacity from 45 to 130 tonnes, the equipment and characteristics of which are most suitable for the conditions of work in this country, were already working before them. The parties plan to actively continue this co-operation.

A logical continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian and Indonesian regions is the development of partnerships in the educational sphere, where interaction is carried out on the basis of signed agreements: on cooperation - between the Brest State Technical University and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology; on mutual understanding - between the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy and the Bogor Agricultural Institute; on student exchange - between the Minsk State Linguistic University; on cooperation between the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Grodno State Medical University. Over the past few years, the Belarusian State University (BSU), the Belarusian State University

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<sup>406</sup> Vechorko, S. Brest region establishes cooperation with the Indonesian province of West Sumatra / S. Vechorko // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-nalazhivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indonezijskoj-provintsiej-zapadnaja-sumatra-59706-2014/>

<sup>407</sup> Eight dump trucks BELAZ started work in Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vosem-karjernih-samosvalov-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-indonezii-387074-2020/>

of Informatics and Radioelectronics, and the Grodno State Medical University have also found partners in this Southeast Asian country.

In particular, in November 2020, BSU and Airlangga University signed a memorandum of understanding. The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, implement joint educational and research projects, and exchange research materials. The first step in implementing the agreements was "participation of BSU professors in the DECOTA educational programme. It is focused on attracting renowned scientists to give online lectures to students of Airlangga University"<sup>408</sup>. And BSU students were offered to take free online Sura-Bali Community Immersion Programme 2020, which involved studying Indonesian culture and tourism activities in the provinces of East Java and Bali. Note that this university is one of the oldest universities in Indonesia. It was founded in 1954 in the city of Surabaya. In its structure there are 14 faculties: from medical and law to sea and fishery, nursing and veterinary medicine. Almost forty thousand students receive higher education here. In passing, it should be noted that BSU has already had experience of co-operation with Indonesian partners. In particular, since 2016, Unitechprom BSU has been fulfilling a contract for the supply of medical equipment - spirometers - for Global systech medika from Jakarta.

In 2022, a number of other Belarusian universities signed documents on co-operation with Indonesian partners, indicating further expansion of these ties. Thus, in January 2022, the Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) and the Veteran National Development University in Yogyakarta signed a co-operation agreement, outlining in this document the main directions of interaction: "opening of the Centre of Indonesian Language and Culture on the basis of MSLU; opening of the Centre of Belarusian Culture and Russian Language on the basis of UNR "Veteran"; teaching Indonesian language at MSLU on an optional basis; teaching Russian language and lecturing about Belarusian culture at UNR "Veteran"; holding cultural events on the basis of the Centre of Indonesian Language and Culture at MSLU"<sup>409</sup>. Here it is appropriate to add that UNR "Veteran" is one of the state universities in Indonesia. It is a university with a patriotic orientation, actively building up its educational base. The university has opened the Faculty of Mineral Technology, Industrial Engineering, Agriculture, Economics and Business and

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<sup>408</sup> Memorandum of Understanding signed between BSU and Airlangga University [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-podpisan-mezhdu-bgu-i-universitetom-airlangga-414083-2020/>

<sup>409</sup> Co-operation with Veteran University in Yogyakarta (Republic of Indonesia) [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.mslu.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-s-universitetom-veteran-v-dzhok-yakarte-respublika-indoneziya>

the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. The educational institution conducts active scientific work and broadcasts its civic position.

In January 2022, the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA) and Indonesia's Tidar University also signed a memorandum of co-operation. In March, Indonesian and Belarusian students were given the first lectures on sustainable agriculture, a topic that is particularly relevant in the current conditions, as "progress in the development of agricultural production inevitably leads to such global problems as climate change, the development of soil degradation processes, soil salinisation <...> and therefore requires close attention from the entire academic and scientific community" [14].<sup>410</sup> [14]. In this regard, both sides expressed their desire to make cooperation between the BGSCA and Tidar University as useful as possible for solving both local and global problems related to the search for ways to mitigate climate change and provide the inhabitants of Belarus and Indonesia with sufficient food.

The contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian projects for 2021-2022 announced by the State Committee for Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia together with the National Agency for Research and Innovation of this country should also play its role in boosting scientific and technological ties between the two countries. The priority areas of the competition are such as: "health and medicine (raw materials, including natural ones, for pharmaceuticals; medical equipment, stem cells); emergency management and nature management; machine technologies for industry (energy optimization, food industry, computer modelling in engineering)"<sup>411</sup>.

The fact that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Southeast Asian country are in the process of concluding a free trade agreement provides additional opportunities for Belarus-Indonesia cooperation. The parties signed a memorandum of co-operation in October 2020, thus cementing the agreement that "this document will contribute to building an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic co-operation"<sup>412</sup>. On its basis, a working group was established to focus on issues such as trade facilitation, customs and technical regulation, and financial market development. In mid-April 2022, the Council of the Eurasian Economic

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<sup>410</sup> Noskova, S.A. Indonesia - Belarus: mutual interest / S.A. Noskova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=5208](http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT_ID=5208)

<sup>411</sup> Contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian scientific and technical projects for 2021-2022. [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://science.bsuir.by/ru/konkursy-i-granty/konkurs-belorussko-indoneziyskikh-proektov>

<sup>412</sup> Zaleskii, B. Integration as a factor of development. Features of regional co-operation in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 62.

Commission approved a draft decision to conclude a free trade agreement with Indonesia. The agreement itself is expected to be signed in May 2022 at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. In this regard, there are significant prospects for Belarus to supply cargo, agricultural and specialised machinery, X-ray equipment, bleached pulp and glued plywood to Indonesia at reduced customs duties. For reference, we note that the traditional commodity items of import to this country are oil and oil products, telephone sets, wheat, computing machines and their units, sugar and chemically pure sucrose. To these are now being added new ones that are in keeping with the spirit of the times. For this reason, "certain successes can be achieved by manufacturers of urban electric transport, as Indonesia's major cities are implementing a programme to renew their public transport fleets, and Belarusian companies have the opportunity to offer competitive and environmentally friendly goods"<sup>413</sup>.

All these facts indicate that in the near future, Indonesia may become Belarus' most important partner not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the entire Asia-Pacific region. At least, all the necessary prerequisites for this have already been created.

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<sup>413</sup> National Marketing Centre on the prospects of promoting Belarusian goods in Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyj-tsentr-marketinga-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-v-indoneziju-8163/>

## **Belarus-Iran: new energy - into positive dynamics of co-operation**

Iran is one of Belarus's most important partners in West Asia and the Islamic world. The countries established diplomatic relations in 1993. And by today, Belarusian-Iranian contacts are developing quite intensively. "In 2021, bilateral trade turnover between the two countries totalled \$33.3 million, exceeding last year's figure by 34.7%, including Belarusian exports - \$14 million, growth rate - 10.2%. <...> Exports of services from Belarus to Iran reached \$3.35 million last year. The balance of trade in services for Belarus is positive at \$2.8 million.<sup>414</sup> . The key items of Belarusian exports to Iran were equipment for the production of paper pulp products, specific goods, longitudinally sawn timber, newsprint in rolls or sheets, equipment for thermal processing of materials, reciprocating internal combustion engines, and bearings.

In July 2022, the **15th meeting of the mixed Belarusian-Iranian commission for economic cooperation** was held, where the parties discussed successful bilateral projects and reached certain agreements on the implementation of joint promising activities. Minsk and Tehran are interested in increasing the volume of trade between the two countries. In the best years, the sides reached \$250-300 million. "So we intend to reach the trade turnover within \$500 million in a short period of time. And there are all the prerequisites for this,"<sup>415</sup> . And Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade S. Amin even predicted even higher figures in the medium term and expressed confidence that "we plan to increase co-operation in various spheres. All this will allow us to reach a trade turnover of \$1bn in the near future"<sup>416</sup> .

Iran is highly interested in Belarusian industrial goods, agricultural machinery, machine tools, passenger transport, electric transport, and household appliances. There are great opportunities to expand supplies of Belarusian machinery for the Iranian **mining industry**. Moreover, this sector is developing very rapidly in Iran. In particular, Iran is interested in large

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<sup>414</sup> NCM on the peculiarities of doing business in the Iranian market and promotion of exports of Belarusian goods and services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-ob-osobennostjakh-vedenija-biznesa-na-rynke-irana-i-prodvizhenii-eksporta-belorusskich-tovarov-i-uslug-8226/>

<sup>415</sup> Parkhomchik: Belarus and Iran are interested in increasing co-operation in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-belarus-i-iran-zainteresovany-v-naraschivanii-sotrudnichestva-v-promyshlennosti-516021-2022/>

<sup>416</sup> Minister of Industry of Iran: trade turnover with Belarus may reach \$1 billion in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministr-promyshlennosti-irana-tovarooborot-s-belarusju-v-blizhajshee-vremja-mozhet-dostich-1-mlrd-516242-2022/>

supplies of quarry machinery from the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ). After all, the country has huge reserves of copper, which today is a strategic raw material for the production of electric transport. "For the last ten years, BELAZ machinery has been very much in demand on the Iranian market. It is reliable and has shown itself only on the good side"<sup>417</sup>. Since the Iranian side plans to increase production in the mining industry, Iran would like to receive about 800 more dump trucks. First of all, Iranian partners are interested in dump trucks with payload capacity of 90-130 tonnes.

Iranian **investment projects** are attracting interest in Belarus. In particular, in the free economic zone (FEZ) "Vitebsk" the first resident in 2022 "became BRR Arshieh ECO Health LLC - an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging"<sup>418</sup>. In July 2022, another resident of FEZ Vitebsk became the Belarusian-Iranian company Oriye Galvametal LLC. The company was established for the construction of a hot-dip galvanising plant near the village of Farinovo, Polotsk district. The site has good infrastructural facilities, and now the founders are starting the pre-project preparation and design of the facility. It is planned to purchase Iranian equipment for production. The construction and commissioning of the plant will take about 2-3 years. The enterprise will be built near the Novopolotsk plant of technological metal structures, the products of which are also planned to be processed. "We are talking about cable-supporting structures, road barriers and other products used in road construction and operated in aggressive environments"<sup>419</sup>. It is also planned to process welded lattice decking, the production of which the plant of technological metal structures started in the first quarter of 2021.

Cooperation between Belarus and Iran in the sphere of agriculture and **foodstuffs** will also become one of the important areas of trade and economic co-operation in the coming years. The Belarusian side believes that Iran can be considered as a promising area for increasing domestic exports of dairy and meat products - beef, butter, chicken meat, chicken and quail eggs, as well as vegetable oil, mixed fodder and premixes for animals, complex technical products, innovative developments in the food industry and agriculture. "In

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<sup>417</sup> Iran is interested in large supplies of BELAZ quarry machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/iran-zainteresovan-v-krupnyh-postavkah-karjemoj-tehniki-belaz-516134-2022/>

<sup>418</sup> Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": optimisation with an eye on the result / B.L. Zalessky // *Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Vedecky pokrok na prelomu tysyachalety - 2022"*. Volume 5: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 22.

<sup>419</sup> Belarusian-Iranian tandem of investors will build a hot-dip galvanising plant in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-iranskij-tandem-investorov-postroit-zavod-gorjachego-tsinkovanija-v-sez-vitebsk-513958-2022/>

2021, mutual trade turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs totalled \$10.9 million, up 22% from 2020"<sup>420</sup>. The parties' plans include the need to further increase trade and economic cooperation in agriculture and food, including the organisation of supplies of Belarusian crop, meat and dairy products, as well as animal feed and premixes to Iran, and counter supplies - vegetables, fruits, fish and seafood - from Iran to Belarus.

In November 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Iran, where various meetings and negotiations at the interstate level were held, during which it was noted that interaction between the two countries is now characterised by high dynamics of development in virtually all areas. In particular, this year Minsk and Tehran "significantly increased the volume of cooperation in many areas, from trade turnover to commodity flows, cargo turnover"<sup>421</sup>. However, it appears that the parties still need to take a number of steps, conclude important documents, and hold many new events in order to realise the full potential that Belarus and Iran have in the field of industry, science and technology, and to agree on the approaches laid down in the draft roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026. It should be noted that for three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the two countries "increased to \$63.6 million (2.9-fold growth compared to the same period of 2021), exports - to \$48.6 million (4.4-fold), imports - to \$15 million (41.8% growth). The balance is positive - \$33.6 million"<sup>422</sup>.

An important event in the relations between the two countries was the **Iran-Belarus Business Forum** held in November 2022 in the Iranian capital, organised by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BelCCI) and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, "which has been BelCCI's main partner in Iran for 20 years"<sup>423</sup>. More than 120 executives and representatives of Belarusian and Iranian companies attended this forum. From Belarus, exporters from industrial production and machine building, woodworking, light and food industries were represented. The Iranian side proposed a number of measures to stimulate mutual trade. These include: empowering small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries,

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<sup>420</sup> Belarus plans to supply crop, meat and dairy products to Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavljat-v-iran-rastenievodcheskuju-mjasnuju-i-molochnuju-produktsiju-492495-2022/>

<sup>421</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Iran can achieve more in trade, economic and investment co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10474>

<sup>422</sup> Golovchenko: the positions of Belarus and Iran coincide on the whole range of issues on the economic agenda [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-pozitsii-belarusi-i-irana-sovpadajut-po-vsemu-krugu-voprosov-ekonomicheskoi-povestki-dnja-536376-2022/>

<sup>423</sup> Iran-Belarus Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/iransko-belorusskiy-biznes-forum/#>



strengthening banking and insurance co-operation, identifying new joint projects, developing and simplifying visas for businessmen and tourists, creating the necessary infrastructure for the development of economic relations, especially in the commercial, industrial and technical sectors. In addition, it was announced "to open a credit line of \$100 million for Belarusian traders interested in buying Iranian products"<sup>424</sup>. Following the business forum, the parties signed a number of joint documents. In particular, the BelCCI and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture adopted a co-operation agreement, which "will give a new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries"<sup>425</sup>.

As for cooperation between Minsk and Tehran in the **scientific sphere**, a number of treaties, agreements and memoranda have already been signed between institutes of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus and scientific organisations and universities in Iran. For example, "according to the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences and Azad Islamic University, 16 Iranian scientists have completed their postgraduate studies and defended their PhD theses in the postgraduate programmes of scientific organisations of the Academy of Sciences"<sup>426</sup>. But the parties intend to expand joint efforts to work on specific scientific areas and projects. To this end, in May 2022, the Belarusian side offered its Iranian partners a package of proposals on which they could work together to achieve effective results. Among them are new materials and technologies, production of medicines and pharmaceutical products, technologies and equipment for complex treatment of drinking water, technologies for processing minerals, unmanned aerial vehicles, training and exchange of students, internships for scientists and teachers. It is planned that on the initiative of the National Academy of Sciences, a draft roadmap for cooperation with Iranian scientific organisations will be developed, which will include promising areas of mutual interest.

In March 2023, the two countries celebrated a landmark date - the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In the same month in Tehran, the Presidents of Belarus and Iran signed a **roadmap for**

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<sup>424</sup> Iranian-Belarusian business forum is held in Tehran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://iran.ru/news/analytics/121826/V\\_Tegerane\\_prohodit\\_irano\\_belorusskiy\\_biznes\\_forum](https://iran.ru/news/analytics/121826/V_Tegerane_prohodit_irano_belorusskiy_biznes_forum)

<sup>425</sup> Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belarus and Iran signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennyye-palaty-belarusi-i-irana-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-536244-2022/>

<sup>426</sup> NAS of Belarus will develop a draft roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations of Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-belarusi-razrabotaet-proekt-dorozhnoj-karty-sotrudnichestva-s-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-irana-500275-2022/>

**comprehensive cooperation** between the two countries for 2023-2026, which envisages interaction between Minsk and Tehran on a wide range of issues - in the political, economic, consular, scientific and technical spheres, as well as in education, culture, art, media and tourism. This document has become one of the most important elements of the legal framework of cooperation between Belarus and Iran. For reference, it should be noted that "the Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and more than 70 other documents"<sup>427</sup>. In March, eight more were added to their number, including: an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of plant quarantine and protection, as well as an agreement on the transfer of persons sentenced to imprisonment for further serving of their sentence; memoranda of understanding between the Ministry of Culture of Belarus and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran, as well as between the State Committee for Standardisation of Belarus and the Iranian National Standardisation Organisation.

Speaking about the memorandum on **standardisation issues**, we would **like to** stress that this document provides for cooperation between the parties in the field of conformity assessment procedures, standards and technical regulations for issuing halal certificates and their mutual recognition for products manufactured and mutually supplied by the countries. "At the same time, mutual recognition of the results of halal certification refers only to certificates issued by the respective bodies of the parties: the Iranian National Standards Organisation (INSO) and BelHalal LLC." The parties also plan to exchange experience and knowledge in the field of technologies, competences, infrastructure facilities, as well as research and development related to halal products"<sup>428</sup>. In addition, the parties reached promising agreements in industry, trade, transport and agriculture. This shows that Iran is the most important partner in the Middle East for Belarus. The parties are interested in mutually beneficial long-term co-operation in a number of areas.

We would like to emphasise once again that the relations between Belarus and Iran have shown a major breakthrough over the past two years. "In 2021, the trade turnover between the countries exceeded \$33 million, increasing by more than a third compared to 2020. But over the past year, the level of trade added even more significantly: in 2022, Belarus and Iran traded

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<sup>427</sup> Koltsov: Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and 70 other documents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/koltsov-belorussko-iranskij-pravovoj-reestr-vkljuchaet-bolee-30-mezhdunarodnyh-dogovorov-i-70-drugih-554851-2023/>

<sup>428</sup> Belarus and Iran will mutually recognise the results of certification of halal products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-budut-vzaimno-priznavat-rezultaty-sertifikatsii-haljalnoj-produktsii-555113-2023/>

\$100 million, which is a threefold increase."<sup>429</sup> . **Economic cooperation** remains the key area of Belarusian-Iranian interaction. And there is confidence that the potential of bilateral interaction allows for a significant increase in trade turnover in the coming years. In particular, "new supplies of quarry machinery, cargo and passenger vehicles to Iran are currently under active discussion. The details of a licence agreement to organise joint assembly of tractors in Iran are being worked out"<sup>430</sup> . Another interesting fact: the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" in 2022 increased exports to this country of the Middle East by 2.3 times. "Positive dynamics is also noted in January this year. The growth rate was 134% by January 2022. Cellulose, paper and cardboard, sawn timber are actively supplied to Iran"<sup>431</sup> .

Belarus and Iran are also developing co-operation in the **transport sector**. In March 2023, the two countries agreed on a permit-free system for road transport of goods. Apparently, "already in 2023, road carriers will be able to transport cargoes without permits <...>. Iranian airline Mahan Air has launched regular flights twice a week on the Tehran-Minsk-Tehran route since 26 March this year"<sup>432</sup> . The transport theme is continued by the fact that Belarus together with Iran will take part in the development of the international transport corridor North-South. After all, "today the Iranian side needs to build about 180 kilometres of railway. And the Iranian side has actively started this work to complete the North-South railway corridor in the direction of the port of Bandar Abbas"<sup>433</sup> . This project is very important for Belarus, as it will actualise Belarusian transit through Iran to distant countries.

Another important topic in the context of Belarusian-Iranian interaction is the development of an active **interregional dialogue**. In this regard, we would like to remind that "relations are developing between Homiel Region and Mazandaran Province, Mahiliou Region and East Azerbaijan, Minsk Region and the capital region of Iran. Ties have been established between

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<sup>429</sup> Raisi: relations between Iran and Belarus have shown a breakthrough [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/raisi-otnoshenija-mezhdu-iranom-i-belarusiju-prodemonstrirovali-proryv-555018-2023/>

<sup>430</sup> Rogozhnik: the potentials of Belarus and Iran allow to significantly increase mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogozhnik-potentsialy-belarusi-i-irana-pozvoljajut-znachitelno-uvlechit-vzaimnyj-tovarooborot-554952-2023/>

<sup>431</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" last year increased exports to Iran by 2.3 times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-bellesbumproma-v-proshlom-godu-uvlechili-eksport-v-iran-v-23-raza-555029-2023/>

<sup>432</sup> Belarus and Iran agreed on a permit-free system of road transport of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-dogovorilis-o-bezrazreshitelnoj-sisteme-avtoperevozok-gruzov-555173-2023/>

<sup>433</sup> Belarus will take part in the development of the North-South transport corridor through Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-razviti-transportnogo-koridora-sever-jug-cherez-iran-555159-2023/>

Minsk and Tehran, as well as between Mogilev and Tabriz"<sup>434</sup>. More specifically, for example, Homiel region already intends to resume and develop co-operation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, "a document on trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation with which was signed back in 2009"<sup>435</sup>. The Mogilev region plans to expand trade and economic co-operation and intensify ties in the sphere of tourism, education and culture with the province of East Azerbaijan, where the free economic zone "Aras" is located. In May 2022, constructive talks were held on the prospects of co-operation and development of ties between Grodno Region and Homozgan Province. "The parties confirmed mutual interest in the implementation of joint projects in various areas. Priority activities aimed at forming long-term sustainable relations have been identified"<sup>436</sup>.

Among the Belarusian regions that actively cooperated with Iranian partners in 2022, one should also mention **Minsk Region**, whose trade turnover with Iran grew 10.5 times compared to 2021. The statistics states that "in January-December 2022, trade turnover between Minsk region and the Islamic Republic of Iran amounted to \$51190.5 thousand (growth rate 114.1%). Including exports - \$44309.8 thousand (120%), imports - \$6880.7 thousand (113.5%). A positive foreign trade balance of \$37429.1 thousand was formed"<sup>437</sup>. The basis of export supplies of Minsk region last year was dominated by sawn timber, glued plywood, veneered wooden panels, other engines and power plants, electric motors and generators. In turn, Minsk voblast imports dates, figs, pineapples, avocado, guava, mango, mangosteen, lettuce, fresh and chilled chicory, other vegetables, fruits and nuts from Iran. In addition, there are "several successful Iranian projects being implemented in the metropolitan region. Projects such as AFTAB, the Bel Peka Paint project, and the Eastern Ship sheep farming project can be mentioned."<sup>438</sup>. In

<sup>434</sup> Koltsov, D. Trade, co-operation and removal of barriers. How Belarus and Iran will mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations during Lukashenko's visit to Tehran / D. Koltsov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/torgovlja-kooperatsija-i-snjatie-barjerov-chem-belarus-i-iran-otmetjat-30-letie-dipotnoshenij-vo-vremja-8621/>

<sup>435</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Priority - restoration of partnership / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVII Miedzynarodowej naukow-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI powieka - 2021", Volume 4. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 23.

<sup>436</sup> About the visit of the Ambassador of Belarus to Iran to the province of Hormozgan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/bdd91d54c2ef1c14.html>

<sup>437</sup> Narkevich, G. "We welcome Iranian investments in our economy". Turchin met with the ambassador of the country / G. Narkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mln.by/15022023/my-privetstvuem-iranskije-investiczii-v-nashu-ekonomiku-turchin-vstretilsya-s-poslom-strany/>

<sup>438</sup> Trade turnover of Minsk region and Iran in 2022 increased more than tenfold [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-minskoj-oblasti-i-irana-v-2022-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-desjat-raz-550380-2023/>

the future, it appears that the parties have great prospects for development in a number of areas.

The Belarusian side is also attentive to other proposals for co-operation between the regions. In 2022 alone, direct interaction was established with the governors of the Iranian provinces of Hormozgan, Mazandaran, Isfahan, and Gilan, as well as with the mayors of the cities of Bandar Abbas, Isfahan, Resht, and Astara. This shows that new ties between the regions and cities of the two countries are on the way.

On the whole, in recent years Belarus and Iran have been finding the most efficient and effective ways to ensure positive dynamics for the long term in order to jointly breathe new energy into bilateral cooperation, preserving and multiplying everything positive for the implementation of a multifaceted mutually beneficial partnership.

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## **Belarus-Africa: both expanding exports, and search for new markets**

In May 2022, the third Belarusian-African Economic Forum is to be held in Cairo, where the prospects of implementing joint projects in agriculture, engineering, education, and other areas with a number of African countries will be considered. This fact once again testifies to the fact that "intensification of interaction with African countries is one of the important components of the modern Belarusian foreign policy"<sup>439</sup>. It should be recalled that by the beginning of 2022, the Republic of Belarus had established diplomatic relations with 51 countries of the African continent, four of which - Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa - successfully operate Belarusian diplomatic missions. "The key area of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and African states in the trade and economic sphere is the expansion of exports of products and services. Systematic work is underway to develop new markets on the African continent"<sup>440</sup>. An important component of this work is the organisation and holding of Belarusian-African economic and business forums.

Thus, the business forum "Africa - Belarus: Current Situation and New Guidelines for Joint Business Projects", attended by representatives of 17 embassies of African countries, including Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Zambia, and Zambia, as well as more than two hundred Belarusian enterprises, was held in December 2020 in the format of a videoconference. The relevance of this event for the Belarusian side was explained by the fact that official Minsk pays great attention to the development of ties with the countries of this continent, as "Africa is a treasure trove of natural resources, an important source of global labour resources, and a huge untapped market"<sup>441</sup>. In this regard, it is important not only to increase mutual trade with the continent's countries, but also to diversify Belarusian exports, deepen economic and industrial cooperation, and actively use the project approach, the essence of which is the implementation of projects to establish joint ventures and enterprises in Africa, promote

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<sup>439</sup> Zalesky, B. Vectors of the far arc. Opportunities for sectoral co-operation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing: Saarbrücken, Deutschland / Germany, 2018. - C. 17.

<sup>440</sup> Belarus and the countries of Africa and the Middle East [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries\\_regions/africa\\_middle\\_east/](https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries_regions/africa_middle_east/)

<sup>441</sup> Africa is becoming a promising and long-term partner of Belarus - Ulakhovich [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/afrika-stanovitsja-perspektivnym-i-dolgosrochnym-partnerom-belarusi-ulahovich-413176-2020/>

industrial and food products, as well as scientific, technical and production developments in the industrial, agricultural, energy and transnational sectors.

Developing this thesis, the participants of the December Africa-Belarus Business Forum noted that "there are three main areas of co-operation with African countries for Belarus from the point of view of business"<sup>442</sup>. Firstly, everything related to mechanical engineering and the development of the relevant infrastructure. Secondly, everything related to food production, agrarian technologies, agricultural machinery. Thirdly, everything that includes the concept of "service sector", and especially education, medicine, IT-technologies. Of course, the Belarusian side has already accumulated a certain experience of cooperation in each of these areas, which can be used to further realise the huge potential for the development of foreign economic relations.

A good example in this regard is the Minsk Tractor Plant, which in the first ten months of 2020 almost three and a half times increased its exports to African countries, opening two new markets - Zimbabwe and Burundi. But the address of the main deliveries of Belarusian tractors to the "black continent" is Sudan, where 153 machines were shipped in 2019 and 510 in January-October 2020. This is the result of the co-operation between MTZ and the Sudanese company MIG Agricultural Co. Ltd, which started back in 2003, thanks to which more than two and a half thousand BELARUS tractors are already working in Sudanese fields.

In addition, Minsk Tractor Plant in Africa has also created a certain plan for the future in the form of a roadmap for cooperation with the Ministry of Military Industry of Egypt signed back in February 2020, which envisages the organisation of assembly production of tractors and engines on the basis of the plant of Helwan Diesel Engines Co. with localisation of up to 40 per cent in the next three years. It is important that the Egyptian partners have already "received a standard project for the organisation of assembly production for 500 units of machinery, as well as a list of necessary equipment and tooling. In addition, MTW will prepare and hand over a standard project of assembly production designed for the production of 10 thousand machines per year"<sup>443</sup>.

In the first eight months of 2020, OJSC BMZ, the managing company of BMK Holding, increased its deliveries to Africa by almost 20 per cent,

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<sup>442</sup> Belarus offers African countries to co-operate in the sphere of services, agro-industrial complex and machine-building [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-afrikanskim-stranam-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-uslug-apk-i-mashinostroenii-419342-2020>

<sup>443</sup> MTZ tripled exports to Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-vtroe-uvlechil-eksport-v-afriku-416304-2020/>

shipping more than \$11 million worth of valves to Africa. This allowed to increase the share of African countries in the total exports of the company to 12 per cent. Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and Ghana are among the main importers of Belarusian metallurgists' products. Interestingly, "shipments to the last listed country [Ghana] in the current [2020] year increased threefold in physical terms"<sup>444</sup>.

Another African country where the Belarusian presence is growing quite rapidly is Zimbabwe, whose government reached an agreement with Belarus a few years ago to supply agricultural machinery worth \$58 million. And "100 tractors, 20 combine harvesters, 52 seeders, five tractors and five semi-trailers made in Belarus have already been delivered to Zimbabwe. By the end of this [2020] year, another 370 tractors, 20 combine harvesters and 138 seeders will arrive by sea"<sup>445</sup>. The fact is that the agricultural sector is a key segment of the economy of this country, along with the mining industry. And mechanisation is seen here as the main way of development of national agriculture. For this reason, in September 2020, Zimbabwe announced at the state level the launch of a joint government programme with Belarus to mechanise the country's agricultural sector. In this regard, a Belarusian trade and service centre was opened in the capital, Harare, where "machinery will be provided to Zimbabwean farmers as part of the government's programme to mechanise the country's agriculture"<sup>446</sup>. Also. Efforts to build ties between Belarus and Namibia will soon be considerably intensified. In November 2020, the two countries declared their intention to pay special attention to "the development of a legal framework and the establishment of a joint intergovernmental committee on trade and economic cooperation."<sup>447</sup>

The Second Belarusian-African Economic Forum, attended by representatives of government agencies, business and financial circles from 14 African states - Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, and Eritrea - was held in Minsk at the junction of spring and summer 2021. On the Belarusian side, the event was attended by over 175

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<sup>444</sup> BMZ increased sales of rebar to Africa by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechil-prodazhi-armaturny-v-afriku-pochti-na-20-407746-2020/>

<sup>445</sup> Zimbabwe launched a joint programme with Belarus to provide farms with agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-zimbabwe-zapuschena-sovmestnaja-s-belarusju-programma-obespechenija-ferm-selhoztehniko-408853-2020/>

<sup>446</sup> "Gomselmash" strengthens its position in the market of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-ukrepljaet-pozitsii-na-rynke-zimbabwe-408968-2020>

<sup>447</sup> Belarus and Namibia plan to set up a committee for trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-namibija-planirujut-sozdat-komitet-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnicestvu-417026-2020/>



companies and industrial enterprises interested in establishing contacts with African partners and implementing joint mutually beneficial projects. Minsk described the forum as an important dialogue platform aimed at further strengthening and developing bilateral and multilateral relations between Belarus and African countries, expanding trade, economic and cooperation ties, and increasing mutual trade turnover. Suffice it to say that "in the three years after the first Belarus-Africa Forum, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and African states totalled over USD 1.8 billion. Belarus and its African partners have gone from an annual trade turnover of \$158 million in the early 2000s to \$553 million in 2020"<sup>448</sup>. This dynamics largely explains why this continent is considered to be one of the important elements of Belarus's multi-vector foreign policy, where Belarus has considerable opportunities for joint and mutually beneficial movement towards the creation of new strongholds and strengthening cooperation in a wide range of areas.

It is a fact that Belarus has long been exporting to many African countries. Moreover, "practically half of the states of the southern continent know Belarusian products: from food to machine building"<sup>449</sup>. For example, Egypt has an assembly plant for Belarusian tractors and trucks, while Sudan and Algeria are already actively working on similar projects. Potash fertilisers and tyres are exported to South Africa. "Major projects are being implemented and contracts for the supply of Belarusian machinery and equipment to Zimbabwe and Angola are being worked out"<sup>450</sup>.

However, the very fact that the second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum was held testified to the fact that the achieved indicators of co-operation with African partners can and should be much higher. The existing level of co-operation is just a starting point for the introduction of new forms and methods of trade and economic interaction and diversification of mutual trade. In fact, for this reason, at this economic forum, Belarus offered African countries to use a comprehensive systematic approach in the development of partnerships, from assessing local agricultural conditions to supplying a full range of machinery and equipment. Implementation of such an approach could significantly increase supplies of "Belarusian machinery, equipment and

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<sup>448</sup> About the Second Belarusian-African Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/dd94997d14d9eb8a.html](https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dd94997d14d9eb8a.html)

<sup>449</sup> Experts link the development of the world economy with Africa. How can Belarus take advantage of this? [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-svjazvvajut-razvitie-mirovoj-ekonomiki-s-afrikoi-kak-etim-mozhet-vospolzovatsja-belarus-443722-2021/>

<sup>450</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian dump trucks and agricultural machinery have taken strong positions in the markets of many African countries // A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-samosvaly-i-selhoztehnika-zanjali-prochnye-pozitsii-na-rynkah-mnogih-afrikanskih-stran-443820-2021/>

components to Africa within the framework of various forms of industrial cooperation with the possible use of various instruments of financing Belarusian exports"<sup>451</sup>, as well as accelerate the creation of joint production facilities using Belarusian technologies and the turnkey construction of industrial and agricultural facilities.

It should be noted that Belarusian proposals at the economic forum were met with considerable interest by the African participants. Thus, the Egyptian side, represented by about 35 companies in Minsk, expressing its interest in industrial cooperation with partners from Belarus, suggested promoting trilateral cooperation under which Belarusian tractors assembled in Egypt could be supplied to other countries of the continent using the opportunities of the free trade zones available there, which would remove a number of tariff barriers. Among other vectors of co-operation, according to Egyptian business, several others look promising today. "The first is a coronavirus vaccine produced by Belarus, and the second is an electric bus produced by Belarus"<sup>452</sup>.

As for other African countries, for example, Uganda, which is rich in mineral resources and where oil and gas are extracted, "intends to seriously engage in residential infrastructure and construction of hotels to develop tourism. Belarusian partners could help the country"<sup>453</sup>. Among other promising areas of mutual Belarusian-Ugandan interest were oil products processing, information and communication technologies, and education. Congo would like to develop relations with Belarusian partners in order to modernise its agricultural policy. Namibia sees prospects for such cooperation in mining, energy, industry, agriculture, and even fishing.

The interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of South Africa (RSA) deserves a separate discussion in this context. March 2023 will mark 30 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 2020, trade turnover between the two countries exceeded \$25 million, with Belarusian exports accounting for \$18 million. This was due to supplies from Belarus of quarry automotive equipment and spare parts for it, oversized tyres, potash fertilisers, linen fabrics, X-ray equipment, and certain

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<sup>451</sup> About the meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei with the participants of the Second Belarusian-African Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/cc66b6a8ee1bbd02.html](https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cc66b6a8ee1bbd02.html)

<sup>452</sup> Egypt is interested in industrial cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/egipet-zainteresovan-v-promyshlennoj-kooperatsii-s-belarusiju-443740-2021/>

<sup>453</sup> "We can start working right now" - African countries voiced promising areas of cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mozhem-nachinat-rabotat-prjamo-sejchas-strany-afriki-ozvuchili-perspektivnye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-443755-2021/>

types of food products. An important point in this case is that "the commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in South Africa includes the trading house of Belshina, a dealer (certified service centre) of BelAZ"<sup>454</sup>.

A recent characteristic feature of the Belarusian-South African interaction has been the revival of trade and economic ties. In particular, "in 2020, after a six-year break, deliveries of BELAZ mining machinery to South Africa resumed"<sup>455</sup>. As of the end of September 2021, the fleet of these machines in this African country already numbered 49 dump trucks. This fact is an obvious evidence of the fact that Minsk and Pretoria are now starting to gradually return to the full realisation of the potential inherent in cooperation between the regions of the two countries. Recall that in 2013, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the parties spoke of good prospects for "co-operation in the areas of industry, agriculture, interregional development..."<sup>456</sup>. And in 2021 this aspiration became especially noticeable.

For example, in late September 2021, the head of the South African diplomatic mission in Russia and Belarus, M.D. Maketuka, was talking about intensifying cooperation **with** partners from the Free State province in Minsk Regional Executive Committee. The meeting resulted in the decision to co-operate in two areas: agriculture and machinery production. It should be noted that these regions signed a co-operation agreement back in December 2015. In September 2016, a representative delegation from the Free State visited the Belarusian capital region, where it was particularly interested in the technologies and experience of the Minsk region in processing agricultural products. This was explained by the fact that agriculture is central to the economy of this province. In addition, the South African side expressed great interest "in the assistance of Belarusian partners in personnel training, and they also intend to develop co-operation in construction and health care"<sup>457</sup>. And in November 2020, the partners from South Africa confirmed their readiness to cooperate in various areas, including "in the areas of trade in milk and meat,

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<sup>454</sup> Co-operation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of South Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/](https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/)

<sup>455</sup> Turchin discussed with the Ambassador of South Africa cooperation in the field of agriculture and machinery production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-poslom-juar-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-i-proizvodstva-tehniki-462069-2021/>

<sup>456</sup> Zaleskii, B. International relations and media. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 539.

<sup>457</sup> Martyniuk, E. Free State Province of South Africa intends to adopt the Belarusian experience in processing agricultural products / E. Martyniuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-fri-stejt-juar-namerena-perenjat-belorusskij-opyt-po-pererabotke-selhozproduktov-211004-2016/>

exchange of students for training"<sup>458</sup>, as well as in the development of tourism. Apparently, the time for the implementation of all these plans of interaction has come.

Another South African province that has noticeably intensified its interest in co-operation with Belarusian partners in 2021 is KwaZulu-Natal, which is the second most populous (11.5 million people) in South Africa and ranks second in the country in terms of economic indicators. Thus, in April, a video conference "Opportunities for trade and investment cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the field of textiles and clothing" was held, where "from the South African side there were presented companies working in the field of linen products supply, tailoring of clothing and footwear, designers"<sup>459</sup>. It should be assumed that as a result of the discussion such Belarusian enterprises as Orsha Flax Factory, Kamvol, Mogotex, and Luch will soon find reliable business partners in the south of the African continent.

This province of South Africa is also interesting for Belarus because it is here that a project to set up an assembly plant for Belarusian tractors is to be implemented in a special economic zone. "The parties to the project are Nqawana Holdings and the administration of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) on the South African side, and MTZ OJSC and Round Bay LLC on the Belarusian side"<sup>460</sup>. In August 2021, the technical details of this project were already discussed here and concrete steps were outlined for the implementation of the agreements reached.

An interesting example of partner regions from Belarus and South Africa is Mogilev Oblast and Mpumalanga Province, one of the most industrially powerful in the country, where mining, telecommunication services, energy, and about 40 per cent of South Africa's forest land are well developed. The two sides signed a memorandum of co-operation in December 2016. In it, they expressed interest in developing partnerships in trade and industry, agriculture, education, sports, tourism and culture. The province also expressed interest in developing not only projects in the agro-industrial complex, but also in training specialists in agriculture, forestry, medicine, and information technology in Belarusian universities. In addition, there was talk about the possibilities of

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<sup>458</sup> South Africa is interested in co-operation with Minsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-minskoj-oblastju-417308-2020/>

<sup>459</sup> About the videoconference "Opportunities for trade and investment co-operation between the Republic of Belarus and the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the field of textiles and clothing". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b561f2d89c659bd7.html>

<sup>460</sup> On the visit of Ambassador A. Sidoruk to Richards Bay [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ad33cd30a4281477.html>

"co-operation in woodworking, creation of joint ventures for processing agricultural products and production of foodstuffs"<sup>461</sup>. Let us hope that it is time for these regions to return to the partnership plans once adopted in order to successfully implement them today.

Kenya is another country on the African continent where mutually beneficial co-operation with Belarus has great potential. In August 2019, Nairobi hosted the Belarus-Kenya Business Forum, during which the participants outlined promising growth points for bilateral trade and economic cooperation. At the same time, the parties' attention was focused on the prospects for joint projects that would contribute to the implementation of the Kenyan government's strategic "Big Four Programme", which includes "food security and nutrition, universal health coverage, affordable housing and manufacturing"<sup>462</sup>. As a result, agreements were signed at the forum for the construction of a reinforced concrete plant on Kenyan soil and the establishment of a fish farm with a total value exceeding one hundred million dollars. Agreements were also reached on the supply of motor tractor machinery and equipment from Belarus to Kenya for almost twenty million dollars, with the subsequent establishment of an assembly plant for Belarusian tractors with an annual capacity of up to five thousand units in this African country.

These facts demonstrate that the business forum was an important concrete step towards the establishment of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Kenya, which established diplomatic relations almost 30 years ago. It is true that the legal framework for Belarusian-Kenyan co-operation is still in the process of formation. However, it is encouraging that the parties are now preparing to sign a number of joint documents regulating bilateral relations in various areas, including agriculture, higher education, science, and technology.

A positive trend of recent years in the development of partnership ties between the two countries is the rapid growth - by more than forty per cent - of mutual trade turnover in 2018, which came close to \$50 million. "Traditional items of Belarusian exports to Kenya are: potash and mixed mineral fertilisers, newsprint, and printing products. The basis of Kenyan imports to Belarus is

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<sup>461</sup> Kulyagin, S. Mogilev region and Mpumalanga province of South Africa signed a memorandum of co-operation / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-mpumalanga-juar-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-222724-2016/>

<sup>462</sup> About the Belarusian-Kenyan business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/e02ca9530a8dcc63.html>

formed by supplies of flowers and buds, nuts, vegetables and fruits, coffee, tea"<sup>463</sup>. And this gives grounds for the Belarusian side to forecast at the highest level that "Kenya will soon become one of the key partners of Belarus in Africa"<sup>464</sup>.

The seriousness of the Belarusian side's intentions to thoroughly settle down in the Kenyan market is confirmed by the fact that Belarus organised its first national exposition at the FoodAgro International Food, Hospitality and Agriculture Exhibition held in Nairobi in early August 2019. Minsk is confident that participation in this exhibition, which is part of the largest exhibition event in East Africa - Kenya International Trade Exhibition, "will promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizers, food, agricultural products to the Kenyan market, as well as become a launching pad for Belarusian companies to enter the KOMECA countries (integration association of Eastern and Southern Africa)"<sup>465</sup>.

In the Kenyan capital, the enterprises of Belgospischeprom Concern, Lidselmash Holding Management Company, Gomselmash, MTZ, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash, Lidakhlebproukt, and Smarhon Bread Products Combine unitary enterprise presented their products. The participation of these Belarusian exporters in the said exhibition is explained by the fact that Kenya is an agrarian country where "more than 35% of GDP is accounted for by the agricultural sector"<sup>466</sup>, where in December 2017, a new programme of planned economic development of the country until 2022 was launched with a focus on the development of national production, food security and construction of affordable housing. In this regard, with a competent approach, Belarusian producers can realistically claim to increase supplies of their agricultural equipment, fertilisers, and chemical plant protection products here. The development of meat and dairy production is also promising in this African country, as "the range of such products in Kenya is not wide, so they respond with interest to proposals to create meat and dairy complexes, poultry

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<sup>463</sup> Belarus - Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/](http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/)

<sup>464</sup> Lukashenko expects Kenya to become one of the key partners of Belarus in Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-rasschityvaet-chto-kenija-stanet-odnim-iz-kljuchevykh-partnerov-belarusi-v-afrike-328984-2018/>

<sup>465</sup> The national exposition of Belarus opened at the FoodAgro exhibition in Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-vystavke-foodagro-v-kenii-356957-2019/>

<sup>466</sup> FoodAgro exhibition will allow Belarus to expand its presence in the Kenyan market - Sadoho [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vystavka-foodagro-pozvolit-belarusi-rasshirit-svoe-prisutstvie-na-rynke-kenii-sadoho-349941-2019/>

complexes, meat processing lines, cheese production"<sup>467</sup>. Another interesting fact is this. There are many manufacturers working in Kenya today who assemble tractors, tractors and cars here. There is a company that assembles three models of Volkswagen cars on its premises. It would like to expand the range of vehicles assembled there by adding Belarusian tractors.

It should be noted that the exhibition in Nairobi was a continuation of the Belarusian side's course of active participation in various business events held on the African continent in the pre-pandemic period in 2019. Thus, in March of the same year, Belarus' national exposition was organised for the first time at the International Exhibition of Agriculture and Livestock, Food, Beverages and Packaging Technologies Agrofood, which was held in the Nigerian city of Lagos. And in April, the Made in Belarus exposition was presented at the 60th Zimbabwe International Trade Fair 2019 in the Zimbabwean city of Bulawayo, one of the largest in the southern African region. Apparently, 2022 should become a new "starting point" in this issue in the post-pandemic era. This is evidenced by the Plan of National Exhibitions of Belarus in Foreign Countries for this year, which talks about the demonstration of national expositions of our country in Africa at least at two international exhibition forums: in the first half of the year - Kenia International Trade Exhibition in Nairobi (Kenya); in the second half - Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe). These events, along with the third Belarusian-African Economic Forum in Cairo in May 2022, should give new powerful impulses to systematic work to expand Belarusian exports and develop new markets in Africa.

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<sup>467</sup> Demand for Belarusian agricultural machinery in Kenya is constantly growing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/spros-na-belorusskuju-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-postojanno-rastet-349964-2019/>

## **Belarus - Africa: from spot co-operation - to a full-fledged partnership**

The Republic of Belarus intends to increase supplies to the countries of the far arc. At a meeting in the Council of Ministers back in July 2022, the task to reorient export flows in the amount of at least \$16 billion was set. "The volumes of Belarusian exports to the countries of the far arc at the end of 5 months are still quite modest. <...> A comprehensive strategy of co-operation with the countries of the far arc, plans of interaction between embassies and industries have been adopted..."<sup>468</sup>. In this context, such an actively developing continent as Africa is currently of great interest to Belarus.

Note that "by the beginning of 2022 the Republic of Belarus had established diplomatic relations with 51 countries of the African continent"<sup>469</sup>. Statistics state that for 2021, Belarus' trade turnover with African countries totalled half a billion dollars, of which \$480 million is Belarusian exports. "First of all, our country supplies machine-building products, agricultural, quarry and truck equipment. The products of the Belarusian Metallurgical Plant are also in demand now"<sup>470</sup>. It is understandable. For the Belarusian industry, the African market is one of the most promising for the supply of its products. Suffice it to say that "over the period of January-November 2022, exports of the Ministry of Industry's products to the African continent increased more than 1.5 times. <...> Belarusian-made agricultural machinery is very popular with African consumers, who note the high quality of Belarusian tractors and other agricultural machinery"<sup>471</sup>. For reference, we note that 60 to 80 per cent of the population of African countries are engaged in the agrarian sector, so its modernisation, mechanisation, food security and technologies in this area play an important role for them. Another promising area of ties with African partners is education services. "Now about 1.6 thousand students from African countries are studying in Belarus. <...> First

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<sup>468</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to increase supplies to the countries of the far arc [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10368>

<sup>469</sup> Zalesky, B. Perimeter of the Far Arc. The potential of sustainable partnership in solving the multi-vector interaction. / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 177.

<sup>470</sup> Nikolajchik: Belarus systematically and purposefully expands its presence in Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikolajchik-belarus-planomemo-i-tselenapravlenno-rasshirjaet-svoe-prisutstvie-v-afrike-547784-2023/>

<sup>471</sup> Industrial enterprises of Belarus signed a package of documents on cooperation in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prompredpriyatija-belarusi-podpisali-v-zimbabve-paket-dokumentov-po-sotrudnichestvu-547368-2023/>



of all, they are interested in training in medical, technical and agricultural specialties"<sup>472</sup>.

As for the diplomatic presence of the Belarusian side, there are currently five embassies of the Republic of Belarus operating in Africa, which generally cover the key regions of the continent. In West Africa - Nigeria, which is the economic leader in the region. In East Africa - Kenya, where Belarus also has certain prospects for increasing trade turnover and the whole range of cooperation. In North Africa - Egypt, where we are talking about the project of the Minsk Automobile Plant to set up assembly production. In South Africa - the Republic of South Africa (RSA), where a project to assemble Minsk Tractor Plant's machines, which will enter the market under the local brand, has already been implemented since 2021. Finally, between South Africa and East Africa is Zimbabwe, where the Belarusian embassy appeared in 2022. All these African regions have one important feature: there are "quite a lot of minerals, natural resources, including rare-earth metals, which are of interest to large states and not only. Such countries as Russia, China, and the USA are quite actively involved in the implementation of various projects in Africa"<sup>473</sup>. Thus, Belarus' presence on the African continent is of a systemic nature. All the more so because a new large consumer market is already being created there, including for the export of Belarusian goods and services.

For example, a large batch of Bobruiskagromash tractors and attachments, Lidagropromash sprayers and Gomselmash harvesters to **Nigeria** were under consideration for delivery in 2022. Belarus is "interested in the markets of South Sudan, Zambia, Malawi, and Egypt. Belarusian municipal and forestry machinery, as well as special-purpose machinery are in demand here"<sup>474</sup>. An interesting promising area of cooperation with African countries is the construction of grain drying complexes, as well as the creation of assembly plants for agricultural, automotive and road machinery.

The enterprises of Bellesbumprom Concern are also systematically exploring the markets of African countries, actively expanding the geography of supplies. In 2022, the Concern's organisations shipped products to **Tunisia for the first time**. The mastering of African markets began in 2015 with **Egypt**.

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<sup>472</sup> Together with the Foreign Ministry, we are assessing the potential for co-operation with Africa. What are they interested in us? [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vmeste-s-mid-otsenivaem-potentsial-sotrudnichestva-s-afrikoj-cto-im-interesno-u-nas-547795-2023/>

<sup>473</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Belarusian missions cover key regions of Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mid-predstavitelstva-belarusi-ohvatyvajut-kljuchevye-regiony-afriki-547191-2023/>

<sup>474</sup> Parkhomchik, P. Belarusian industry under sanctions / P. Parkhomchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/beloruskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-ministrorborbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-i-8121/>

"The Concern's enterprises also supply products to Algeria, Kenya, Morocco. Among the key commodity positions are paper and cardboard. Exports in 2022 compared to 2021 in monetary terms increased by 20%"<sup>475</sup> .

Another interesting example is **Zimbabwe**. A few years ago, this country set a course for modernisation of agriculture. Starting from 2020, Belarus started supplying machinery as part of the agricultural mechanisation programme in this southern African country. A company that not only sells but also services machinery has already been set up there. In 2022, "we [the Belarusian side] actually finished the second phase of this programme. There is already an agreement that we will participate in the third phase as well. Again for tens of millions of dollars. <...> The second direction of machinery supplies is connected with the fact that apart from the agrarian sector, Zimbabwe has an actively developing mining industry. The first BELAZs were delivered more than five years ago and are still successfully operating at the quarries"<sup>476</sup> .

A new stage of cooperation with this South African state began at the end of January 2023, when a Belarusian delegation led by the President of Belarus paid a state visit to Zimbabwe. As part of the visit, contracts were signed for the supply of about four thousand units of Belarusian tractors, agricultural and other machinery to this African country, with the total economic effect estimated at \$200 million. During the visit, Belarus signed a package of important bilateral documents, including basic economic agreements designed to promote industrial cooperation and economic co-operation with South Africa. In particular, an intergovernmental agreement on the settlement of tax relations will help to solve such tasks as "the distribution of taxation rights between states, elimination of double taxation, exchange of information between tax services"<sup>477</sup> . A bilateral joint standing commission has been set up to further expand co-operation, and a co-ordinating body, a task force of the two countries' ministries of agriculture, will begin work.

At the same time, the second Belarusian-Zimbabwean business forum "Expanding Horizons: Dynamic Solutions for Economic Development" was held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, where 33 Belarusian companies

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<sup>475</sup> Enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" systematically develop the markets of Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/predpriyatija-kontserna-bellesbumprom-planomerno-osvaivajut-rynki-afriki-547390-2023/>

<sup>476</sup> Ambassador of Belarus on co-operation with Southern Africa: it is necessary to come here seriously and for a long time [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-belarusi-o-sotrudnichestve-s-jugom-afriki-sjuda-nado-prihodit-serjezno-i-nadolgo-547179-2023/>

<sup>477</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe have agreed on co-operation in the tax sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-nalogovoj-sfere-547558-2023/>

participated and where it was noted that the most promising areas for bilateral cooperation are healthcare, food, light industry, machine building, metallurgy, fuel and energy, mining, chemicals, and wood processing. For reference, we note that "trade turnover between Belarus and Zimbabwe has increased 7 times since 2018 and reached \$39 million at the end of January-November last year [2022]"<sup>478</sup>. During the forum, industrial enterprises of Belarus signed a package of documents with partners from Zimbabwe. In particular, memorandums and cooperation agreements were adopted between the official dealer - AFTRADE DMCC - and Lidselmash OJSC, Gomselmash OJSC, Bobruiskagromash OJSC and Minsk Motor Plant Holding Management Company OJSC to develop cooperation in agriculture in order to sell the products of these enterprises in the market of this country. MTZ and AFTRADE DMCC also adopted a document on strategic partnership to promote BELARUS machinery in Zimbabwe. For this purpose in 2023-2024 Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 3575 machines to the Zimbabwean market, and in the future the number of machines and terms of supply will be determined by the results of negotiations. Note that "between 2018 and 2022, Minsk Tractor Works supplied more than 1,800 units of machinery to Zimbabwe"<sup>479</sup>. And in Harare, a multifunctional service centre with branches in Mutare and Bulawayo and a spare parts warehouse to service the supplied machinery has been set up. And MTW together with the partner on a permanent basis trains consumers on the peculiarities of operation of BELARUS tractors. Another interesting fact is the "signing of a memorandum of intent between BELAZ, SOHRA Overseas FZE and Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company Pvt Ltd with a view to implementing agreements on the supply of Belarusian machinery and equipment for the mining industry in Zimbabwe"<sup>480</sup>.

Industrial co-operation with Zimbabwean partners has huge potential in other areas as well. For example, a contract was signed to supply Belarusian-made equipment for the construction and modernisation of grain storage complexes in Zimbabwe. The fact is that the authorities of this country have announced plans to allocate farmland to Belarusian state-owned companies for

<sup>478</sup> Transcontinental bridge, investments and Belarusian ice-cream in Africa. Details of the business forum in Harare [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/transkontinentalnyj-most-investitsii-i-belorusskoe-morozhenoe-v-afrike-podrobnosti-biznes-foruma-v-547289-2023/>

<sup>479</sup> MTZ will supply more than 3,5 thousand BELARUS tractors to Zimbabwe within two years [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-v-zimbabwe-bolee-35-tys-traktorov-belarus-v-techenie-dvuh-let-547284-2023/>

<sup>480</sup> Industrial enterprises of Belarus signed a package of documents on cooperation in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prompredpriyatija-belarusi-podpisali-v-zimbabwe-paket-dokumentov-po-sotrudnichestvu-547368-2023/>

agricultural complexes for growing wheat, soya beans, meat and dairy products, and poultry farming. And the Belarusian side has already received 10 thousand hectares of land "in Mbire district for the cultivation of maize, soya beans and construction of a meat and dairy farm. At the same time a milk and meat processing line will be launched with further sale of finished products through retail chains"<sup>481</sup>. It is planned that the list of cultivated crops will be supplemented by rice and wheat, as well as Belarusian specialists will plant orchards. Another fact is that "a memorandum of understanding has been signed on co-operation in supplying Belarusian-made machinery and equipment for the forestry industry to the Republic of Zimbabwe"<sup>482</sup>. The two countries are also mutually interested in co-operation in the light industry. In particular, Bellegprom Concern will study the possibilities of supplying cotton from this African country, and "on the margins of the Belarusian-Zimbabwean business forum in Harare, the two countries discussed the possibilities of co-operation in the textile and leather sectors of the light industry"<sup>483</sup>.

As for interaction between the regions of the two countries, during the state visit of the Belarusian delegation, the two capitals - Minsk and Harare - signed an agreement on establishing twinning relations, which already outlines promising areas "in the energy sector, in the areas of health care, education, water supply, water treatment, and municipal equipment"<sup>484</sup>. And, apparently, in the near future, the agreement will be followed up by the signing of action plans that will further strengthen the bilateral Belarusian-Zimbabwean regional relations, including in trade and economic cooperation between the two capitals.

A separate conversation is about the interaction between the two countries in the field of education. At the end of January 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a memorandum of understanding 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. Things that are in

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<sup>481</sup> Abukhovich, Y. Trade, agriculture, mining. On the prospects of co-operation with Zimbabwe and the UAE / Y. Abukhovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/torgovlja-selskoe-hozjajstvo-dobycha-poleznyh-iskopaemyh-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-s-zimbabwe-i-oae-8585/>

<sup>482</sup> Rogozhnik: industrial co-operation with Zimbabwe has a huge potential [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogozhnik-sotrudnichestvo-v-promyshlennoj-sfere-s-zimbabwe-imeet-ogromnyj-potentsial-547600-2023/>

<sup>483</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe are interested in co-operation in the sphere of light industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-legproma-547603-2023/>

<sup>484</sup> Minsk and Harare became sister cities. What's next? [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-harare-stali-gorodami-pobratimami-cto-dalshe-547593-2023/>

demand in any country. Given that today Zimbabwe is a very dynamically developing country, first of all they need personnel"<sup>485</sup>. During the visit of the Belarusian delegation to this African country, the parties discussed the training of specialists both for science and high technology, as well as for middle-level workers, as it is relevant for Zimbabwe, given the supplies of high-tech equipment from Belarus to this country and the development of industrial cooperation. It should be recalled that on the initiative of the President of this country Emmerson Mnangagwa "the Vision-2030 programme is being implemented, which includes specific measures to mechanise, industrialise Zimbabwe, improve the educational level, the quality of medical services, the standard of living of the population as a whole"<sup>486</sup>. So Belarusian educational services will be very useful in this country.

For example, a wide range of scientific and innovative cooperation with Zimbabwean partners was presented by Belarusian State University (BSU) at the business forum "Expanding Horizons: Dynamic Solutions for Economic Development" in the capital of Zimbabwe. BSU cooperates with this African country within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed in 2019 with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education, Science and Technological Development. Today, this co-operation is intensifying. In Harare, BSU signed six memoranda of understanding with Zimbabwean higher education institutions at once: 1) University of Zimbabwe; 2) Zimbabwe Open University; 3) Lupane State University; 4) National University of Technology and Science; 5) Harare Institute of Technology; 6) Chinhoyi University of Technology. In these documents, the parties plan to "develop academic exchange of students and specialists, participate in research and educational projects, exchange materials, plans, publications and other relevant information"<sup>487</sup>.

As for cooperation proposals, BSU has initiated more than 20, which relate to the fields of medicine, pharmaceuticals, water management, water treatment, geology, mineral exploration, biotechnology, ecology, soil science. These include the production of pharmaceuticals, ultrasonic gas meters, services to solve applied mining problems, and treatment of polluted water,

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<sup>485</sup> Ivanets sees great prospects for co-operation between Belarus and Zimbabwe in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ivanets-vidit-bolshie-perspektivy-dlja-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-zimbabve-v-sfere-obrazovanija-547599-2023/>

<sup>486</sup> Nikolaychik: we managed to significantly increase the intensity and efficiency of contacts with Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikolajchik-nam-udalos-znachitelno-narastit-intensivnost-i-effektivnost-kontaktov-s-zimbabve-547791-2023/>

<sup>487</sup> The first agreements of BSU and universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://bsu.by/news/pervye-dogovorennosti-bgu-i-vuzov-zimbabve-d/>

among others. "In the field of agriculture, joint projects to study the impact of soil salinisation on plants and crops, the impact of climate change on the environment may become promising. Interaction in the field of education is seen in the training of Zimbabwean citizens at the Institute of Further Education, training in English at master's, postgraduate and adult education programmes"<sup>488</sup>. It is also proposed to develop and implement joint educational programmes, participate in scientific conferences, organise guest lectures and internships for teachers and students from Zimbabwe.

The Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) also signed memoranda with leading Zimbabwean universities. The fact is that the economy of this country needs specialists trained by BNTU, so the interest in the Belarusian university is particularly high. The parties are interested in joint scientific research, technology transfer and transfer of experience in the organisation of the BNTU technopark, in the creation of technoparks in Zimbabwean universities. In addition, "implementation of joint educational programmes is planned in such promising areas as architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and robotics, and in the future cooperation in other sectors is possible"<sup>489</sup>.

The Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) signed memoranda of co-operation with leading educational institutions of the Republic of Zimbabwe - National University of Technology and Science, Harare Institute of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, University of Zimbabwe, Lupane State University, Open University of Zimbabwe - in January 2023.<sup>490</sup> Interaction with these partners implies the development of such forms of cooperation as "exchange of experience in the field of education and promotion of exchange of undergraduate, master's and postgraduate students; development of faculty exchange; development of joint research projects in areas of mutual interest; training of citizens of the Republic of Zimbabwe under joint educational programmes; training in master's and postgraduate studies, doctoral studies; internships; training of citizens of the Republic of Zimbabwe under joint educational programmes.

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<sup>488</sup> Co-operation is intensifying. BSU signed six memorandums with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotrudnichestvo-aktiviziruetsja-bgu-podpisal-shest-memorandumov-s-vuzami-zimbabve-547721-2023/>

<sup>489</sup> Technology transfer and joint research. How BNTU plans to co-operate with universities in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/transfer-tehnologij-i-sovmestnye-issledovanija-kak-bntu-planiruet-sotrudnicat-s-vuzami-zimbabve-547979-2023/>

<sup>490</sup> Rector of BSTU Igor Voitov signed Memoranda of co-operation with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belstu.by/news/university/university/rektor-bgtu-igor-voitov-podpisal-memorandumi-o-sotrudnicestve-s-universitetami-zimbabve>

All these facts show that Belarus is attractive for Zimbabwe with its intellectual potential. So, co-operation between the educational institutions of the two countries can be multifaceted and have good results.

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## Belarus: with a view to promoting trade and economic interests

Every year, Belarus approves the Plan of National Exhibitions in Foreign Countries. Its distinctive feature is the Belarusian side's focus on promoting its trade and economic interests in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America - Vietnam, Mongolia, South Korea, India, China, Turkey, Qatar, Iran, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Brazil. In this regard, the Asian continent is particularly important, where "there are still many opportunities in this direction <...>. In order to successfully use them, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts, as is actually happening in the development of partnership relations with a number of Asian countries"<sup>491</sup>, including **Vietnam, Iran, Mongolia, Turkey, Pakistan, China**, where Belarusian exporters actively participate in specialised exhibition events.

It is characteristic that Belarus' representatives are not participating in a number of exhibition events for the first time, but are already using their previous experience in promoting their interests. **This** includes, in particular, the **Vietnam Expo** trade fair, which has been held annually since 1990 and is one of the largest in Southeast Asia, regularly attracting hundreds of exhibitors and tens of thousands of professional visitors. In December 2018, this business event was held in Ho Chi Minh City for the 16th time. At the event, Belarus was represented by a national exposition, with more than 50 large enterprises participating, focusing "on knowledge-intensive, complex technical products, as well as agricultural and food products"<sup>492</sup>.

In particular, only Belarusian State University (BSU) presented then about 30 scientific and technical developments in agriculture, instrumentation, chemistry, healthcare, information technologies. "In particular, the exposition included a complex microbial preparation "Zhytsen". Its use has proven its effectiveness in increasing the yield of grain crops, it improves soil quality and accelerates the decomposition of stubble and straw"<sup>493</sup>. Here were also presented BSU biopesticides for integrated plant protection "Aurin", "Stimul",

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<sup>491</sup> Zalesky, B. Horizons of the far arc. The potential of interaction between the Republic of Belarus and the countries of Asia and Africa / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 25.

<sup>492</sup> Grishkevich, A. The national exposition of Belarus is presented at the trade exhibition in Ho Chi Minh City / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-predstavlena-na-torgovoj-vystavke-v-hoshimine-328209-2018/>

<sup>493</sup> BSU will present scientific and technical developments at the trade fair in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-predstavit-nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-na-torgovoj-jarmarke-vo-vjetname-327981-2018/>



which are used to stimulate the growth and development of plants, their protection from bacterial and fungal infections. The visitors of the exhibition were also very interested in ultrasonic gas metering devices, remote monitoring device for mobile objects "Agent B-602", medical unit of general hyperthermia "Ptich-M", anticancer drugs, disinfectants, edible packaging films.

Such enterprises as OJSC Krinita, OJSC Belsolod, JV OJSC Spartak, OJSC Minsk Kristall - Managing Company of Minsk Kristall Group Holding, OJSC Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, OJSC Slodych Confectionery Factory, SOAO Kommunar, OJSC Krasnyi Gazvik, OJSC Krasnyi Mozyryanin, OJSC Lidapischekoncentraty demonstrated the possibilities of Belarusian food exports in Ho Chi Minh City. Their interest in this business forum can be explained by the fact that "Vietnam is not only a favourable consumer market with more than 92 million people, but also a kind of trade gateway to the whole region of South-East Asia, the population of which exceeds 600 million people"<sup>494</sup>.

In 2022, more than 350 companies from 16 countries, including China, the USA, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Cuba, took part in this forum. Belarus presented more than 100 scientific, technical and innovative developments in the field of high-tech equipment at this forum. The event is held under the auspices of Vietnam's Ministry of Industry and Trade. "The themes of the exhibition are IT and telecommunications, science and education, engineering and industrial equipment, agriculture, food, pharmaceutical and medical products, construction materials, chemical products, light industry, consumer goods"<sup>495</sup>.

As for **Iran**, the International Exhibition of Agriculture and Food Industry Iran Agrofood was held in June 2022. The National Exposition of the Republic of Belarus was organised at the Tehran International Exhibition Centre. This forum is a key industry event in the field of food production and agriculture in Iran. The main sections of the exhibition are: agricultural machinery, food and beverages, equipment for their production, catering, storage and packaging, ingredients. The exhibition is held annually. In 2021, 311 organisations and enterprises became its participants. This time Belarus, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands and others

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<sup>494</sup> Enterprises of Belgospisheprom will present their products at an exhibition in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belgospisheproma-predstavjat-produktsiju-na-vystavke-vo-vietname-327182-2018/>

<sup>495</sup> More than 100 projects will be presented by Belarus at the Vietnam Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-100-proektov-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-vietnam-expo-495765-2022/>

presented their products. Belarusian manufacturers showed a wide variety of products. Thus, the range of goods of the confectionery factory "Vitba" included more than 100 items, including breakfast cereals, waffles and biscuits.

The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed innovative developments in several areas. For example, the Scientific and Practical Centre for Animal Husbandry of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus offered a number of veterinary drugs and bio-additives based on nanoparticles for farm animals. The Belarusian State Technological University presented to the guests of the exhibition "new types of mineral fertilisers, technologies of processing agricultural waste to produce construction and composite materials, technologies of processing plant raw materials and medicinal herbs to produce biologically active additives, new methods of quality analysis of flax and flax products"<sup>496</sup>. Belarusian State University presented 15 scientific and technical developments at the international exhibition Iran Agrofood. Among BSU's innovations are edible films and coatings based on polysaccharides and plant antimicrobial and antioxidant additives. "They are the only type of biodegradable polymer packaging that does not need sorting and special disposal conditions, preserves the taste, flavour, aesthetic appearance and sterility of products. The new type of wrapping is non-toxic, fully degradable in the human and animal body, capable of reducing the use of plastic many times over"<sup>497</sup>.

And in **Mongolia**, in September 2022, the National Exposition of Belarus was presented at the 47th International Multidisciplinary Exhibition Ulaanbaatar Partnership in Ulaanbaatar. The exposition was attended by major export-oriented Belarusian companies - producers of food products, pharmaceutical products, machine-building enterprises, scientific and technical organisations and others. "The Ulaanbaatar Partnership exhibition has a universal character and covers a wide range of thematic sections: food and beverages, agriculture, engineering, construction, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, light industry, consumer electronics. The event is one of the largest multi-sectoral exhibitions in Mongolia: in 2021 it gathered 110 companies and 12 thousand visitors"<sup>498</sup>. Belarus took part in the exhibition in

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<sup>496</sup> A wide range of Belarusian goods will be presented at the exhibition Iran Agrofood [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shirokij-spektr-belorusskih-tovarov-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-iran-agrofood-507944-2022/>

<sup>497</sup> Edible films, vitamins, veterinary preparations: BSU presents 15 developments at exhibitions in Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sjodobnye-plenki-vitaminy-vetpreparaty-bgu-predstavljajet-15-razrabotok-na-vystavke-v-irane-508439-2022/>

<sup>498</sup> Belarus will present its exposition at the exhibition in Mongolia in September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-sentjabre-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-v-mongolii-511811-2022/>

Ulaanbaatar in the format of a national exposition in 2019. At that time, the exposition presented products and services of 15 companies: organisations of mechanical engineering, food industry, science and education. The business programme included a Belarusian-Mongolian business forum with the participation of representatives of 60 Mongolian enterprises.

In **Turkey**, the national exposition of Belarus was presented in early November 2022 in Istanbul as part of the international multidisciplinary exhibition MUSIAD Expo. The participation of domestic enterprises and organisations in the national exposition at this exhibition helped establish new business contacts with potential partners, increase Belarusian exports and diversify the product mix. Turkey is an important partner of Belarus. "Last year, trade turnover between the two countries totalled \$1081.6 million (146% by 2020), including exports - \$360.5 million (270%) and imports - \$721.1 million (119%). In 2021, the turnover of services between Belarus and Turkey totalled \$94.8 million (162%), exports - \$52.8 million (134%), imports - \$42 million (220%)"<sup>499</sup>. As for the Istanbul Expo, MUSIAD Expo is Turkey's largest biennial multi-disciplinary event. In 2020, it was attended by more than 500 companies and over 100 thousand visitors from 125 countries. The main sections of the exhibition are food industry, agriculture, construction, mechanical and automotive engineering, machine tools, metallurgy, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, services, tourism, real estate, consumer goods, furniture, energy, logistics, information technology, textile, clothing and footwear industries, leather goods.

In 2023, national exhibitions of Belarus will be organised in a number of other Asian countries. In particular, in **Pakistan**. Recall that at the International Trade and Industry Fair, which took place in the Pakistani city of Karachi in November 2021, the Belarusian collective stand of the State Committee for Science and Technology presented about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments. Institutions of the Ministry of Education, as well as organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed their exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials. "Among the most interesting developments are the technology of obtaining optically selective composite absorbing coatings for solar collectors, smart windows on bistable effect, multifunctional complex for preparation and automatic pouring of filled and unfilled multi-component

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<sup>499</sup> The national exposition of Belarus will be presented at the multi-sectoral exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-mnogootraslevoj-vystavke-v-turtsii-514624-2022>

hybrid-composite mixtures, technology of manufacturing energy-saving flat and flexible aluminium heaters with carbon fibre resistive element"<sup>500</sup>. This year there will be even more Belarusian participants.

Speaking about the **China** International Import Expo, which is held annually in Shanghai, in November 2022 it already became the fifth one. The Belarusian exposition was attended by 27 organisations from the food industry, logistics, science and education. The Belarusian pavilion at the import fair included "two main sections: 'Food and Agricultural Products' and 'High-Tech Equipment and Information Technologies'"<sup>501</sup>. The total area of the Belarusian exposition was about 100 square metres. In 2023, it will be even larger.

It should be noted that in recent years, Belarusian expositions have also been presented on the African continent. For example, in **Kenya**, Belarus' interest in the Kenya International Trade Exhibition (KITE) business forum is explained by the fact that it is the largest exhibition event in East Africa. In 2019, our country was represented there for the first time with a national exposition at the 22nd FoodAgro International Food, Hospitality and Agriculture Exhibition in Nairobi, which is a part of KITE. At that time, the enterprises of Belgospischeprom Concern, Lidselmash Holding Management Company, Gomselmash, MTZ, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash, Lidakhleboproduct, Smorgon Bread Products Plant demonstrated their products in the capital of Kenya. Participation in the exhibition opened up "new opportunities for them to promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilisers, foodstuffs, and agricultural products to the Kenyan market"<sup>502</sup>, and also pointed the way to the markets of other East and Southern African countries. In particular, there was adopted a memorandum of understanding between the official representative of the Belarusian enterprises MTZ, Lidagroprommash, Bobruiskagromash, Gomselmash, Lidselmash, MAZ and Pewin Motors and reached an agreement on the supply of Belarusian agricultural machinery - tractors, agricultural machinery and equipment, accessories. For example, only the "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" signed an agreement to supply its machinery worth about \$500,000. "The visitors [to the exhibition] were most interested in tillage equipment, tractor trailers and semi-trailers, as

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<sup>500</sup> About 60 Belarusian scientific and technical developments will be presented at the international exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/okolo-60-belorusskih-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavjat-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-pakistane-469010-2021/>

<sup>501</sup> China International Import Expo opened in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/world/view/v-shanhae-otkrylas-kitajskaja-mezhdunarodnaja-vystavka-importa-533320-2022/>

<sup>502</sup> The national exposition of Belarus opened at the FoodAgro exhibition in Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-v-vystavke-foodagro-v-kenii-356942-2019/>

well as forage harvesting equipment (mowers, rakes, balers)"<sup>503</sup>. Besides, "Lidselmash OJSC and Peter Wanjohi Company have established co-operation for the construction of grain harvesting and grain processing complexes in Kenya, Uganda and other countries of the region"<sup>504</sup>. Belgospischeprom agreed to supply the first batches of sunflower oil and light canned beer to this African country. Finally, at the same time, "agreements were signed on the construction of a plant of reinforced concrete structures on Kenyan land and the creation of a fish farm worth over a hundred million dollars"<sup>505</sup>.

In **Zimbabwe** in April 2022, the national exposition of Belarus was presented at the 61st Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, the largest multi-disciplinary exhibition event in South Africa. More than 400 companies from 15 countries, including Kenya, Mozambique, the Republic of South Africa, Japan, the United States of America, showed their products. The Belarusian stand in Bulawayo displayed "a wide range of machinery and equipment, scientific and technical developments, medicines"<sup>506</sup>. The total exhibition area of the pavilion was about 170 square metres.

Foreign importers were particularly interested in the pharmaceutical products presented at the Belarusian pavilion. In particular, representatives of Belmedpreparaty RUE, part of the Belpharmprom holding company, held effective negotiations. "This is expected to expand the presence of Belarusian medicines in the African market"<sup>507</sup>. The Zimbabwean side voiced its intention to develop co-operation in this area, as well as to act as representatives of Belarusian companies in the regional market. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed a number of agreements on cooperation with educational institutions and scientific organisations in Zimbabwe, while BELAZ signed agreements on the supply of auto parts.

The interest of the Belarusian side to this forum is also explained by the fact that "today Zimbabwe is actively expanding mining, has significant

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<sup>503</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" will supply Kenya with machinery and spare parts for \$500 thousand. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-postavit-v-keniju-tehniku-i-zapchasti-na-500-tys-358196-2019/>

<sup>504</sup> Belarusian enterprises at FoodAgro agreed on the supply of agricultural machinery to Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-na-foodagro-dogovorilis-o-postavkah-selhoztehniki-v-keniju-357705-2019/>

<sup>505</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Belarus - Kenya: outlined promising points of growth / B.L. Zaleskii // Proceedings of the XV International Scientific Conference, Novini na nauchna progress - 2019, 15 - 22 August 2019; Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 3.

<sup>506</sup> The national exposition of Belarus is presented at the largest exhibition in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-predstavlena-na-krupnejšej-vystavke-v-zimbabve-499129-2022/>

<sup>507</sup> Belarusian manufacturers of medicines will present their products at the exhibition in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-proizvoditeli-lekarstv-predstavjat-svoju-produktsiju-na-vystavke-v-zimbabve-498300-2022/>

reserves of coal, diamonds, gold, lithium, copper and is one of the promising export destinations for BELAZ machinery"<sup>508</sup>. For reference, Zimbabwe uses Belarusian dump trucks with payloads of 55 and 130 tonnes, bulldozers, loaders, tow trucks and irrigation trucks. At the exhibition in Bulawayo the Belarusian manufacturer held negotiations with the National Diamond Mining Company ZCDC, "which operates more than 20 dump trucks with a payload of 55 tonnes and other BELAZ special equipment, as well as with the coal mining company HWANGE Colliery"<sup>509</sup>. As a result, agreements were reached on the development of already existing partnerships.

In 2023, Belarusian expositions will also be presented in other African countries - **Algeria** and **Egypt**. In particular, **Algeria will host the FIA** international exhibition. The Belarusian exposition at this exhibition forum was organised for the first time back in 2017. Back then, Belarus was represented by the products of the enterprises of the Ministry of Industry, including OJSC MAZ, OJSC Gomselmash and OJSC Minsk Electrotechnical Plant, as well as the developments of the State Committee for Science and Technology, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Education. "The exposition of Belarus at FIA 2017 aroused keen interest of representatives of Algerian state bodies, large private companies and enterprises, as well as the diplomatic corps. As a result of the negotiations held during the exhibition, memoranda of co-operation were signed between MTZ OJSC and Belarus Motor Algeria, as well as between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and potential partners"<sup>510</sup>. In general, about one thousand companies from 40 countries participated in the FIA-2017 exhibition in Algeria. In 2023, apparently, the number of participants will be even higher.

As for the international exhibition of food and beverages Food Africa Cairo, which is held annually in **Cairo**, this year the Belarusian exposition will be organised at this venue for the fifth time. In December 2022, the exhibition Belarus. The Taste of Nature was presented at the **Egyptian** International Exhibition Centre. Within the framework of the exposition, 14 Belarusian companies presented a wide range of dairy, meat, starch products, as well as baked goods. Their products were demonstrated to the foreign visitors of the

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<sup>508</sup> BELAZ will take part in the largest exhibitions on three continents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-primet-uchastie-v-krupnejshih-vystavkah-na-treh-kontinentah-497525-2022/>

<sup>509</sup> BELAZ intends to develop co-operation and strengthen ties with companies in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-i-ukrepjlat-delovye-svjazi-s-kompanijami-zimbabve-499547-2022/>

<sup>510</sup> Belarus and Algeria have all prerequisites for expanding co-operation - Rachkov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-alzhir-imejut-vse-predposylki-dlja-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-rachkov-247000-2017/>

exhibition by "the enterprises of Grodnoyasomolprom holding (OJSC Bellakt, OJSC Molochny Mir, Lida Dairy Canning Plant and its branch Smorgon Dairy Products, Rogoznitsky Starch Plant, Volkovysk and Slonim meat processing plants), as well as Agrokombinat Skidelsky, Smorgon Bread Products Plant, Primilk Ltd, Lidakhleboprodukt, Slutsk Cheese Factory and Minsk Milk Plant No. 1"<sup>511</sup>.

All these facts speak for one thing: participation in major exhibition events in African countries can open up new export opportunities for Belarusian enterprises, the potential of which is truly enormous.

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<sup>511</sup> Belarusian exposition is presented at the food exhibition in Egypt [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskaja-ekspozitsija-predstavlena-na-prodovolstvennoj-vystavke-v-egipte-538642-2022/>

## Belarus: there are incentives for investors

In December 2021, the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus approved amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones" (FEZ), which provide for the transfer of powers to change the boundaries of these territories from the head of state to the government. "At the same time, the President of the country will still agree on the inclusion of agricultural and forestry territories within the boundaries of FEZs"<sup>512</sup>. This innovation is expected to shorten the time from idea to the start of new investment projects in the territories, which are considered growth points in the regions, as it will encourage potential investors to invest resources in FEZs. For them "a clear rule remains unchanged: FEZ boundaries can be expanded exclusively for specific investment projects"<sup>513</sup>. It should be reminded that the law "On Free Economic Zones" was adopted in December 1998. It defines one of the main goals of free economic zones as "attracting investments in the creation and development of export-oriented and import-substituting industries based on new and high technologies"<sup>514</sup>. It should be noted that there are only six FEZs in Belarus. As of 1 October 2021, there were 429 companies with the number of employees - about 137 thousand people, where projects are being implemented with investments of almost seven billion dollars from more than 30 countries of the world. The fact that FEZs are territories where it is possible to build a successful business today is confirmed by the statistics of 2021. In three quarters, the volume of exports here grew almost one and a half times, and the inflow of foreign direct investment accounted for a fifth of the country's total.

In particular, residents of **FEZ Grodnoinvest** are achieving high results in 2021, with exports exceeding one billion dollars in January-September. The geography of these supplies is very wide: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Lithuania, Great Britain, Turkey. "For 9 months a foreign trade surplus of \$540 million was obtained.

<sup>512</sup> The Council of the Republic approved the bill on free economic zones [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sovet-respubliki-odobril-zakonoproekt-o-svobodnyh-ekonomicheskikh-zonah-476194-2021/>

<sup>513</sup> Nikitina: attractive national jurisdiction activates the inflow of investments [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikitina-privlekatel'naja-natsional'naja-jurisdiksija-aktiviziruetsja-pri-privlechenii-investitsij-475406-2021/>

<sup>514</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Free and special economic zones as points of growth in the regions / B.L. Zaleskii // Socio-humanitarian researches. - 2020. - №3. - С. 64.



This is the best indicator among FEZs of Belarus"<sup>515</sup> . As a result, FEZ residents already account for over 43% of exports and over 30% of industrial production of the entire Grodno region. The machine-building segment is developing especially dynamically in this FEZ. Suffice it to say that here "exports of computing, electronic and optical equipment doubled in the first nine months of the current [2021] year"<sup>516</sup> . In total, nine companies in machine-building and another seven in metalworking have been registered in Grodnoinvest so far. In general, 75 companies with investments from 40 countries are residents of the FEZ. They successfully implement investment projects in woodworking and furniture production, machine building and metalworking, food, chemical and light industry, agriculture and export a wide range of products, with the largest share of foreign supplies being woodworking and furniture products, food and chemical products, machinery and equipment, textiles.

It is characteristic that today new investment projects are being laid in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest", which in the near future will have a very positive impact on the export component of both the FEZ itself and the whole Grodno region. In particular, at the FEZ site in Smorgon, Europlastex Invest LLC has already started the second project as a resident of Grodnoinvest. The first one involves the construction of a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton yarn products. The second project is the organisation of a metal processing plant in Smarhoni, the total cost of which will exceed five million euros. The first products are planned to be produced here already in 2022. Most of them "will be oriented towards export to the countries of Central Asia, Western Europe, Middle East"<sup>517</sup> . For this purpose, new and modernised production facilities will be built, as well as modern technological equipment for the production of steel pipes and profiles will be purchased. As a result, the new investment project will create dozens of new jobs, utilise unused premises and partially replace imported products from abroad.

It should be noted that nine resident enterprises, including those with investments from the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and other countries, which since 2015 "have invested over \$470 million in the creation of modern export-

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<sup>515</sup> Exports of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents in January-September exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-janvare-sentjabre-prevysil-1-mlrd-472551-2021/>

<sup>516</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents doubled the export of electronic and optical equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-udvoili-eksport-elektronnoj-i-opticheskoy-apparatyry-473562-2021/>

<sup>517</sup> Foreign investor organises steel pipe production in Smarhon [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/inostrannyj-investor-organizuet-v-smorgoni-proizvodstvo-stalnyh-trub-454884-2021/>

oriented enterprises"<sup>518</sup> are already successfully operating on the industrial sites of FEZ Hrodnoinvest in Smarhon district. It was here that almost half - 48 per cent - of all industrial output of the FEZ Grodnoinvest was produced in 2020. As for other industrial sites of FEZ, "29 per cent of production falls on the city of Grodno, 8 per cent - on Lida district. The leaders in terms of growth rate for 2020 were Smorgon (136 per cent), Grodno (123 per cent) and Svisloch (123 per cent) districts"<sup>519</sup>.

And there are good reasons to believe that new domestic and foreign investors will soon appear here. The fact is that in August 2021, Smorgoni commissioned the second start-up complex of a large-scale infrastructure project to reconstruct the main transport artery of the city - Industrial Avenue, which connects residential development with the industrial park of the Free Economic Zone and includes a modern four-lane road, engineering infrastructure networks, landscaping and gardening of the adjacent territory, lighting. In 2021, the implementation of the third stage of the project started here, which involves the creation of a roundabout, as well as providing the industrial park with additional electricity. All this will make the operating conditions for both existing and potential FEZ residents even more attractive.

The FEZ industrial site in Hrodna also continues to develop, with two new residents registered in 2021. The first one, the company Unis Trade, is setting up the production of metal structures in Hrandichi. The second one, OV-PlastSnab LLC, which will organise an enterprise for the production of a wide range of synthetic polymer products, was registered here in June 2021. Besides export of finished products and import substitution, the investment project of the new resident will allow to form additional prerequisites for the development of the chemical cluster in the FEZ on the industrial site in the area "Auls", where such residents as "PCC Consumer Products Navigator" LLC, "Belagrofert" LLC, "Grodnorayagroservice" OJSC, PT "Typhoon" LLC are already successfully implementing their projects. And "the construction of a unique plant for the production of glass products has recently begun"<sup>520</sup>. So the prospects for the growth of the export component are very serious here.

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<sup>518</sup> The second part of the infrastructure project of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" is completed in Smarhoni [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vtoraja-ochered-infrastrukturmogo-proekta-sez-grodnoinvest-zavershena-v-smorgoni-455912-2021/>

<sup>519</sup> Industrial production of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promyshlennoe-proizvodstvo-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-vyroslo-na-14-430320-2021/>

<sup>520</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will create an innovative production of synthetic polymer products in Grodno [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno-innovacionnoe-proizvodstvo-izdelij/>

**FEZ "Vitebsk"** residents increased exports by more than 60 per cent in the three quarters of 2021, bringing their volume to \$623 million and interacting with partners from 73 countries. As a result of work on diversification of exports FEZ participants managed to almost half increase the shipment of their products to the markets of the "far arc" countries, and to the UK, the United Arab Emirates, India, Pakistan, Israel, Brazil - three and more times. In addition, "for the first time supplies of fibre-optic cable were made to Afghanistan, gas and smoke analysers were shipped to Poland, fur pelts to China, linen to Chile, insulated cables to France"<sup>521</sup>. To all appearances, more than 50 investment projects implemented in this FEZ will soon be joined by a number of new ones, as foreign investors show interest in organising here the production of composite materials, in the sphere of machine-tool construction, woodworking and creation of finished products from wood raw materials, as well as microfertilisers. In particular, "an investor from Sweden in co-operation with a partner from China is ready to invest about \$100 million in the construction of a plant for processing low-grade wood. Representatives of the Netherlands are looking for a site to organise furniture production with an investment volume of about 100 million euros. <...> A German company is planning to set up a terrace board production facility worth about \$9 million"<sup>522</sup>. In addition, Chinese businessmen have already registered a legal entity in Vitebsk to implement a project in woodworking with an expected investment of about \$26 million. In total, there are "about 8 more projects under consideration, the implementation of which will attract at least \$160 million to the economy of Vitebsk region"<sup>523</sup>.

It should be reminded that 56 investment projects with the participation of investors from 15 countries, including Germany, Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Great Britain, Israel, Cyprus and Spain, are currently being implemented in this FEZ on the territory of 16 sectors. In the first quarter of 2021, three new residents were registered here with projects to develop the production of special hydro-pressing equipment, construction materials and modernise facilities for the production of import-substituting components for agricultural machinery and passenger cars. "The projects attracted \$12.2

<sup>521</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" residents in January-September increased the export of goods by almost 62% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-janvare-sentjabre-velichili-eksport-tovarov-pochti-na-62-471298-2021/>

<sup>522</sup> Investors from 4 countries show interest in the implementation of projects on the sites of FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-projavljajut-interes-k-realizatsii-proektov-na-ploschadkah-sez-vitebsk-472892-2021/>

<sup>523</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" residents for 9 months increased production by more than 40% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesjatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bolee-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>

million of foreign direct investment on a net basis, which was more than 40% of the figure for Vitebsk region as a whole"<sup>524</sup> .

**FEZ Gomel-Raton** residents exported more than half of the products produced in January-September 2021. More than 1.1 billion dollars worth of goods were shipped to the markets of 63 countries. The top five importers here are Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and China. These are not bad indicators, considering that as of 1 October 2021, 69 business entities were operating in the FEZ, of which 30 were companies with foreign capital from 16 countries. In 2021, three new resident enterprises with the volume of declared investments of about 50 million dollars were registered here. And in total "\$76.3 million of foreign direct investment was attracted in FEZ "Gomel-Raton" for the implementation of investment projects for 9 months"<sup>525</sup> . This is almost half of the total volume of investments in Gomel region.

By the end of 2021, the FEZ expected to increase the volume of production by 18.5 per cent due to the modernisation of existing production facilities and registration of new residents with promising investment projects. Thus, "Alcopack" enterprise is building a new building, where it plans to produce new medical products. "Polycap" is working on a project to produce disposable tableware from cellulose"<sup>526</sup> . Residents such as Veza-G and Multipak will also expand their production. MIRTEK-engineering LLC, which produces energy metering devices, already supplies more than half of its output to foreign markets - Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and European countries. Recently, it has started to work on outsourcing the production of SMD and DIP-components surface mount printed circuit boards - a promising direction, which is relevant for all companies that are associated with the production of electronic modules and assemblies. Note that "in 2020, \$230 million of investments were made in FEZ Gomel-Raton"<sup>527</sup> .

As for the **Brest FEZ**, in January 2022 at the Expo 2020 world exhibition in the United Arab Emirates, for the first time its potential was presented in a separate pavilion at the Belarusian national exposition. Such

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<sup>524</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" residents for 9 months increased production by more than 40% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesjatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bolee-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>

<sup>525</sup> FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents for 9 months increased the production of industrial products by more than 42% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-za-9-mesjatsev-uvlechili-proizvodstvo-promproduktii-bolee-chem-na-42-471389-2021/>

<sup>526</sup> FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents intend to increase the volume of production by 18.5% in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-namereny-uvlechit-objem-proizvodstva-na-185-v-2021-godu-434576-2021/>

<sup>527</sup> FEZs are a driver of territorial development - Asliuk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-javlajutsja-drajverom-razvitija-territorij-asliuk-434551-2021/>

FEZ resident enterprises as JV "Santa Bremore" Ltd, group of companies "STiM", JSC "Barkhim" demonstrated their capabilities and exhibits to the numerous visitors of the world forum. The very fact of FEZ "Brest" presence at "ECPO-2020" eloquently illustrates the growing role of this "multi-profile economic territory, where production, technological, logistic activities can be developed"<sup>528</sup>, for the economy of Brest region.

Recall that residents of this FEZ in 2021 provided already a fifth of the total industrial output of this Belarusian region. "\$936 million worth of goods were supplied outside the country (growth rate - 123.9%). The specific weight of FEZ in the total volume of exports of Brest region was 29% with a foreign trade surplus of \$289 million"<sup>529</sup>. And this is despite the fact that in December 2021 there were 72 residents, including 42 - with foreign capital, and the number of employees totalled 21.5 thousand people. In 2021, 700 additional jobs were created in the FEZ. At the end of December 2021, the 73rd resident of FEZ "Brest" became LLC "Green-Glass" with an investment project to modernise the production of glassware to a full cycle. "The investor intends to invest more than 500 thousand euros in this business within three years. The product range includes sheet processed glass, reinforced (tempered) and laminated flat glass, glass mirrors, single- and double-chamber double-glazed windows"<sup>530</sup>.

Before that, in October 2021, Kesar Industrial LLC, a company with Belarusian-Israeli capital, located in Kobrin and specialising in lumbering, became a resident of the FEZ. The new resident leased a land plot and acquired ownership of the buildings located on it, where after the reconstruction the production of "furniture boards made of laminated chipboard, laminated timber products with a wide range of applications will be transferred. A significant share of the products is expected to be supplied to foreign markets"<sup>531</sup>. The production of these products is planned to start within three years. Kesar Industrial Ltd. intends to invest more than half a million euros in the first stage of this investment project. Interestingly, the new resident will be the fifth company operating in the FEZ in the field of wood processing.

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<sup>528</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Free and special economic zones as points of growth in the regions / B.L. Zaleskii // Socio-humanitarian researches. - 2020. - №3. - C. 67.

<sup>529</sup> Investment potential of FEZ "Brest" will be presented at the exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsionnyj-potentsial-sez-brest-predstavjat-na-vystavke-v-dubae-480588-2022/>

<sup>530</sup> A new resident was registered in FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-brest-476969-2021/>

<sup>531</sup> Woodworking enterprise joined the number of FEZ "Brest" residents [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/derevoobrabatyvajushchee-predpriyatje-popolnilo-chislo-rezidentov-sez-brest-462782-2021/>

It should be noted that the FEZ "Brest" today is characterised not only by the emergence of new residents, but also by the expansion of activities of companies that have been operating here for a long time. The fact is that in 2016 its territory was expanded mainly at the expense of companies that had free space. In five years, about 80 enterprises have settled down on the unused capacities of former industrial giants, including electric lamp, carpet, and electromechanical plants. In general, FEZ "Brest" residents are now located in the regional centre and Brest district, as well as in Baranavichy, Pinsk, Kobrin and Ivatsevichy.

Thus, in August 2021, Anrex IOOO, which has been a FEZ resident for a quarter of a century, acquired production and administrative and household premises from Brest-based Tsvetotron OJSC and set up furniture production there. "It is planned to invest about Br60 million in the project and create 500 jobs. The first start-up complex has already been commissioned ..." <sup>532</sup>. As a result, the city got rid of unprofitable buildings of the former factory and got new production. Another example in this context is Arlight and K LLC, a company with Russian-Chinese capital, registered in the Brest FEZ in November 2015 and located in the Aeroport industrial zone. Over the past six years, the company has created here a high-tech production of LEDs, which are used to produce LED strips and lighting devices that are in demand not only in Belarus, but also in Russia, as well as in Poland and Germany. Suffice it to say that in 2020 it shipped \$3.7 million worth of products to foreign partners. In 2021, a new line was launched here, which "will double the capacity of the plant and produce up to 3 thousand linear lights and up to 350 km of LED tape per month" <sup>533</sup>. This will make it possible to bring the number of labour to 250 people.

A number of other existing FEZ resident companies are also planning to expand their production facilities. For example, Polipol Mebel Bel LLC, registered here in the summer of 2020, which became "the seventh company in the FEZ with German capital" <sup>534</sup>, is building a large factory for the production of upholstered furniture in Ivatsevichy with a planned investment volume of 26 million euros. "A new line for the production of raw smoked

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<sup>532</sup> Investor on the premises of Brest "Tsvetotron" created furniture production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investor-na-ploschadjah-brestskogo-tsvetotona-sozdal-mebelnoe-proizvodstvo-457323-2021/>

<sup>533</sup> LED manufacturer in FEZ "Brest" plans to double the volume of production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvoditel-svetodiodov-v-sez-brest-planiruet-udvoit-objem-proizvodstva-450766-2021/>

<sup>534</sup> Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Brest": prospects inspire optimism / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern european science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 7.

sausages is going to be launched by IE "Inko-Food" Ltd. JV "Santa Bremore" LLC invests at least \$5 million annually in the development of production"<sup>535</sup>. All these facts clearly show what serious investment and production potential FEZ "Brest" has today in terms of future development. And which after demonstration at the world exhibition "EXPO-2020" in Dubai can get new powerful impulses in terms of further development.

In general, it remains to add that free economic zones in Belarus, as a model of economic relations in the regions, have already become an effective tool for the development of the national economy. And the adoption of amendments to the Law "On Free Economic Zones" will certainly only contribute to the preservation of the positive dynamics of development, which they have already managed to achieve over the past 20 years since the emergence of free economic zones in Belarus.

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<sup>535</sup> Five new enterprises will be launched this year in FEZ "Brest". [Electronic resource]. -2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pjat-novyh-predpriyatij-zapustjat-v-etom-godu-v-sez-brest-433948-2021/>

## Belarus: Optimisation as an impetus for the development of growth points in the regions

The results of 2021 showed that residents of six free economic zones (FEZs) operating in the Republic of Belarus were able to generate up to 70 per cent of investment, up to half of exports of goods and a third of industrial output of their regions. And this is despite the fact that "as of the beginning of 2022, 432 economic entities were registered in FEZs, and projects with investments from more than 30 countries were being implemented for a total amount of declared investments of about \$7.5 billion. In 2021, 25 new residents were added to FEZs with a total amount of declared investments of \$441 million, of which one third - with foreign capital (\$401 million)"<sup>536</sup>. In December 2021, the Republic of Belarus approved amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones" (FEZ), which provided for the transfer of authority to change the boundaries of these preferential land plots from the head of state to the government. The purpose of these innovations is to "reduce the time from the idea to the start of implementation of new investment projects in the territories that are considered growth points in the regions"<sup>537</sup>.

Based on this decision, in April 2022, the Belarusian government adjusted the territory of the **FEZ Hrodnoinvest**, adding areas that represent zones of high demand for investors and excluding areas that are not promising. Recall that in 2018, this FEZ has already changed its contours. Then the territories of Svisloch were included in its borders for the first time, industrial parks in Smorgon and Grodno district were expanded. This allowed to attract more than one billion dollars of foreign investments into the FEZ since then. This time adjustments were made to the areas located in Hrodna, Svisloch and Smarhon districts, as well as in the cities of Lida, Novogrudok, Smarhon, Slonim and Hrodna, which should "improve the conditions for attracting investments to the regions, involve new industrial sites with an investment capacity of up to \$60 million, ensure the possibility of further effective implementation of investment projects of existing FEZ residents worth more than \$120 million"<sup>538</sup>.

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<sup>536</sup> FEZ residents in 2021 formed the fifth part of the main republican indicators [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-v-2021-godu-sformirovali-pjatuju-chast-osnovnyh-respublikanski-pokazatelej-485111-2022/>

<sup>537</sup> Zaleskii, B. Time of concrete decisions. Chronicle of international co-operation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 141.

<sup>538</sup> The government adjusted the boundaries of FEZ "Hrodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pravitelstvo-skorrektirovalo-granitsy-sez-grodnoinvest-496079-2022/>



It should be noted that in 2021 the residents of FEZ Hrodnainvest have already seriously increased both industrial production and export supplies to near and far abroad countries, as well as attracted a record volume of foreign direct investment. In figures it looks like this: foreign trade turnover of residents increased by more than 40 per cent and exceeded two billion dollars. "The growth driver was the export of Belarusian products. Its volume totalled \$1.4 billion with a growth rate of 146 per cent against the level of 2020. The foreign trade surplus totalled \$721 million, which is \$283 million more compared to 2020"<sup>539</sup>. The geography of supplies is 63 countries. Exports to Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Italy, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and the USA increased significantly. But Russia, Poland and Ukraine remained the key markets. The lion's share in the volume of shipped products - more than 70 per cent - came from wood and paper products, furniture, food and agricultural products. In addition, manufacturers of optical equipment, chemical products and metal products also increased their exports. These successful results of FEZ residents' activities are undoubtedly based on their active investment policy. In 2021, they were able to attract 160 million dollars of foreign investment. The key investors were Austria, Cyprus, Poland and the Netherlands. In total, the investment vectors of FEZs include 15 countries. Most investments were made in the production facilities located in industrial parks in Smarhon, Svisloch and Hrodna.

It is also important that in 2021, four companies engaged in the chemical, metalworking and logistics industries became new residents of the FEZ Grodnoinvest. Thus, the company Portela with Portuguese investments is implementing a project to build a transport and logistics centre in Hrodna district. Another resident - "Unis Trade" - is busy organising the production of metal structures in Grodno, where "a production and warehouse complex will be built, modern equipment for manufacturing various metal structures will be purchased. The production is planned to be launched by the end of 2022"<sup>540</sup>. And the OV-PlastSnab company at an industrial site in the Aulsa neighbourhood plans to produce a wide range of synthetic polymer products. Finally, in December 2021, "ServicePromPak Group" LLC was registered in the FEZ with an investment project for the creation of a high-tech enterprise for the production of a wide range of types of packaging made of polyolefins for sale for export and to other FEZ residents, which will be implemented in

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<sup>539</sup> Export of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" grew 1.5 times last year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-sez-grodnoinvest-za-proshlyj-god-vyros-v-15-raza-494540-2022/>

<sup>540</sup> Logistics, chemistry and metalworking: FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in 2021 added 4 new residents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/logistika-himija-i-metalloobrabotka-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2021-godu-popolnili-4-novyh-rezidenta-481367-2022/>

the district of Grandice. "The production of the first batch of products is planned for the second quarter of 2022. It is planned that 45 jobs will be created"<sup>541</sup>.

Positive dynamics of export and attraction of foreign investments is maintained here in 2022. In particular, in January-March of this year, "over 70% of sold products were exported from here, which is 4 percentage points more compared to the 1st quarter of 2021. The geography of exports exceeded 60 countries"<sup>542</sup>. As for foreign investments, in the first quarter of 2022, they were received in the FEZ almost 135 million dollars from 12 countries, including the Netherlands, Cyprus, Austria, Great Britain, Poland, the United Arab Emirates. "The main volume of investments came from companies in the industrial park of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in Smorgon district, where global manufacturers successfully operate. More than \$16 million was attracted by FEZ residents located in Grodno"<sup>543</sup>. Speaking of new residents, it should be said that the company "Unionway" has already been registered here in 2022, which is implementing a project to build a container terminal near the railway freight station "Svisloch". This terminal will "specialise in the transshipment of containers from the 1520 mm gauge to the 1435 mm gauge and back, depending on the direction of transport. Modern equipment will additionally allow to organise container transshipment to road transport and storage of containers both in the open air and inside warehouses"<sup>544</sup>. Investments in the project will amount to more than 23 million dollars. It is planned to create 70 new jobs here. The construction of the first stage will start already in 2022, and in 2025 the terminal should start providing services. A memorandum of intentions on the development of a transport and logistics terminal in Grodno region worth about one hundred million dollars was also signed with the Arab company BRIKOIL TRANS-F.Z.E..

The Polish vector of interaction also remains relevant for FEZ. This is evidenced by the fact that "in 2021 trade turnover between FEZ residents and Polish companies totalled more than \$266 million, which is 147% more than

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<sup>541</sup> High-tech chemical production will be created by a new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vysokotekhnologichnoe-himproizvodstvo-sozdast-novyy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-477539-2021/>

<sup>542</sup> Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" paid over Br61 million of taxes and other fees in January-March [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-za-janvar-mart-uplatili-svyshe-br61-mln-nalogov-i-inyh-sborov-501549-2022/>

<sup>543</sup> In FEZ "Grodnoinvest" received more than \$134 million of foreign investments in January-March [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-grodnoinvest-za-janvar-mart-postupilo-bolee-134-mln-inostrannyh-investitsij-501557-2022/>

<sup>544</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will build a container terminal in Svisloch [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-postroit-v-svislochi-kontejnernyj-terminal-492911-2022/>

in 2020. During the period of FEZ activity since 2002, \$140 million of investments were attracted from Poland"<sup>545</sup>. Companies with Polish capital in the construction materials industry, woodworking, chemical production are successfully operating here. In April 2022, the FEZ administration signed a co-operation agreement with the Polish company i4-Mobile Sp. z o.o., which will contribute to effective co-operation between the parties.

In April 2022, the sector boundaries in **FEZ "Vitebsk"** were optimised, as a result of which its area was reduced by approximately 500 hectares by excluding inefficient and unclaimed areas - river floodplains, marshes, badlands, residential buildings. At the same time, this preferential area included new promising land plots for the implementation of significant investment projects that will create at least 470 jobs. In particular, 14 hectares were added in Vitebsk for the implementation of a project worth more than \$94 million - "Development of production of cable and wire products," where at least 320 jobs will be created. Two more FEZ sites appeared in Orsha and Dokshitsky district. In the first case, a local investor plans to develop there the production of concrete mixtures with the organisation of about 20 jobs. In the second case, "it is planned to locate an enterprise for processing of low-value timber and production of wood-fuel pellets. The cost of the project is estimated at about \$30 million, and the investor has calculated the possibility of creating about 50 jobs."<sup>546</sup>

Two more sites are included in the FEZ in the Polotsk district. One of them will be used for the production of wood pellets, which will cost about \$30 million. The second one is to accommodate innovative production of cross-glued wooden wall boards and floor slabs for the construction of housing and buildings of various functional purposes, as well as the production of glued timber and fuel pellets with an investment volume of \$60 million. For this purpose, in April 2022, "KimaBel" LLC became a new FEZ resident with a project on modernisation of woodworking production, which provides for renovation of production sites and introduction of new technological solutions to organise the production of innovative export-oriented wood products. The new resident, which has been operating since 2013 in the Polotsk district and specialises in the production of beams and planks, sales of sawdust and wood

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<sup>545</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" expands cooperation with Polish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-grodnoinvest-rasshirjaet-sotrudnichesvto-s-polskimi-kompanijami-497707-2022/>

<sup>546</sup> Optimisation of FEZ "Vitebsk" sector boundaries will allow to attract more than \$200 million of investments [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/optimizatsija-granits-sektorov-sez-vitebsk-pozvolit-privlech-bolee-200-mln-investitsij-496811-2022/>

chips, "the markets of the Middle East, East and South-East Asia are being studied as promising export destinations for the products"<sup>547</sup>.

Speaking about new FEZ residents, it should be recalled that the first one here in 2022 was BRR Arshieh ECO Health LLC - an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging. "The implementation of the project is aimed at a gradual reduction in the use of polymer packaging and its replacement with environmentally friendly packaging, which is identified as one of the priorities of socio-economic development of Belarus"<sup>548</sup>. It is expected that by the end of 2022, the new resident will have resolved all design issues of the production site in the Zhurzhevo sector on the outskirts of Vitebsk, and in 2023 will already start construction of the facility, where it is expected to organise about 25 new jobs.

As of the end of April, 53 resident enterprises have already been registered in FEZ Vitebsk, which are implementing projects with the participation of investors from 14 countries. And they are doing it very successfully. For example, Polotsk leskhoz managed to triple its output in 2021, while LLC "Production Association "Energokomplekt" - more than one and a half times. Vityaz OJSC increased export deliveries of its products by 2.7 times over the same period. The volume of services exported by "Raw Materials-Bel" Ltd. has grown almost 10 times. In this regard, one cannot but recall UP "Polimerkonstruktsiya" - a well-known manufacturer of water treatment equipment and technologies, which provided almost double growth in production volume, the same amount - in sales revenue, and net profit increased almost six times. "The enterprise actively worked on foreign markets, more than doubling supplies to foreign partners"<sup>549</sup>, and also demonstrated high innovation activity, having shipped to its consumers innovative products worth three million Belarusian rubles, which is 23(!) times higher than the same indicator of 2020. All these facts indicate that the FEZ is very serious about achieving high performance in 2022 as well. This is confirmed by the results of FEZ residents' activity in the first quarter of this year. Suffice it to say that during these three months here produced almost a quarter more industrial products than in the same period of 2021. In addition,

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<sup>547</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will create the production of innovative wood products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyy-rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-innovatsionnyh-izdelij-iz-drevesiny-498382-2022/>

<sup>548</sup> The first resident with Iranian capital is registered in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyy-rezident-s-iranskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovan-v-sez-vitebsk-484100-2022/>

<sup>549</sup> Seven enterprises were recognised as the best residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" according to the results of 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/luchshimi-rezidentami-sez-vitebsk-po-itogam-2021-goda-priznany-sem-predpriyatij-487020-2022/>

"in January-March residents attracted about 31 million foreign investments, of which more than \$16 million on a net basis"<sup>550</sup>.

Active international activity of FEZs should contribute to the preservation of competitive advantages and favourable conditions for doing business. An important step on this path is the signing in April 2022 by the administrations of FEZ "Vitebsk" and the pilot zone of regional trade and economic cooperation "China-SCO" of a memorandum of co-operation, in which the parties outlined promising areas of interaction. One of them is "promotion of investment opportunities of FEZ "Vitebsk" and pilot zone "China-SCO" as promising platforms for international cooperation within the framework of the initiative "One Belt - One Road"<sup>551</sup>. It should be noted that the pilot zone "China-SCO" in Shandong province, with which Vitebsk region is connected by a cooperation agreement, appeared in 2018. It is located 40 kilometres from the city of Qingdao in the coastal part of the city of Jiaozhou. Thanks to its connection to land, sea and air communications of this Chinese region, it represents a new platform for the implementation of trade, economic and innovation cooperation projects between the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation states and their partners, including Belarus, which opens up very tempting prospects for the development of cooperation.

In April 2022, the corrections also affected the territory of **FEZ "Minsk"**, where "from the borders of this free economic zone are excluded unclaimed in the development of territories with a total area of. 140,01 ha, located in Minsk and Minsk region"<sup>552</sup>. In 2021, seven new enterprises with investments not only from Belarus, but also from Russia, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria appeared here at once. "Foreign direct investment on a net basis amounted to \$58.1 million. In 2021, more than a thousand jobs were created at the enterprises of the free economic zone "Minsk"<sup>553</sup>. And exports of goods of FEZ residents to 85 countries increased by almost 40 per cent and reached a record two billion dollars. It is characteristic that in 2022 the active work on registration of new residents continues here. Thus, in January, the first resident registered in FEZ "Minsk" in 2022 was 3D Paperko LLC - a company with

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<sup>550</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" residents in the first quarter increased by a quarter the production of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-pervom-kvartale-narastili-na-chetvert-proizvodstvo-produktsii-496741-2022/>

<sup>551</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and pilot zone "China-SCO" will develop trade and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-pilotnaja-zona-kitaj-shos-budut-razvivat-torgovo-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-499010-2022/>

<sup>552</sup> The borders of FEZ "Minsk" are adjusted [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/granitsy-sez-minsk-skorrektirovany-496357-2022/>

<sup>553</sup> Export of goods of FEZ "Minsk" residents reached a record \$2 billion last year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-rezidentov-sez-minsk-v-proshlom-godu-dostig-rekordnyh-2-mlrd-486329-2022/>

Chinese investment, which will implement a project for the production of environmentally friendly packaging from cardboard. The new resident will "produce all kinds of disposable cardboard packaging for fast food outlets. The project is oriented both to supply the Belarusian market and to export"<sup>554</sup>.

The first registered resident in the **FEZ Brest** in 2022 is Soyuz Greenhouse Complex, a company with Belarusian-Polish capital, which was allocated a land plot of about 60 hectares near Brest airport in January this year. "Within three years, a high-tech greenhouse complex with a capacity of more than 30,000 tonnes of vegetables per year, including 18,000 tonnes of cucumbers and 13,000 tonnes of tomatoes, is to appear here. The production volume will amount to about 33 million euros per year"<sup>555</sup>. The new resident plans to invest 75 million euros in the implementation of this project and create 450 new jobs. About 80 per cent of the grown vegetable products are expected to be sent to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and other foreign markets. The second resident in this FEZ in 2022 was registered in March - LLC "Dalmio", which will implement an investment project related to the production of technological equipment, lines and components for the food industry. In this regard, "the company has acquired unused production areas in the FEZ territory. Within three years the new resident intends to invest at least Br1.5 million. The project envisages expansion of production, increase in the number of jobs"<sup>556</sup>, as well as increase in export volumes and solution of import substitution tasks.

**FEZ Gomel-Raton** also shows good results in the development of the export component in 2022, with 67 residents registered as of 1 April. In the first three months of this year, they increased their exports by almost 30 per cent. To be absolutely precise, here "the share of deliveries outside Belarus totalled almost 70 per cent of total sales revenue"<sup>557</sup>.

All these facts once again prove that even in the current difficult conditions FEZs continue to be an effective tool for accelerated development of the regions of Belarus, "where it is possible to build a successful business

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<sup>554</sup> The first resident was registered in FEZ "Minsk" in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervogo-v-2022-godu-rezidenta-zaregistirovali-v-sez-minsk-480078-2022/>

<sup>555</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Brest" will be engaged in the production of vegetables [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-ovoschej-480900-2022/>

<sup>556</sup> A new resident was registered in FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistirovali-v-sez-brest-490538-2022/>

<sup>557</sup> FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents increased exports by almost a third in the I quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-pochti-na-tret-velichili-eksport-v-i-kvartale-495702-2022/>

today"<sup>558</sup> and effectively address the topical issues of the Belarusian economy. The task of each FEZ is to prevent a decrease in the efficiency of its activities. After all, "it is in preferential zones that the investment, innovation, production and export potential of the country gets a concentrated expression in the form of promising business projects"<sup>559</sup>, which, in turn, contribute to the sustainable and dynamic development of the Belarusian state.

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<sup>558</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Amendments to the law as an incentive for investors / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVIII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 7.

<sup>559</sup> Chervjakov: it is necessary to preserve competitive advantages and favourable business climate in FEZ [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-nuzhno-sohranit-konkurentnye-preimuschestva-i-blagopriyatnyj-biznes-klimat-v-sez-495990-2022/>

## Belarus: an effective tool for accelerated development

In the current challenging environment, free economic zones (FEZs) continue to be an effective tool for accelerated development of the Belarusian regions and effectively address pressing issues of the Belarusian economy. The task of each FEZ is to prevent a decline in its efficiency. After all, it is in preferential zones that the country's investment, innovation, production and export potential "receives a concentrated expression in the form of promising business projects, which, in turn, contribute to the sustainable and dynamic development of the Belarusian state"<sup>560</sup>.

In the first half of 2022, 15 new enterprises were added to the list of FEZ residents in Belarus, with a declared investment volume of over \$140 million and plans to create 760 new jobs. This is a record volume of declared investments in new projects over the past three years. "Among the largest projects are the organisation of production facilities in Brest (creation of a greenhouse farm and construction of a complex for extruded aluminium profile production), Svisloch (construction of a container terminal) and Polotsk (creation of a production facility for wood fuel pellets and construction of a hot-dip galvanising plant) districts"<sup>561</sup>.

The inflow of residents is facilitated by the continuous work of FEZ administrations to find new investors, regular presentations of their opportunities at international conferences and exhibitions, as well as the decisions taken by the government in April 2022 to expand the borders of these territories for the implementation of significant investment projects. "In the first half of 2022, residents of free economic zones accounted for a quarter of foreign direct investment on a net basis and exports of goods, a fifth of industrial production in the national indicators"<sup>562</sup>. Depending on the FEZ, residents generated up to 80 per cent of investment, up to 54 per cent of goods exports and up to 37 per cent of regional industrial output. In three quarters, this figure increased 1.7 times to more than \$415 million. In addition, "22 new residents with projects in woodworking, chemical industry, logistics, agriculture and metalworking have been registered this year. The total

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<sup>560</sup> Zaleskii, B. Result-orientation. Realising the opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 22.

<sup>561</sup> FEZs of Belarus note the record volume of declared investments in new projects for three years [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sez-belarusi-otmechajut-rekordnyj-za-tri-goda-objem-zajavlennyh-investitsij-po-novym-proektam-518444-2022>

<sup>562</sup> FEZs provided a quarter of foreign direct investment on a net basis in the first half of 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sez-obespechili-chetvert-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-na-chistoj-osnove-v-i-polugodii-2022-goda-519459-2022/>



investment will be \$167 million. 1080 new jobs will be created"<sup>563</sup>. This suggests that in 2022 the FEZ of Belarus will be enriched with interesting new residents. Let us familiarise ourselves with some of them.

Let's start with the **FEZ "Brest"**. The first free economic zone in Belarus was established in 1996. Over a quarter of a century, the total investment amounted to about \$1.8 billion. The FEZ currently includes 16 sites, which are located in Brest and Brest district, Kobrin and Kobrin district, Ivatsevichi and Ivatsevichi district, as well as Pinsk, Gantsevichi and Drohichin. "In 2021, FEZ economic entities exported goods worth \$950 million to 80 countries. Compared to 2020, the volume of industrial output increased by 26.4% and reached Br3.2 billion. Fixed capital investments totalled Br135 million, foreign direct investment on a net basis - \$43.4 million"<sup>564</sup>. Positive trends in the FEZ continue in 2022. For January - September, exports increased by almost nine per cent with a surplus of more than \$300 million. "In the first nine months of 2022, foreign investment of \$133.6 million was attracted (growth rate - 105.7 per cent). Foreign direct investment on a net basis was \$59 million (135.9 per cent growth rate)."<sup>565</sup>. In 2022, six organisations with a total investment volume of \$92 million are registered as residents of FEZ "Brest".

In particular, "the first resident registered in 2022 was LLC Greenhouse Plant "Soyuz" - a company with Belarusian-Polish capital..."<sup>566</sup>. Others followed. In July, the administration of FEZ "Brest" registered the third new resident this year. Arlight PRO Ltd. intends to set up the production of extruded aluminium profile. The project is aimed at solving import substitution tasks: only one enterprise in Belarus produces such products. It is planned that the products of the company will be mainly used for the production of household appliances. "To organise production, the new FEZ resident will be allocated an investment site in the area of Brest airport. This year construction of an administrative, production and warehouse complex with its own gas-fuelled heat source will start there. The launch of

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<sup>563</sup> Abramenko: FDI on a net basis in FEZ in January-September increased 1.7 times [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-pii-na-chistoj-osnove-v-sez-za-janvar-sentjabr-vozrosli-v-17-raza-536597-2022>

<sup>564</sup> The manufacturer of sanitary-hygienic equipment became a resident of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvoditel-sanitarno-gigienicheskogo-oborudovanija-stal-rezidentom-sez-brest-527300-2022/>

<sup>565</sup> FEZ "Brest" residents continue reorientation of export supplies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezidentyi-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-prodolzhayut-pereorientacziyu-eksportnyix-postavok>

<sup>566</sup> Zalesky, B. Challenges of multi-vectorality. Ideology of international co-operation in the conditions of global turbulence / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 228.

production is scheduled for the end of 2023<sup>567</sup>. The total investment will amount to about \$10 million. More than 100 jobs will be created at the enterprise. An important detail: from January to June 2022, residents of the FEZ "Brest" produced more than one and a half billion Belarusian rubles worth of industrial products, 65 per cent of which were supplied to foreign markets. The export growth rate for the first half of the year was 100.6 per cent.

In September 2022, two new residents were registered in the FEZ. Firstly, it is PolesyeCentre LLC, which will be engaged in microclonal propagation of seedlings of coniferous and ornamental plants. For the implementation of this investment project the enterprise plans to lease a land plot in the airport area of about six hectares, where a greenhouse complex for growing seedlings with a closed root system will be built. It is planned to produce more than two and a half million seedlings of coniferous trees per year, which will be used for reforestation. The complex is planned to be put into operation in 2023 and to reach its design capacity in 2024. The investment project envisages investments of over one million euros. It is planned to employ twelve workers at the additional workplaces.

Secondly, Zubr Energy LLC - Pinsk plant for the production of starter batteries - also joined the ranks of FEZ residents. It is expected that the new status will allow the company with more than two decades of history to increase exports and improve production efficiency. The investment project in a short period of time "provides for modernisation with expansion of existing production areas, production of new types of batteries"<sup>568</sup> and is aimed at solving the problems of import substitution. The facility is planned to be commissioned in 2023. Investment in the project will amount to about twelve million euros. It is planned to employ more than 100 people at the additionally created workplaces.

In October 2022, another new resident was registered in the FEZ - AgroPischeProm Limited Liability Company, which was established in 2009. The company produces a wide range of specialised technological, transport and tank equipment for food, chemical and agro-industrial enterprises. The range of products includes more than 300 items, including machines for washing containers, equipment for hygiene of enterprises, slaughtering and primary processing of livestock, processing of by-products, lifts, conveyors

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<sup>567</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Brest" will be engaged in the production of aluminium profile [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-aluminievogo-profilja-512121-2022/>

<sup>568</sup> Two new residents were registered in FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dvuh-novyh-rezidentov-zaregistirovali-v-sez-brest-525763-2022/>

and other installations. Now the company employs more than 150 qualified specialists. The expansion of the production base implies the creation of new jobs. The investment project will increase the production capacity of the enterprise and expand the range of products at the expense of new areas. For this purpose the production building on the territory of FEZ will be reconstructed. The investor intends to invest about two and a half million Belarusian rubles in the project implementation. It is planned to launch production at the new site in 2024. By the end of the year, the FEZ "Brest" plans to consider the business plans of several more potential business entities.

Another FEZ resident plans to significantly expand its product line. Brestmash OJSC - a resident of the FEZ "Brest" since 2015 - is a manufacturer of modern technological equipment for food industry enterprises, components for gas and electric household cookers. "The entry of Brestmash OJSC into Belavtomaz Holding has opened new opportunities for the development of the company"<sup>569</sup>. Manufacturing of components for the production of motor vehicles, large-unit assembly of cargo and passenger vehicles has become an important area of activity of the resident of FEZ "Brest". In September 2022, Brestmash presented prototypes of ambulance and social taxi vehicles made on the basis of Minsk Automobile Plant chassis. "The launch of a new line of minibuses, especially in the conditions of intensified work under the import substitution programme, allows entering new market segments, as well as strengthening the position of the domestic brand abroad"<sup>570</sup>. The order for the new vehicles has already been received from the Ministry of Health of Belarus. The first vehicles will be delivered to the service of Belarusian medics by the end of 2022.

The next example is the **FEZ "Grodnoinvest"**, where in the first half of 2022 attracted foreign investments for more than 150 million dollars. "Compared to last year, this amount is 2.5 times more. The geography of investments includes 12 countries. They include the UAE, Uzbekistan, Slovakia, Germany, Russia <...>. The main share of investments is attracted from the Netherlands, Cyprus, Austria, Great Britain and Poland. Their share

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<sup>569</sup> FEZ "Brest" resident takes part in the implementation of the project for the production of ambulances [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-prinimaet-uchastie-v-realizacii-proekta-po-proizvodstvu-mashin-skoroj-pomoshhi>

<sup>570</sup> FEZ "Brest" resident plans to expand the line of manufactured cars [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-brest-planiruet-rasshirit-linejku-vypuskaemyh-avtomobilej-526001-2022/>

in the total volume exceeded 95%"<sup>571</sup>. Two thirds of investments are attracted by residents who implement projects in Smarhon district. FEZ firms located in Grodno attracted almost 18 million dollars.

In 2022, the administration of the FEZ Grodnoinvest continues to improve the investment climate in Grodno region, increase the level of accessibility of modern engineering and transport infrastructure. More than 32 million Belarusian rubles will be allocated for these purposes within the FEZ boundaries. "There are plans to build in the regional centre an automobile exit to the FEZ industrial zone (Grandichi district) and a roundabout at the intersection of Street No. 1 and Skidelskoye highway (Auls district), to reconstruct Industrial Avenue in Smorgon, to build new power supply sources at the FEZ sites in Svisloch and Grodno with a total capacity of up to 100 MW"<sup>572</sup>. In particular, a new 1.2 kilometre-long driveway was built near the village of Novaya Gozha, which made it possible to separate the movement of heavy trucks and special equipment. In total, nine FEZ resident enterprises are located in the industrial zone of this district, which have invested over 30 million dollars in the creation of modern production facilities in the woodworking, chemical and textile industries. By 2025, residents are planning to invest more than 8 million dollars additionally.

The export results of the half-year are no less weighty: for six months the residents of the free economic zone Hrodnainvest supplied almost \$715 million worth of products. "The foreign trade surplus amounted to \$229 million. The residents of the free economic zone exported to 54 countries products of woodworking and furniture production, chemical industry, mechanical engineering and metalworking, light industry, production of construction materials and agro-industrial complex"<sup>573</sup>. The share of exports in the total output of FEZ Grodnoinvest in January-June 2022 increased to 69 per cent. FEZ companies provided more than 46 per cent of all exports of goods of Grodno region.

In July 2022, Vimzovplast LLC became a resident in the FEZ Grodnoinvest, which will produce products from synthetic polymers and quartz agglomerate. The new resident intends to create a modern enterprise

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<sup>571</sup> Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted foreign investments for \$151 million this year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-etom-godu-privlekli-inostrannyh-investitsij-na-151-mln-518233-2022/>

<sup>572</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" invested over Br1.5 million in the construction of a road in Grodno district [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-grodnoinvest-investirovala-svyshe-br15-mln-v-stroitelstvo-dorogi-v-grodnenskom-rajone-520208-2022/>

<sup>573</sup> In the first half of the year residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" exported products worth \$714 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-pervoe-polugodie-rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-eksportirovali-produktsii-na-714-mln-520243-2022/>

with high-tech injection moulding equipment, form a wide range of products, as well as launch the production of import-substituting products - synthetic polymer granulate. Most of the products will be sold under a special FEZ legal regime through the development of co-operative relations with FEZ residents. The investor plans to start production in the fourth quarter of 2022. "The total investment costs of the project will exceed EUR 1 million. The total volume of investments within the project implementation will exceed the total tax benefits six times. It is planned to create 30 jobs during the entire period of the project implementation"<sup>574</sup> .

In November 2022, Kronos-Grodna LLC was registered in FEZ Grodnoinvest with an investment project to create a multi-profile production facility for furniture and wood products. The new resident will build a new complex, including production, warehouse and administrative premises, and purchase modern technological equipment. "The implementation of the project will create about 30 new jobs, expand the range of products and increase exports, increase deductions to the budget and off-budget funds"<sup>575</sup> . All this will be carried out within the framework of the effectively operating furniture cluster of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in Grodno region, in which more than 20 FEZ residents of different production orientation take part. Co-operation will make it possible to create a product with high added value, concentrate resource potential within the region, and increase the profitability of manufactured products.

A little later, in November 2022, another resident - Terminal West CJSC - was registered in the FEZ Grodnoinvest with an investment project to create a production and logistics enterprise. The company will be engaged in transshipment of liquefied hydrocarbon gases from broad gauge to narrow gauge railway tank wagons, as well as from tank wagons to road transport. In addition, cleaning and compounding services for liquefied hydrocarbon gases will be provided. "The project will be realised at sites #4 (Grodno) and #12 (Svisloch district) of the FEZ "Grodnoinvest". In the course of implementation the company will purchase new technological equipment, carry out technical modernisation of gas filling stations, improve the infrastructure"<sup>576</sup> . It should

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<sup>574</sup> The new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will produce products from synthetic polymers [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-budet-proizvodit-izdelija-iz-sinteticheskikh-polimerov-511741-2022/>

<sup>575</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will create a multi-profile production of upholstered furniture in Grodno [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno-mnogoprofilnoe-proizvodstvo-myagkoj-mebeli/>

<sup>576</sup> In FEZ "Grodnoinvest" a new production and logistics enterprise will be created [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdat-dut-novoe-proizvodstvenno-logisticheskoe-predpriatie-535377-2022/>

be noted that the company "Terminal West" became the fifth FEZ resident registered this year. Earlier in 2022, the company Unionway LLC was registered in the logistics sector in Grodnoinvest, which is implementing a project to build a container terminal near the railway freight station Svisloch. The construction of the first stage started this year, and "the company will start providing services from 2025. Total investment costs will amount to more than \$23 million. During the project implementation period it is planned to create 70 new jobs"<sup>577</sup>. In addition, such residents as Portela, which is building a transport and logistics centre in Hrodna district, Vilaris with capital from the United Arab Emirates, and Silva Logistics BiWay with investments from the Netherlands are already successfully implementing projects in the FEZ.

In 2022, the opportunities of FEZ Grodnoinvest were repeatedly demonstrated at international conferences and exhibitions. For example, in November this year, within the framework of the International Exhibition MUSIAD EXPO in Istanbul, the FEZ proposals in the investment, trade, economic and tourism areas were voiced at the Turkish-Belarusian Investment Forum. The conversation was about the implementation of new investment projects in Grodno region, "including the creation of industrial park "Grodno" with the participation of Turkish companies, expansion of trade and economic relations and development of industrial cooperation in the chemical, woodworking, machine-building and other spheres"<sup>578</sup>. One of the topics of discussion was a new ambitious project to build an industrial park "Grodno" with a ready infrastructure and developed logistics. The advantages of the special tourist and recreational park "Avgustovsky Kanal" were also presented. As a result of these talks, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the administration of the FEZ Grodnoinvest and the Association of Independent Industrialists and Entrepreneurs MUSIAD, which envisages the expansion of cooperation between Belarusian and Turkish companies in production, investment, financial, trade and economic areas. For reference, the FEZ has a resident with Turkish capital - Europlastex Invest LLC, which is implementing two projects in the industrial park in Smarhoni - cotton yarn and steel pipes.

In the same November, FEZ proposals were also considered in Dubai at the Eurasian Business Forum "Focus on Belarus", where negotiations were

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<sup>577</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will build a container terminal in Svisloch [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-postroit-v-svislochi-kontejnernyj-terminal/>

<sup>578</sup> Turkish business is presented the opportunities for investment in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest" territory [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/tureczkie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-v-ramkax-sez-grodnoinvest/>

also held with the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the prospects for "cooperation in trade and investment, organisation of mutual deliveries of products and joint work in the markets of the Middle East and North Africa" were considered<sup>579</sup>. The parties agreed on co-operation.

As for **FEZ Vitebsk**, the volume of attracted foreign investments for six months of 2022 exceeded \$30 million, or almost half of the total investment volume of Vitebsk region. During this period, five residents were registered, including for the first time with capital from Iran. The new enterprises intend to implement projects in the sphere of wood processing, as well as to create production of biodegradable disposable tableware and environmentally friendly packaging. In June, Novopolotsk SM Ltd was registered. The company plans to implement an investment project to expand the existing production of modern medical dressing materials, as well as electrical, thermal insulation and sealing tapes made of textiles, which are components for various industries. This will allow to increase the capacity of the enterprise to produce import-substituting products and increase its export potential. It is planned to organise more than 20 jobs.

In September 2022, the 6th resident since the beginning of the year - CJSC BELTANK - was registered in the FEZ with a project for the production of steel containers. Import-substituting production will be organised in the Polotsk district at one of the sites included in the FEZ in 2018. The project is initiated by a domestic investor, which plans to increase the output of sought-after products by more than 2 times due to the establishment of the enterprise in FEZ "Vitebsk". "The basis of the production portfolio of the new resident will be vertical and horizontal tanks and reservoirs made of stainless steel, aluminium, including with heating, cooling, insulation, mixing. The project also plans to produce metal tanks and reservoirs with capacities from 1,000 to 10 million litres according to individual customer orders"<sup>580</sup>. The products can be used in the energy sector, petrochemical and construction complex, food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, and public utilities. It is expected to create about 20 jobs. The main markets for BELTANK's products are the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

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<sup>579</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" and CCI Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/sez-grodnoinvest-i-tpp-shardzha-obedinennyyx-arabskix-emiratox-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve/>

<sup>580</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" resident will create the production of import-substituting steel tanks near Polotsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-importozameschajuschih-stalnih-emkostej-pod-polotskom-526248-2022/>

In FEZ "Vitebsk" two more projects are in high readiness for registration, including those with the participation of foreign investors. "They involve the organisation of the production of fibreglass reinforcement, as well as the creation of production of hot-dip galvanising of metals, which is considered one of the most economical and widespread methods of metal corrosion protection"<sup>581</sup>. A total of 56 resident enterprises are already registered in the FEZ today, which are implementing projects with the participation of investors from 15 countries. An important detail: in 2022, FEZ Vitebsk passed a milestone in investment activity - since the establishment of the FEZ, the total volume of declared investments by residents has passed the mark of one billion Belarusian rubles.

As for exports, "FEZ Vitebsk residents exported \$425 million worth of goods in January-June [2022], which is 4.4 per cent more than in the same period of 2021"<sup>582</sup>. The geography of supplies includes 68 countries, including Belarus' 10 partner states in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Responding to the specific conditions of the current international situation, the companies are reorganising their logistics chains and actively increasing supplies of products to the countries of the far arc, including Israel, Kuwait, Mongolia, Thailand, Turkey, and Uruguay.

As for the innovation component of FEZ Vitebsk residents, there are interesting facts here as well. In particular, the company Polimerkonstruktsiya, which was registered as a FEZ resident in 2011 with a project to expand the production of innovative water treatment and de-ironing systems, has developed an innovative technology to purify the leachate of solid municipal waste landfills. The company's specialists collected and examined samples of effluent from most landfills from different regions of Belarus. Based on the results of the research, Polimerkonstruktsiya developed technologies and equipment that can be applied taking into account the terrain, landfill specifics and other aspects. The method is based on chemical treatment using membrane technologies, as well as biological treatment as an alternative option. The advantages of the domestic solution are the use of energy-independent natural removal of contaminants, automation of processes and long-term availability of equipment. "Today Polimerkonstruktsiya is implementing a leachate treatment project at the Orsha landfill, which will also serve Orsha,

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<sup>581</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of import-substituting textile components [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyy-rezident-sez-vitebsk-budet-razvivat-vypusk-importozameshajuschiy-tekstilnyh-komplektujuschiy-510424-2022/>

<sup>582</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" residents exported \$425 million worth of goods in the 1st half of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-1-m-polugodii-eksportirovali-tovarov-na-425-mln-521133-2022/>



Dubrovensky and Tolochinsky districts"<sup>583</sup>. In 2021, a unique installation was created for Vitebskdreva, which allows for the return of spent chemical solutions back into production, thus reducing the load on sewage treatment facilities. Similar equipment is being developed for a number of other woodworking and pulp and paper enterprises.

In 2022, active work on registration of new residents in **FEZ Minsk** continues. Thus, in January, the first resident registered in the FEZ in 2022 was 3D Paperko LLC, a company with Chinese investments, which will implement a project for the production of environmentally friendly cardboard packaging. In June, another - the fifth - resident in 2022 was registered in the FEZ. This is the production and trading limited liability company "Agrostroy", which plans to realise an investment project for the production of drilling tools for the mining industry in the FEZ. "The project envisages construction of an engineering production and warehouse complex, creation of more than 40 jobs, attraction of more than 1 million euros of investments"<sup>584</sup>. The established production will be high-tech and export-oriented.

In terms of strengthening work with foreign investors, in November 2022 the FEZ "Minsk" administration presented the FEZ investment potential at the Turkish-Belarusian Investment Forum and signed a memorandum of co-operation with the Association of Independent Industrialists and Entrepreneurs MUSIAD, which "will serve as an impetus to generate new ideas and implement joint projects"<sup>585</sup>. It should be added that this association includes more than 60 thousand Turkish enterprises.

Also, In October 2022, the Council of Heads of Administrations of FEZs of Belarus appeared in Minsk, which is designed to coordinate the work on the development of the image of Belarusian FEZs and provides for joint activities to improve the efficiency of functioning of these structures, organisation of educational programmes, seminars, conferences to find effective ways of interaction with international business circles and targeted promotion of national and regional branding. "This format of cooperation will help to increase efficiency in the implementation of assigned tasks to attract investments into the country's economy, to use new opportunities and

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<sup>583</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" resident offers to clean the effluents of landfills by innovative method [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-vitebsk-predlagaet-ochischat-stoki-poligonov-tko-innovatsionnym-sposobom-520105-2022/>

<sup>584</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will be engaged in the production of drilling tools [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyi-rezident-sez-minsk-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-burovogo-instrumenta-509471-2022>

<sup>585</sup> FEZ "Minsk" will present investment potential at the Turkish-Belarusian forum in Istanbul [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-minsk-predstavit-investpotentsial-na-turetsko-belorusskom-forume-v-stambule-533423-2022/>

overcome negative trends in the current economic conditions"<sup>586</sup>. It is clear that today it is necessary to intensify work with investors to actively strengthen the directions of industrial cooperation, measures to stimulate investment activity and entry into alternative export markets.

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<sup>586</sup> Buben: Council of FEZ Heads of Administrations will help to increase the efficiency of attracting investments into the economy [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/buben-sovet-glav-administratsij-sez-pomozhet-povysit-effektivnost-privlechenija-investitsij-v-ekonomiku-530261-2022/>

## Belarus: free economic zones as a tool for implementing business initiatives

In January 2023, at the conference in Vitebsk "Design and construction in the territories of free economic zones in modern economic conditions, allowing to shorten the investment cycle from the moment of business idea to the start of production activity" it was noted that in the conditions of Belarus the most important task is "to find optimal solutions that will help the investor to start his activity as a FEZ resident as efficiently as possible"<sup>587</sup>. In the context of this topic, we note that in 2022 the number of residents in the free economic zones (FEZs) of the Republic of Belarus, the Velikiy Kamen industrial park and the Bremino-Orsha special economic zone, increased by 10 per cent to 53 new business entities. "The total volume of declared investments is \$260 million, it is planned to create 2.7 thousand jobs"<sup>588</sup>. In addition, FEZs of Belarus in 2022 provided almost a quarter of the volume of Belarusian exports of goods. And this is despite the fact that there were 427 registered residents in six FEZs on 1 January 2023. Speaking about the types of activities of FEZ participants, last year "the most common was manufacturing industry - 86.4%. The transport industry involved 2.9% of residents, trade - 2.4%, real estate operations - 2.4%, agriculture, forestry and fishing - 2.4%, construction - 1%, water supply, waste collection, treatment and disposal - 0.7%, professional, scientific and technical activities - 0.7%"<sup>589</sup>. In particular, interesting investment and innovation experience can be seen in FEZs "**Minsk**", "**Vitebsk**", "**Brest**" and "**Grodnoinvest**".

**Minsk FEZ** is one of the most attractive investment sites in the Republic of Belarus. It is located on 21 land plots, which are situated in promising territories of Minsk region - within the boundaries of Minsk, Molodechno, Fanipol, Zhodino and Borisov. In 2023 the FEZ celebrates its 25th anniversary. Over 100 enterprises with foreign capital from 19 countries, including Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the United States of America, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Czech Republic, Poland, China, Estonia, have come here for a quarter of a century. During this time more than two and a half billion

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<sup>587</sup> Buben: our task is to help investors effectively start working as FEZ residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/buben-nasha-zadacha-pomoch-investoram-effektivno-nachat-rabotu-v-kachestve-rezidentov-sez-544306-2023/>

<sup>588</sup> The number of FEZ residents in 2022 increased by 10% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-sez-v-2022-godu-uvelichilos-na-10-543104-2023/>

<sup>589</sup> Free economic zones last year provided 22.3% of exports of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svobodnye-ekonomicheskie-zony-v-proshlom-godu-obespechili-223-eksporta-tovarov-550537-2023/>

dollars in fixed capital was attracted, more than 29 thousand new jobs were created. The geography of export is 85 countries of the world. "For the whole period of FEZ "Minsk" activity the enterprises exported products for more than \$15 billion"<sup>590</sup>. The main industrial spheres where FEZ companies operate are machine building, metalworking, automotive industry, woodworking, production of construction materials, electronics, printing and packaging.

According to the results of 2022, the production of industrial products of FEZ residents increased by more than 10 per cent. The share of import-substituting products was more than 50 per cent, and "the share of export supplies of FEZ enterprises was 75 per cent"<sup>591</sup>. Another interesting fact: FEZ residents more than doubled their supplies to China in 2022. We would also like to remind that last year the composition of the zone was supplemented by six new residents with a total volume of declared investments - more than four million dollars, of which the share of foreign investments was about 30 per cent. At the same time, more than 490 jobs were additionally created. In particular, the sixth FEZ resident in December 2022 became Belbansvi LLC, which will organise the production of technical fabric on the basis of secondary raw materials and textile waste. "It is planned that the company will start working already in the second quarter of 2023 in Fanipol, where about 50 jobs will be created. The declared investment volume for the project during 2023-2027 will amount to more than 1 million euros. The share of export deliveries is more than 90%"<sup>592</sup>. Belbansvi's products are in demand in the oil and gas industry, furniture industry, automotive services, medical sphere, as well as in other production sectors.

Also. In 2023, the main tasks to be realised in FEZ "Minsk" include: 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.

As for **FEZ Vitebsk**, as of mid-January 2023, there were already 57 organisations registered as residents, which are implementing projects with the

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<sup>590</sup> Buben, A. About the contribution of FEZ "Minsk" to the country's economy, import substitution, work under sanctions / A. Buben // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/buben-o-vklade-sez-minsk-v-ekonomiku-strany-importozameschenii-rabote-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8539/>

<sup>591</sup> FEZ "Minsk" residents attracted 1.7 times more direct foreign investments in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-minsk-v-2022-godu-privlekli-v-17-raza-bolshe-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-544008-2023/>

<sup>592</sup> FEZ "Minsk" resident will produce technical fabric on the basis of recycled materials [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-minsk-budet-proizvodit-tehnicheskiju-tkan-na-osnove-vtorsyrja-538832-2022/>

participation of investors from 14 countries. The FEZ consists of 17 sectors located in Vitebsk, Orsha, Polotsk, Postavy, Miorsky and Dokshitsky districts, as well as in the regional centre. In January, the first resident of 2023 - LLC Lesdrevconsult - was already registered here. At the site in Polotsk, the company plans to organise import-substituting production of chainsaws, brushcutters and brush cutters to meet the needs of forestry enterprises. The project will be realised with the support of Chinese partners. "Prototype products are expected to be produced already in the first half of the year. In the future, the investors intend to organise the production of components in Polotsk, gradually increasing the degree of localisation of petrol tool production. The volume of investments will exceed Br1.5 million"<sup>593</sup>. Half of the output will be exported to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union.

It should be noted that seven new companies were registered in the FEZ in 2022. BELTANK CJSC became the sixth resident in September. The company will implement an investment project in Polotsk district for the production of steel containers, which involves increasing the production of import-substituting products and creating new jobs. "The products can be used in the energy sector, petrochemical and construction complex, by organisations in the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics industries, and public utility companies. It is expected to create about 20 jobs. The main markets for BELTANK's products are the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union"<sup>594</sup>. The seventh resident in November 2022 was Metal Rolling Company LLC with a project to develop a white tinplate plant in the district town of Miori, which "envisages a significant increase in the production of export-oriented products, involvement of more production workers in the economy of Miori district"<sup>595</sup>. So, this FEZ has good investment and export prospects.

Speaking about the **FEZ "Brest"**, the export volume of the zone residents exceeded one billion dollars for the first time in 2022. At the same time, a surplus of \$460 million was ensured, which is 44 per cent of the volume of products shipped outside Belarus. This means that FEZ residents exceeded the export target by almost three per cent. More specifically, "the export of products of Accumulator Alliance LLC grew by 3.7 times, almost 5.5 times -

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<sup>593</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will create the production of petrol tools in Polotsk [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-benzoinstrumenta-v-polotske-542995-2023/>

<sup>594</sup> Zaleskii, B. Success is in development. Free economic zones as points of growth / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 57.

<sup>595</sup> Metalloprokatnaya Kompaniya" Ltd - a new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://fez-vitebsk.by/press-room/rezidenty/ooo-metalloprokatnaya-kompaniya--novyy-rezident-sez-vitebsk/>

Barkhim OJSC, more than 1.7 times - Vastega IOOO, 1.4 times - Inco-Food IP, 2.5 times - Kondor IOOO. JV "Santa Bremore" and LLC "STiM" exported 18% more products than last year. Export supplies of Brest Hosiery Combine increased by 16%"<sup>596</sup>. In general, the share of FEZ residents in the total exports of Brest region enterprises was 28 per cent. Apparently, the positive dynamics will continue in 2023. Especially since Santa Bremore plans to increase physical production volumes by more than seven per cent, Gefest-Technica - by eight per cent, Involux - by almost 20 per cent, and Polipol Mebel Bel - by almost 10 per cent. In addition, 42 FEZ residents continued to invest in production in 2022.

The year 2023 has also started well in the FEZ. In January, the first resident of the year was registered here - SanSpectr, which will implement an investment project to create a transport and logistics complex "West-East". This project will be organised on a section of railway tracks in the area of Brest-Severny station and will focus on the provision of a wide range of logistics services - warehousing and storage of cargoes, forwarding, customs and other services. The implementation period is five years. The company with Belarusian capital intends to invest more than seven and a half million Belarusian rubles and create about 20 new jobs. "The project has already started to operate. The repair of access roads has begun. It is planned to build feeder tracks, to equip additional container sites, to buy expensive special equipment. In parallel, the company is working out a certificate for its own services. This will give an opportunity to attract new operators and expand the market of services in the sphere of railway container transportations"<sup>597</sup>. It is expected that new and reconstructed infrastructural facilities for container storage and transshipment to motor vehicles will provide additional opportunities for solving problems related to the insufficient capacity of Polish railways and the need to switch to a different gauge. Thus, the transport and logistics complex will contribute to widening the bottlenecks in the handling of container trains within the Brest railway junction in the East-West-East directions.

In the same January 2023, the FEZ resident - Brestmash OJSC - presented a new line of social purpose vehicles, including a school bus, a social service vehicle, and an ambulance. The new line of vehicles is of interest for

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<sup>596</sup> Annual export volume of FEZ "Brest" residents exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/godovoj-objem-eksporta-rezidentov-sez-brest-prevysil-1-mlrd-547421-2023/>

<sup>597</sup> The first resident was registered in FEZ "Brest" this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervogo-v-etom-godu-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-brest-547274-2023/>

the social services of the city. In December 2022, "the territorial centre of social service of the population of Moskovski district of Brest purchased a new car manufactured at Brestmash OJSC for use as a "social taxi". The car is equipped with a device for smooth raising and lowering of a wheelchair, which facilitates the transport of people with disabilities"<sup>598</sup>. In the future, about 500 units of special motor vehicles of 26 models will be assembled at the production facilities of the resident of FEZ "Brest". These are commercial vans, vehicles for patrol and checkpoint and canine services, for transporting people with disabilities, ambulances. The plant's production capacity allows it to assemble up to two thousand vehicles per year.

Another example. In 2011, the Baranovich Cotton Production Association became a resident of the FEZ. In 2023, the enterprise will celebrate its 60th anniversary. In January of this year, the implementation of the association's development strategy for the next five years was discussed at a meeting attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus. It is one of the largest textile producers in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The association includes spinning, weaving, finishing and garment factories and employs about 1,200 people. In recent years, this FEZ resident has already completed several stages of modernisation, which allowed to increase the level of automation of the production process, to master new types of products and to achieve high-quality prints of any complexity. In conditions of tough competition in this sector, where Asian manufacturers traditionally have strong positions, "in Baranovich the whole cycle of fabric production will be preserved. The company plans to expand the production of polycotton. Due to the addition of acrylic the fabric will acquire special antibacterial, non-flammable properties"<sup>599</sup>. So the strategy of the association will be implemented further - in the line of powerful innovative modernisation to take the JSC to a new level of development.

Recall: today the FEZ "Brest" already "includes 16 sites, which are located in Brest and Brest district, Kobrin and Kobrin district, Ivatsevichy and Ivatsevichy district, as well as Pinsk, Hantsevichy and Drohychn"<sup>600</sup>. As of the beginning of February 2023, 76 enterprises from 16 countries are already

<sup>598</sup> The resident of FEZ "Brest" JSC "Brestmash" presents a new line of social cars [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-oao-%C2%ABbrestmash%C2%BB-prezentuet-novuyu-linejku-soczialnyix-avtomobilej>

<sup>599</sup> The strategy of BPCW development was discussed with the participation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/strategiya-razvitiya-bpxo-obsuzhdalas-pri-uchastii-premer-ministra-respubliki-belarus>

<sup>600</sup> Zalessky, B. Betting on efficiency. Peculiarities of Belarus' economic relations with Asian partners / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 48.

operating as residents. This shows that FEZ "Brest" continues to actively address the issues of increasing the export and innovation component in order to contribute to the dynamic development of the whole Brest region.

In 2022, the **FEZ Hrodnainvest** was actively developing such areas of residents' activity as wood processing, production of chemical products, machine building, and metal processing. Five companies were registered as FEZ residents last year. The total amount of declared investments for the implementation of projects was about 30 million dollars. Realisation of the declared investment projects will allow to create about 180 new jobs with decent salaries. Firstly, in Grodno, the company "Krones-Grodno" has organised a multi-profile production of furniture and wood products on a site in the area of Grandichi. Within the framework of the project, a new complex will be built, including production, warehouse and administrative premises, and modern technological equipment will be purchased. Secondly, "another new resident - VIMZOVPLAST LLC - will set up a modern plant in the regional centre to produce a wide range of products from synthetic polymers and quartz agglomerate. The products are import-substituting and will be sold under a special FEZ legal regime through the development of co-operative relations with FEZ residents of Belarus..."<sup>601</sup>. Thirdly, in the Grodno district at a site in the Novaya Gozha area, the company Barinpak is implementing a project to produce ecological packaging made of high-density fibreboard. The finished products are intended for export to the near and far abroad countries, but some part of them will be sold in Belarus within the framework of the country's gradual transition from polythene packaging of goods to environmentally safe packaging. The first batch of products has already been produced and was highly appreciated at the republican contest of innovative projects.

Another key area of activity of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents in 2022 is logistics. Suffice it to say that only last year six residents worked in the FEZ in the field of logistics, which was the largest number among similar structures. In 2022, the establishment of production and logistics enterprises, in particular, was announced by Terminal West and Unionway CJSC, which are implementing investment projects on industrial sites in Grodno and Svisloch. Besides, last year the FEZ administration and the Arab company BRIKOIL TRANS-T.Z.E. signed a memorandum of intent to develop the existing transport and logistics terminal in Grodno region.

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<sup>601</sup> 5 new residents registered in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/5-novyx-rezidentov-zaregistrovano-v-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2022-godu/>



In February 2023, the seventh resident in the FEZ Hrodnainvest in the logistics sector became ZapadTransGranitsa LLC, which will build an international trade and logistics complex near Hrodna airport. The project, located in the area of the agro-town of Obukhovo, is to complete the construction of an unfinished air terminal building with partial demolition. "The company plans to create a complex of administrative and storage facilities, build access roads, car parks and taxiways for aircraft, as well as a cargo apron. The unique complex will be multimodal and will utilise the potential of road and air transport. The first phase of construction will be completed by the end of 2025. In total, more than \$35 million will be invested in the project and about 100 jobs will be created"<sup>602</sup>. This complex will make it possible to use the logistic potential of Grodno region, to attract investments in the creation of a multimodal centre that has no analogues in the region, to involve in economic activity the building of the air terminal that has not been completed, to attract tourists and foreign trade companies, thus stimulating local entrepreneurial activity and trade turnover.

And a few more facts. In 2022, the administration of FEZ Grodnoinvest built and commissioned seven new infrastructure facilities. New roads and communications were built in the FEZ plots in the cities of Grodno and Smarhon, as well as in Grodno district. Street No. 7 in Grodno, in the Auls district, was reconstructed and landscaped. The construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Street No.1 and Skidelskoye Highway has been completed. "The projects of 12 FEZ resident enterprises for the production of construction materials, chemical and woodworking products are successfully implemented here. In the next [2023] year, the Grodno Glass Plant OJSC, a production facility unique for Belarus, will be launched"<sup>603</sup>. In the Grodno district, three car parks for 30 parking spaces for passenger cars were built and commissioned at the Novaya Gozha site. The reconstruction of Industrial Avenue in Smorgon continued at the expense of the Grodnoinvest FEZ development fund. The 3rd start-up complex worth over two million Belarusian rubles was put into operation, a roundabout and pedestrian connections, outdoor lighting, storm water drainage, domestic water supply system were installed. The implemented complex of works allowed to significantly improve the capacity of cargo traffic of FEZ residents, improve

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<sup>602</sup> FEZ resident "Grodnoinvest" will build an international trade and logistics complex [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-postroit-mezhdunarodnyj-torgovo-logisticheskij-kompleks-550573-2023/>

<sup>603</sup> 7 infrastructure projects realised in 2022 by the administration of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/7-infrastrukturnyx-proektov-realizovano-v-2022-godu-administraciej-sez-grodnoinvest/>

the quality of transport logistics and ensure road safety at the proper level at this site.

In 2023, it is planned to design and build engineering infrastructure at the sites of FEZ Grodnoinvest for a total amount of about seven and a half million Belarusian rubles. This will make it possible to increase the investment attractiveness of Grodno region for the implementation of new projects and improve conditions for the existing FEZ resident enterprises.

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## **Belarus: from modernisation to maximum localisation of production and import substitution**

As early as in the Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020, the task was outlined to create conditions for the implementation of the policy of rational import substitution and development of import-substituting industries, including using the potential of small and medium-sized companies in order to improve the trade balance of the country to eventually reach "an annual increase in the production of import-substituting products in the amount of at least USD 600 million"<sup>604</sup>. It should be noted that in Belarus the main objective of import substitution, which is understood as a state policy aimed at rationalising imports of goods and services by stimulating domestic producers, including those with the participation of foreign capital, to organise the production of goods that were previously imported, is formulated as "not the mechanical substitution of imported goods, but the development of competitive national production"<sup>605</sup>. According to the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, the share of import-substituting products in the country has already approached 40 per cent or, in monetary terms, \$20 billion. At the same time, "the share of sales of import-substituting products for export has grown to 50 per cent. This shows that it is not only competitive in the domestic market, but is also in demand abroad"<sup>606</sup>.

Among the economic entities in Belarus that have been quite successful in addressing the issues of import substitution in recent years are the enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern. In 2019, they increased the output of such products by almost 10 per cent and produced them for more than \$530 million. More specifically, 26 enterprises produced import-substituting products in 38 commodity items, including pulp, fibreboard, chipboard, plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated and non-corrugated cardboard, paper sacks, newsprint and sanitary paper. In particular, "in 2019 Svetlogorsk CCP produced 145,000 tonnes of pulp, which is 5.6 times more

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<sup>604</sup> Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/file253cf6b5b538838e.PDF>

<sup>605</sup> Ideas for import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: [http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei\\_importozames-ru/](http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei_importozames-ru/)

<sup>606</sup> The share of import-substituting products in the industry of Belarus is approaching 40% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolja-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-v-promyshlennosti-belarusi-priblizhaetsja-k-40-379006-2020/>

than in 2018"<sup>607</sup>. Another interesting example in this context is JSC Rechitsadrev. A few years ago in Rechitsa began to operate a Plant of synthetic resins. One of the uses of this resin is the production of decorative film from ordinary paper used in the manufacture of laminated wood panels. The result: whereas previously furniture makers had to buy synthetic resin abroad, they have now started to export their surplus resin themselves. In 2019 alone, this generated around three million euros for the company. Overall, however, "the production of our own resin saved around 10 million euros over the entire period"<sup>608</sup>.

The secret of success of the Concern's enterprises lies in the modernisation of the basic woodworking plants, which allowed to significantly expand the range of products and ensure their high quality. The result: over the last five years, when the new plants started operating, the production volume of import-substituting products more than doubled. Continuing to develop this topical priority, the Bellesbumprom Concern sees such promising areas as expanding the range and increasing the production of various types of paper packaging as an alternative to polyethylene packaging, as well as producing high-quality coated paperboard, which is used in significant quantities in the printing, food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics industries. As a result, "in 2020, the Concern's enterprises plan to increase the output of import-substituting products by \$30 million to \$560 million"<sup>609</sup>.

The Energokomplekt production association in Vitebsk has also accumulated interesting experience in developing import substitution, where in 2019 "86% of the total volume worth \$112 million was supplied for export. At the same time, the Vitebsk company accounts for 70% of all cable products manufactured in Belarus"<sup>610</sup>. It is appropriate to add that this association, founded in 1992 and now a resident of the Vitebsk free economic zone, employs 650 people providing innovative products to both domestic and foreign consumers.

A number of examples of successful implementation of the import substitution policy can be observed at the enterprises of Gomel region. In

<sup>607</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" in 2019 increased the production of import-substituting products by 9.3% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2019-godu-uvlechili-proizvodstvo-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-na-379049-2020/>

<sup>608</sup> Kapba, E. In the lens - "JSC Rechitsadrev". Successful import substitution / E. Kapba // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://dneprovec.by/companynews/2020/02/14/25898>

<sup>609</sup> Igor Lyashenko directs "Bellesbumprom" to more active production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9267>

<sup>610</sup> Bogacheva, O. More attention should be paid to the issues of import substitution - Anfimov / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/voprosam-importozameschenija-neobhodimo-udeljat-bolshe-vnimaniya-anfimov-378866-2020/>

particular, "one of them is the activity of the Turov Dairy Plant to produce traditional Italian cheeses for sale on the national Belarusian market"<sup>611</sup>. All these examples show that the import substitution policy in Belarus, although it is developing, still has a huge potential, which many market players will have to master, guided by the best practices already available in the country.

That is why the Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025, adopted in mid-2021, envisaged strengthening the policy of rational import substitution, taking into account the production of new high-tech and export-oriented goods, including within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union. This document states that the production of import-substituting products by the end of the five-year plan in the country "will increase to USD 22.3 billion with a total production growth of USD 4 billion"<sup>612</sup>.

In December 2021, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, while considering the problems of uninterrupted supply of necessary components and materials faced by domestic manufacturers, set the task to maximise the localisation of Belarusian products, including through cooperation with Russia and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, taking into account the positive trends observed in the work on import substitution. Indeed, over the five-year period - from 2016 to 2020 - the output of import-substituting products in Belarus increased by about a third - from \$13.6 billion to \$18 billion. Over the same period, its share in total industrial production increased from 34.2 to 38 per cent. And now "more than 53 per cent of import-substituting products are not only used inside the country, but also exported. The balance of foreign trade in goods under the approved import substitution scheme has improved by \$412 million over the last five years"<sup>613</sup>.

Among the measures stimulating enterprises to import substitution, the following were named at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers: increase in localisation, development of technological chains, processing of local raw materials, attraction of small and medium-sized businesses. And "about 170 import-substituting projects have already been

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<sup>611</sup> Shumel, K.V. Development of import-substituting industries in the context of the concept of innovative development of the Republic of Belarus / K.V. Shumel // Women scientists of Belarus and Kazakhstan : proceedings of the International scientific and practical conference, Minsk, 1-2 March 2018 / edited by I.V. Kazakova [and others]. I.V. Kazakova [and others]. - Minsk : RIVSH, 2018. - C. 553.

<sup>612</sup> Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. - C. 28.

<sup>613</sup> In the conditions of sanctions it is necessary to increase the localisation of production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10092>

proposed for a total amount of almost Br13 billion of investments"<sup>614</sup>, of which the Ministry of Economy has selected 47 most significant projects with investments of about eight billion Belarusian rubles, the implementation of which will make it possible to produce import-substituting products for more than nine billion Belarusian rubles.

A tight action plan for the development of import-substituting industries for 2022 was formed again in the concern "Bellesbumprom", which "set the task to produce and sell import-substituting products worth \$876.1 million (which is 31% higher than the task of the national target plan)"<sup>615</sup>. The concern intends to solve this task based on the development of new production facilities in the woodworking and pulp and paper industries. Today, 26 enterprises of Bellesbumprom produce such products in 50 commodity items, "including pulp, chipboard, fibreboard (MDF), plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated cardboard and boxes made of it, paper bags, non-corrugated cardboard, newsprint and sanitary paper, and products made of it. For 2021, the growth rate of import-substituting products output by the Concern was 163% by 2020"<sup>616</sup>.

In 2021, interesting import substitution measures were also implemented in Krichevcementosilfer, one of the largest Belarusian enterprises producing construction materials. In particular, they started to actively use sandy cement for this purpose. And compared to 2020, its supply in January-October 2021 increased fourfold - up to 270 thousand tonnes. Local "river sand with high silicon content" was added to this cement instead of foreign slag. The cement grade and its quality remain at the same level, but the cost of the product is significantly reduced"<sup>617</sup>. In other words, at the same production rate, the company increased the profitability of each tonne of cement at the expense of cheap domestic sand.

Another interesting example in this context is the opening in late December 2021 of a site for the production of vacuum tubes for venous blood

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<sup>614</sup> Chervjakov: import substitution acquires special importance as a tool to counteract sanctions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-importozameschenie-priobretaet-osoboe-znachenie-kak-instrument-protivodejstviya-sanktsijam-473567-2021/>

<sup>615</sup> Increasing import substitution and reducing costs: Chairman of "Bellesbumprom" on the tasks for the year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/naraschivanie-importozameschenija-i-snizhenie-zatrat-predsedatel-bellesbumproma-o-zadachah-na-god-485290-2022/>

<sup>616</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" in 2021 increased exports by 48.2% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-uvelichili-eksport-na-482-485259-2022/>

<sup>617</sup> Yevmenkova, Y. "Krichevcementnoshiffer" exported almost 40% of products for 10 months / Y. Yevmenkova // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krichevsementnoshifer-eksportiroval-za-10-mesjatev-pochti-40-produktsii-470044-2021/>

collection at Medplast OJSC in Gomel. This product "is an import substitute - it has not been produced in the country so far, and the needs of medical institutions were met by imported supplies. Modern equipment has been installed at the site. In compliance with all sanitary norms, 121 types of tubes of different sizes and volumes will be produced here"<sup>618</sup>. An important detail: Belarus has become the fourth country in the world, after the USA, China and Turkey, where there is a full production of such medical devices.

The enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry are currently facing particularly strenuous tasks in this area. In 2022, they must produce import-substituting products worth four and a half billion dollars, which is almost 20 per cent more than in 2021. "Solving this task requires a significant increase in exports - up to 70 per cent of the output of goods (\$3.19 billion). The organisations of the Ministry of Industry should master in production almost 400 items of new products"<sup>619</sup>. It should be noted that in the current economic situation many enterprises not only state the emerging problems, but also see in them actual impulses for technological advancement to the opening of new directions and development of new niches.

For example, OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" produced the first batch of gearless winches at the production site of electric motors in March 2022. "Previously, the company purchased such winches in Spain, but due to sanctions restrictions there are interruptions with the import of winches"<sup>620</sup>. Now the JSC plans to increase the output of these components and completely avoid import purchases, as well as to start their sale to other enterprises. Zenit JSC is also actively engaged in import substitution and is working on the development of high-tech electronic components and control stations, which will make it possible to create high-quality import-substituting components that will find their consumers not only in the Belarusian market, but also in other post-Soviet countries.

There are such enterprises in the Belneftekhim Concern as well. In particular, the framework agreement on further modernisation of the enterprise, signed in November 2021 within the framework of the investment forum "Mill of Success" held in Mogilev, is intended to update the work on

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<sup>618</sup> Production of vacuum tubes for venous blood sampling opened in Gomel [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-vakuumnyh-probirok-dlja-zabora-venoznoj-krovi-otkryli-v-gomele-477229-2021/>

<sup>619</sup> Parkhomchik, P. Belarusian industry under sanctions / P. Parkhomchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belorussskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-ministr-o-borbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-i-8121/>

<sup>620</sup> "Mogilevliftmash" has mastered the production of new components and intends to completely avoid import purchases [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevliftmash-osvoil-vypusk-novyh-komplektujuschih-i-nameren-polnostiju-ujti-ot-importnyh-zakupok-494830-2022/>

import substitution in OJSC "Mogilevkhimvolokno". The fact is that "a company with Turkish capital BelEmsa is operating in Mogilev. In its production it uses spunlace, which are produced from the threads of "Mogilevkhimvolokna", but in Rostov region. Then this raw material goes back to Mogilev"<sup>621</sup>. As a result of the agreement reached with BelEmsa, the spunlace will now be moved from one end of Mogilev to the other.

Multifaceted work on import substitution is also characteristic of the Belarusian energy sector, where great opportunities are opening up for organisations in the peat industry. It should be reminded that about two million tonnes of peat are extracted in Belarus every year. The priority here is given to the production of peat fuel, which makes it possible to replace the use of imported natural gas and hard coal. At the same time, "special attention is paid to increasing supplies of these products to organisations in the cement industry and the housing and utilities sector. Thus, over the last five years, the volume of milling peat consumption by housing and utilities boilers has increased 2.5 times: from 25.9 thousand tonnes in 2016 to 75.3 thousand tonnes in 2021"<sup>622</sup>. By the end of 2025, these volumes are expected to increase to 160 thousand tonnes. And the use of peat in the cement industry after the implementation of the peat drying combustion project allowed to increase its consumption from 80 thousand tonnes in 2015 to 358 thousand tonnes in 2021. The output of peat products for non-fuel purposes is also growing. In particular, the Brest region is now working out the issue of creating the production of its new type - cover material for mushroom cultivation. "The total volume of the domestic market for these products in the country is estimated at about 50,000 tonnes per year. Most of this volume was previously imported. Given the availability of our own raw material base, there are opportunities to replace these imports"<sup>623</sup>.

Brest region is also working on the development of other areas of substitution of imported goods for domestic ones. In particular, an appeal was sent to the Academy of Sciences on the need to finalise the technologies of refractory clay enrichment for JSC "Berezastroymaterialy" and quartz sands in Stolin district. Another interesting example concerns small and medium-sized businesses ready to produce import-substituting products. For example, a

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<sup>621</sup> Thanks to new investment projects in Mogilev region will appear about 600 jobs [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/blagodarja-novym-investproektam-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-pojavitsja-okolo-600-rabochih-mest-468164-2021/>

<sup>622</sup> Karankevich, V. Organisations of the Ministry of Energy strengthened the work on import substitution under sanctions / V. Karankevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/organizatsii-minenergo-usilili-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8135>

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.



private investor plans to produce raw materials "from granitoids at RUPP "Granit" to replace Ukrainian basalt raw materials for a Gomel enterprise that produces mineral wool. Riona LLC, a domestic producer of polymer products, is ready to expand production of polypropylene disposable tableware. For this purpose, meat and dairy industry enterprises are attracting 3 million euros of investment from the Development Bank"<sup>624</sup> .

It should be noted that the appeal to the private sector in this context is very relevant. Suffice it to say that in 2021, "637 small and medium-sized businesses [were] involved in the implementation of import-substitution projects in the country. They produced \$2.5 billion worth of products, or almost 36 per cent of the country's total import-substituting production"<sup>625</sup> . So the potential here lies quite serious. In 2022, this interaction between the public sector and small and medium-sized businesses will be significantly expanded so that entrepreneurs can organically integrate into co-operative technological chains to replace foreign suppliers who have left the market. The work here is being done in several areas at once.

In particular, Belarus has already launched a 24/7 operational contact centre at the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation. In addition, the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support of Entrepreneurs has created a nationwide contracting information resource to facilitate the search for organisations interested in cooperative cooperation as much as possible. Finally, another important element of all this work, according to the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, is to bring information "about this area of co-operation to every producer, even the smallest one. <...> It is necessary to painstakingly "manually" promote this idea to each entrepreneur, explain the benefits and advantages of participation in co-operation chains"<sup>626</sup> . And such work is already unfolding in Belarus.

For example, in March 2022, the Minsk Automobile Plant, for which import substitution is an important factor of "strategic security contributing to the rhythmic operation of the plants of the entire Belavtomaz holding and

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<sup>624</sup> Shuleiko told the deputies of Brest Regional Council about the main directions of import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shulejko-rasskazal-deputatam-brestskogo-oblsoboveta-ob-osnovnyh-napravlenijah-importozameschenija-492478-2022/>

<sup>625</sup> Rusinovich, O. On the development of import substitution and industrial cooperation under sanctions / O. Rusinovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/o-razviti-importozameschenija-i-proizvodstvennoj-kooperatsii-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8115/>

<sup>626</sup> Rusinovich, O. On the development of import substitution and industrial cooperation under sanctions / O. Rusinovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/o-razviti-importozameschenija-i-proizvodstvennoj-kooperatsii-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8115/>

dozens of other enterprises in Belarus"<sup>627</sup>, held an exhibition and seminar for small and medium-sized businesses. The event was attended by more than one hundred representatives from 63 organisations that can be involved in cooperation with the flagship of the Belarusian automotive industry. The company is confident that the development of new positions by entrepreneurs will, of course, require both time and investments, but the import-substituting products obtained as a result of this interaction will be in demand not only at the Minsk Automobile Plant, but also by other participants of the automotive market in Belarus, Russia, and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

All these examples show that in 2022 import substitution should become the most important task of every import-related enterprise in order to work ahead of the curve. That is why all regions of Belarus have been given challenging tasks in this regard, which cannot be failed to fulfil.

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<sup>627</sup> Kravchenko: sanctions restrictions will intensify the work on import substitution of components for MAZ [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kravchenko-sanktsionnye-ogranichenija-aktivizirujut-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-komplektujuschih-492137-2022/>

## Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: every vector requires attention

One of the priority tasks of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) in 2021 is to increase the share of companies from the countries of the "far arc" - Asia, Africa, and Latin America - in the exchange turnover. "This is explained by the significant potential that exists in interaction with these partners, and the successful realisation of which promises considerable benefits to both Belarusian exporters and foreign importers"<sup>628</sup>. By the end of 2021, more than 27.5 thousand business entities from 69 countries were registered on the BUTB. The largest number of companies from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine are currently operating on the exchange. As for the dynamics of growth in the number of new traders, in 2021 China was the leader. At the same time, BUTB continued to steadily expand the geography of new participants in the trading sessions held here.

Thus, in mid-September 2021, one of the largest suppliers of wood products to the **Japanese** market - Shimizu Lumber, founded in 1950 and headquartered in Kobe on the island of Honshu - completed the paperwork, becoming the first accredited BUTB resident in Japan. "The company considers its entry into the Belarusian market as an opportunity to diversify the sources of supply of woodworking products, primarily softwood sawn timber, which is in high demand in Japan"<sup>629</sup>. It should be noted that this company already buys significant volumes of wood raw materials and sawn timber in South-East Asia, North America and Europe. Nevertheless, it expects to establish long-term fruitful co-operation with local suppliers in Belarus as well.

At the end of December 2021, the first company from **Pakistan**, Sakafat Forever, was accredited at BUTB. It intends to work here "in both directions - import of goods from Belarus and export of Pakistani products to the Belarusian market"<sup>630</sup>, not excluding trade through BUTB with companies from other countries through transit deals. In the Belarusian market, the Pakistani company will start by purchasing sawn timber, as wood products are

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<sup>628</sup> Zalessky, B. Goal - trajectory of growth. Chronicle of international co-operation / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 272.

<sup>629</sup> Belarusian sawn timber will be supplied to Japan through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-budut-postavljatsja-v-japoniju-cherez-butb-460335-2021/>

<sup>630</sup> BUTB accredits first company from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervuju-kompaniju-iz-pakistana-477387-2021/>

in high demand in this South Asian country. On the other hand, the company has already started working on opportunities to sell rice and other agricultural products, which are key exports from Pakistan, in Belarus.

At the beginning of December 2021, the first lumber purchase transaction was made on BUTB by an **Israeli** company accredited here as a non-resident broker. "The volume of the pilot shipment was 150 cc with delivery to Ashdod port. The pilot deal is expected to become the starting point for regular export deliveries of domestic [Belarusian] lumber products to the Israeli market"<sup>631</sup>. An important detail: in parallel with the export of sawn timber, the Belarusian Metallurgical Plant is currently working on supplies of metal products to Israel. As early as in the first decade of December 2021, a circle of potential Israeli buyers was formed. It is expected that after their accreditation at BUTB, the first purchase orders will also be placed. "In this commodity category, the Israeli market is estimated at about \$4bn, which means that almost any volume can potentially be sold through the exchange platform. In addition, we [in Israel] are currently experiencing a real construction boom, and the demand for rebar and steel structures is very high"<sup>632</sup>.

At the end of November 2021, **Indian** manufacturers of facing materials, spare parts for agricultural machinery and industrial equipment expressed serious interest in trading their products on the BUTB. In particular, they were talking about listing ceramic tiles, porcelain tiles and epoxy mortars produced in India, which are in significant demand among Belarusian construction organisations. Considering that in 2021, construction industry products have been the subject of transit transactions on BUTB more than once - most often between Russian and Baltic residents, if Indian companies place bids for sale, there is a very high probability that buyers for them will be found quite quickly. "In addition to building materials, Indian companies have announced their readiness to put bearings, thrust rings, spigots and other spare parts for tractors, cars and construction equipment on the exchange. LED lamps and equipment for the confectionery industry are also among the promising commodity positions"<sup>633</sup>.

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<sup>631</sup> BUTB broker in Israel made the first transaction [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/broker-butb-v-izraile-sovershil-pervuju-sdelku-473363-2021/>

<sup>632</sup> BUTB is working out the possibility of supplying Belarusian sawn timber and metal products to Israel [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatvayet-vozmozhnost-postavok-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-i-metalloproduktov-v-izrail-466415-2021/>

<sup>633</sup> Indian manufacturers of building materials and promotional equipment are interested in B2B-platform BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskie-proizvoditeli-strojmaterialov-i-promoborudovanija-zainteresovalis-b2b-ploschadkoj-butb-471997-2021/>

Another interesting example of expanding the geography of BUTB's business co-operation is in European countries. In December 2021, an agreement was reached to develop co-operation in the field of exchange trading of agricultural products with the **Serbian** Novi Sad commodity exchange NSCOMEX. The parties agreed to work out the issue of mutual access of Serbian and Belarusian companies to the trades, which will contribute to the growth of trade turnover between Belarus and Serbia as a whole. For this purpose, the agro-industrial enterprises of both countries will be provided with an additional tool for export-import operations. The BUTB sees great prospects in reaching such agreements, as "the most effective way to promote exchange services abroad is accreditation of non-resident brokers, who take over the issues of attracting new companies and, as a rule, provide assistance with settlements and logistics"<sup>634</sup>. It should be assumed that the results of this interaction between the two exchanges will not be long in coming as early as 2022.

In January 2022, the geography of electronic transactions on BUTB expanded to 70 countries. This happened after the first **Indian** company - Ark Packaging Solutions - was accredited here. It should be noted that in the whole of 2021, five new countries - Brazil, Gibraltar, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea and Gibraltar - were added to BUTB. Also, "at the end of 2021, Lithuania, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Poland, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Slovakia and China became the top ten largest markets for Belarusian goods"<sup>635</sup>. It is clear that various products from Belarus were supplied to different markets through BUTB: lumber, fuel pellets, rapeseed oil, sugar beet products to European countries; lumber products, wooden poles, stakes and tannery semi-finished products "vet-blue" to British buyers; dried milk, butter, cheese and oilseed products to Russian consumers. As for the People's Republic of China, "whose market is considered by BUTB to be among the most promising"<sup>636</sup>, the leaders so far are lumber, rapeseed oil and sugar. But, to all appearances, in 2022, this balance may seriously change.

The fact is that **China is one** of the countries whose presence on the BUTB platform is growing rapidly. Suffice it to say that in 2021, the

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<sup>634</sup> BUTB and the Serbian Commodity Exchange agreed on co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tovarnaja-birzha-serbii-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-475901-2021/>

<sup>635</sup> BUTB expanded the geography of exchange trading to 70 countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirila-geografiju-birzhevoj-torgovli-do-70-stran-479981-2022>

<sup>636</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Reference point of co-operation - far abroad / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Aplikovane vedecke novinky - 2021". Volume 7: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times. And there were several reasons for that. Among them - "the number of Chinese companies accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform almost doubled. At the same time, two of them received the status of brokers and are engaged in promoting Belarusian products on the PRC market"<sup>637</sup>. For reference, 64 companies from the Celestial Empire were accredited on the BUTB as of 1 December 2021. In January 2022, Zhejiang Pinke Textile Co., Ltd became a new BUTB broker in China. The company plans to attract buyers of agro-industrial products to the auction and considers rapeseed oil and meat and dairy products as the most promising products in this regard.

In this context, the intention of the China SAMS Engineering Corporation (CAMSE), announced in January 2022, to purchase meat and other products of the agro-industrial complex using an exchange mechanism, also looks promising. It should be recalled that SAMSE is the largest shareholder of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone". This, of course, opens wide opportunities for BUTB to co-operate in the field of logistics. "Given the existing infrastructure and location, Velikiy Kamen could become an ideal logistics hub for consolidation of containerised cargo with goods that are sold to China through the exchange. First of all, these are sawn timber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, meat and flax fibre"<sup>638</sup>. An important detail: a subsidiary of SAMSE bought four million dollars worth of beef from Belarus in 2021. In 2022, it plans to further increase purchases not only of meat, but also of other agricultural products produced in Belarus. They expect to expand the range of suppliers and conclude deals on more favourable terms with the help of BUTB.

The next important trend is the expansion of the list of products involved in mutual trade. Previously, Chinese representatives were more interested in Belarusian sawn timber, while now sales of sugar and oilseed products through BUTB are growing. Another important point is the holding of special trade sessions focused on the Chinese market, with delivery to the final buyer. In addition, at the end of 2021, thanks to the implementation of a set of measures to develop exchange trade with China, it became possible to specify the cost of goods and settle exchange transactions in Chinese yuan. In January 2022, the first such export transaction on the BUTB took place. The seller was a

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<sup>637</sup> New BUTB broker in China will focus on imports of Belarusian agricultural products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-broker-butb-v-kitae-sosredotochitsja-na-importe-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-479109-2022/>

<sup>638</sup> BUTB is ready to ensure uninterrupted supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-obespechit-besperebojnye-postavki-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-kitaj-481488-2022/>

woodworking company from China, and the buyer was a European trader supplying lumber products to the European Union, Asia and Africa. "As a result of the transaction, softwood sawn timber was sold for a total of 1.8 million Chinese yuan, or \$287 thousand in equivalent"<sup>639</sup>. It should be assumed that this first successful experience of settlements in the national currency will become a good example for all Chinese companies accredited at BUTB, as in this case the currency risks of the transaction participants are reduced, as well as the time of receipt of funds to the seller's account is shortened.

The following fact complements the picture of interaction between the Belarusian exchange platform and Chinese partners. In January 2022, the first transit transaction between Chinese residents, who decided to use this trading platform to minimise the risk of counterparty default, was made on BUTB. As a result, "a company from Hong Kong sold a shipment of 80 tonnes of beef to a company from mainland China. The transaction amounted to \$354 thousand. Previously, such transactions were concluded mainly to companies from Russia and the Baltic States to insure foreign trade risks"<sup>640</sup>. Of course, this fact very eloquently testifies to the growing confidence in the Belarusian exchange platform on the part of representatives of Chinese business. And there is every reason to believe that the volumes of transit trade with the participation of Chinese residents on the BUTB will only increase. As well as in other areas of cooperation.

Another outcome of 2021 is that the Russian vector of interaction continues to be a priority for the BUTB, as **Russia** retained the first place in terms of the amount of exchange turnover with Belarus. Moreover, as of 1 January 2022, almost half of the 5,539 foreign companies accredited on this exchange platform were Russian - 2,745. This also indicates that "exchange trading is gradually becoming one of the drivers of Belarusian-Russian integration and a very promising project implemented within the framework of the Union State"<sup>641</sup>. And, to all appearances, this positive trend will only steadily gain momentum in 2022.

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<sup>639</sup> The first transaction in Chinese yuan was made on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. -URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-v-kitajskih-juanjah-sovershili-na-butb-481365-2022/>

<sup>640</sup> The first transit transaction between Chinese residents was made on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervaja-tranzitnaja-sdelka-mezhdu-rezidentami-kitaja-sovershena-na-butb-474701-2021/>

<sup>641</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. Exchange trade as a promising integration project of interaction between regions / B.L. Zaleskii// *Materialy XVII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Wysztalcenie i nauka bez granic - 2021"*, Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 10.

For example, in January 2022, in order to increase exchange turnover and the number of Russian traders, the third broker on the Russian market, Alor Asset Management, which has many years of experience in providing brokerage services, was accredited on the BUTB. Among its partners are such major trading platforms as the Moscow Exchange and the St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. With the help of the new broker BUTB plans to significantly increase the inflow of clients from the neighbouring country, as well as to expand the list of Belarusian products sold in Russia. And this is despite the fact that in 2021 a wide range of goods was already supplied to the Russian market through BUTB. These included butter, milk powder, oilseed products and cement, which accounted for about 80 per cent of export sales. Plus, "Russian participants regularly purchased vet-blue leather, scrap metal, construction materials and foodstuffs through the exchange"<sup>642</sup>. The appearance of the new broker should give new impulses to the partnership of the Belarusian exchange in Russia.

In 2022, BUTB will also prioritise such a new and promising area as the sale of Belarusian-made feed additives - L-lysine sulphate, wheat gluten and premixes - in the Union State. This will be facilitated by BUTB's partnership with the Belarusian National Biotechnology Company (BNBC), which is now rapidly increasing exports of feed additives. In December 2021, the co-operation of BNBK "with the stock exchange moved to a new stage. At that time, the first deal was made to export L-lysine sulphate to Russia"<sup>643</sup>. And in January 2022 the amount of export transactions of BNBK has already doubled. So the prospects here are very encouraging.

Attracting potential buyers of Belarusian goods from Russian regions will remain a clear priority for the BUTB in 2022, although in 2021, the volume of exchange trade with Russian regions grew very significantly, some of them by several times. For example, trade turnover with Moscow Region, where Belarusian companies supplied butter, flour, crushed stone, and tannery semi-finished products, doubled. The same growth rate was observed in Leningrad Oblast. One of the reasons for this success appears to be that as of the beginning of December 2021, 296 business entities of the Leningrad Region were "accredited on BUTB, about one third of which regularly participate in trading. Portland cement and meat and dairy products are mainly supplied to this region

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<sup>642</sup> BUTB expands the network of brokers in Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-set-brokerov-v-rossii-480545-2022/>

<sup>643</sup> BNBK increases exports of feed additives through the exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bnbk-naraschivaet-eksport-kormovyh-dobavok-cherez-birzhu-482306-2022/>



through the exchange platform, while ferrous metal products and coal are purchased"<sup>644</sup>. In 2022, this range of exchange trading will be significantly expanded to include confectionery, packaging materials and office furniture. The Chelyabinsk Region also has good indicators in this respect, 64 representatives of which are accredited on the BUTB, and "the amount of transactions made by them reached \$76 million" .<sup>645</sup>

There is every reason to believe that in 2022, entrepreneurs from Bashkortostan will start to take an active part in the BUTB bidding process. After all, about 70 Bashkir companies engaged in ferrous metallurgy, petrochemicals, agriculture and light industry took part in a business seminar held in December 2021, where they were able to see for themselves how the active use of the exchange mechanism in cross-border trade has a positive impact on export volumes, contributes to the diversification of its structure and creates a favourable environment for strengthening business contacts.

Udmurtia is another Russian region that intends to significantly intensify its interaction with the BUTB in 2022. At the end of 2021, several Udmurt producers of agricultural products, metal products, machinery and equipment expressed their readiness to be accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform. In particular, a specific agreement to use BUTB as an additional sales channel for sawn timber and wood panels in Belarus, the European Union and Asian countries was reached with two leading Udmurt forest products producers - Orion LLC and Vostok-resource TPK LLC. In addition, the sale of sawn timber and board products to third countries through transit deals is being considered as another direction of BUTB's interaction with Udmurtia's timber enterprises. "In this respect, the most promising markets are the Baltic States and China, where BUTB efforts have already formed a circle of regular buyers"<sup>646</sup>. There are about 120 such companies in the Baltic States alone, and the total amount of transactions in 2021 exceeded 300 million dollars.

The development of exchange trade as a factor contributing to the growth of trade turnover was also discussed in February 2022 at a meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia. During the discussion, it was noted that the most promising area of exchange

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<sup>644</sup> Enterprises of the Leningrad region intend to sell confectionery and furniture on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-leninskoy-oblasti-namereny-prodavat-na-butb-konditerskie-izdeliya-i-mebel-472442-2021/>

<sup>645</sup> Development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will contribute to the growth of commodity turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitiye-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusjii-i-bashkortostanom-posposobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

<sup>646</sup> BUTB plans to trade in lumber products from Udmurtia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-torgovat-piloproductsiej-iz-udmurtii-476203-2021/>

interaction is the segment of the agro-industrial complex, as "Belarusian enterprises engaged in grain processing would certainly be interested in buying these products in Karachay-Cherkessia. First of all, these are wheat, oats, buckwheat, and maize. Besides, Belarus has a well-developed production of vegetable oils, so seeds of rape, sunflower and other oilseeds are also in great demand at the stock exchange trades"<sup>647</sup>. Apparently, these proposals have found their place in the roadmap for the development of co-operation for 2022-2024 adopted by the parties. Exchange trading will become another tool with the help of which Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia plan to increase the volume of trade turnover and expand the range of mutual supplies in the near future.

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<sup>647</sup> BUTB proposes to develop exchange trade in agricultural products between Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predlagaet-razvivat-birzhevuju-torgovlju-selhozproduksiej-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-karachaevu-483814-2022/>

## **Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: the potential of the exchange platform in the sphere of foreign trade is huge**

The results of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) in 2021 showed that the use of the exchange mechanism is increasingly contributing to both the creation of equal and competitive conditions for doing business within the country, as well as the increase in effective procurement activities, and the expansion of markets for Belarusian products. Recall that "by the end of 2021, more than 27.5 thousand business entities from 69 countries were registered on the BUTB. <...> At the same time, the geography of new participants of trading sessions held here continued to expand steadily"<sup>648</sup>. In this regard, one of the main tasks of the exchange in 2022 is to assist domestic enterprises in promoting their goods for export. For this purpose, "special attention should be paid to realising the Exchange's potential in the sphere of foreign trade. First of all, it is the diversification of exports of Belarusian goods with a focus on the People's Republic of China and other Asian countries..."<sup>649</sup>. And, it should be said, BUTB is already taking energetic measures to solve these tasks.

As for China, "in 2021, the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times at once"<sup>650</sup>, and at the end of the first quarter of 2022, for example, this country became one of the three largest buyers of rapeseed oil on the BUTB. "This was fuelled by an expanding pool of Chinese buyers, as well as an increase in the number of transactions made by them. As a result, compared to the same period in 2021, rapeseed oil sales to the PRC increased by 67 per cent in value terms to \$2.2 million."<sup>651</sup>.

In the first half of 2022, the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover exceeded over \$40 million, which is one and a half times more than in the same period last year. Since the beginning of the year, 20 new residents came to the exchange. Now there are almost 90 of them. About half regularly participate

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<sup>648</sup> Zaleskii, B.L. From expanding geography - to deepening cooperation / B.L. Zaleskii // Proceedings of the XVIII International Scientific Conference, Present Research and Development - 2022, 17 - 25 January 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 6.

<sup>649</sup> MART outlined the priorities of exchange trade development [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mart-oboznachil-prioritety-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-488282-2022/>

<sup>650</sup> Zaleskii, B. From trust to co-operation. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 135.

<sup>651</sup> China has become one of the three largest buyers of rapeseed oil on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-voshel-v-trojku-krupnejshih-pokupatelej-rapsovogomasla-na-butb-493049-2022/>

in trading, three have the status of brokers. "The most demanded by the Chinese were softwood sawn timber and unrefined rapeseed oil. Metal products - rolled sheets and seamless steel pipes - were sent from China to Belarus"<sup>652</sup> .

Another interesting fact: BUTB concluded the first deal to sell skimmed milk powder to China in July 2022. "The volume of the pilot batch was 75 tonnes and the amount was \$250 thousand. The purpose of the trial transaction is to practically work out the issues of mutual settlements and logistics, which will make it possible in the future not only to increase the volume of purchases of Belarusian dried milk, but also to organise deliveries of other types of dairy products, such as butter, cream, cheese and whey, to the Chinese market"<sup>653</sup> . So far, Chinese companies have used the Belarusian exchange platform mainly to purchase lumber, which has prevented them from realising the full potential of exchange trade between the two countries. The expansion of the commodity nomenclature creates additional opportunities for increasing the volume of mutual trade, so the first successful experience of exporting milk powder to China through the exchange can be subsequently extrapolated to other dairy products represented on the exchange platform. On the plus side, Chinese consumers have already become convinced of the high quality of Belarusian dairy products by buying them on the OTC market.

In June 2022, BUTB in China gained another international partner - the Xinjiang Asia-European International Trade Centre (AEEX), which is the operator of the Asia Europe Exchange electronic trading platform. The goal is to unite efforts and jointly promote trade turnover between Belarus and China. The priority areas of cooperation include cooperation in promoting Belarusian-made goods in China, informing Chinese companies about opportunities to find business partners in Belarus through the BUTB platform, and exchanging analytical and statistical data reflecting the current situation in the commodity markets of the two countries. As for the commodity items promising for mutual trade, "the most liquid Belarusian commodity is sawn timber, which is in consistently high demand in China, especially in the construction sector. In this case, delivery of goods purchased at BUTB is possible by railway transport along the New Silk Road. In addition, it is planned to use the AEECH network of business contacts in the Asia-Pacific region to diversify exports of

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<sup>652</sup> Markina, T. What Belarusian enterprises enter the Chinese market with / T. Markina // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/s-chem-belorusskie-predprijatija-vyhodjat-na-rynok-kitaja-513455-2022>

<sup>653</sup> Belarusian dairy products sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskaja-molochnaja-produktsija-prodana-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-512556-2022/>

Belarusian forest products"<sup>654</sup>. Special attention is paid to the prospects of participation of Chinese suppliers in the import substitution exchange. In particular, it is expected that the entry of Chinese manufacturers of spare parts and technological equipment will increase the concentration of supply of these products and expand their range, which will have a positive impact on the price level for Belarusian consumers.

One more fact. In April 2022, China Merchants CHN-BLR Commerce and Logistics Company (CMCB), a member of China Merchants Group, signed a memorandum with BUTB, which provides for cooperation between the parties in the field of transport and trade logistics. The parties proceed from the premise that an extensive logistics infrastructure and well-established transport links are the basic conditions for the functioning of the Belarusian-Chinese commodity exchange market. Therefore, it is only through the synergy of electronic exchange trading technologies and extensive logistics capabilities that the potential of bilateral cooperation can be fully realised.

Since July 2022, the Chinese side has been providing assistance in attracting suppliers and customers from China to the electronic import substitution platform of the Commodity Exchange. In order to optimise logistics costs, the CMCB and the BUTB will work out alternative routes for the delivery of Belarusian goods purchased on the exchange to China using different modes of transport. The prospects of this direction are also evidenced by the results of the analysis of purchase orders placed on the BUTB import substitution platform. "This is especially characteristic of such categories of goods as electrical equipment, communications equipment, as well as components and materials for industry. So far, only a few suppliers of import-substituting products from the PRC are working on the exchange trading platform, but their number may increase in the near future. This is primarily due to Chinese companies already accredited at BUTB, but participating in bidding in other commodity sections"<sup>655</sup>. As for logistics issues, the delivery of goods from Belarus to China and back is carried out normally.

Speaking about the implementation of plans to diversify exchange exports by reaching end consumers in the Middle East, we note that until recently, residents of Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt were the most active on the

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<sup>654</sup> BUTB and China's AEEX will co-operate in e-commerce [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskaja-ploschadka-aeex-budut-sotrudnichat-v-sfere-elektronnoj-torgovli-510290-2022/>

<sup>655</sup> Chinese company will help to attract suppliers and customers to the BUTB import substitution site [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-kompanija-pomozhet-privlech-postavschikov-i-zakazchikov-na-ploschadku-importozameschenija-514280-2022>

Belarusian exchange platform. In February 2022, the United Arab Emirates was added to this list, when the first deal was made on the BUTB to sell lumber products to this country of the Persian Gulf. During an export trade session, a company from Abu Dhabi purchased a trial batch of hardwood sawn timber from a Belarusian woodworking company. The goods were delivered to the country of destination by the buyer. Now BUTB sees its primary task in gaining a foothold in the Emirati market by increasing the number of accredited companies and the volume of deliveries. After all, this Middle Eastern country is an international trade and logistics hub. "This means that by supplying their products to Abu Dhabi, Dubai or Sharjah, Belarusian companies automatically get access to potential buyers from Africa, Southeast Asia and other regions"<sup>656</sup>.

In March 2022, participating in the Dubai International Wood & Wood Machinery Show in the UAE, BUTB representatives held a number of productive meetings with companies interested in business partnership. As a result, "Beston Wood Industries LLC, a major importer and distributor of timber products in the UAE, announced its readiness to enter the Belarusian market through the exchange platform, and Good Wood LLC, an Egyptian manufacturer of furniture boards and door panels, intends to be accredited at BUTB for the purchase of softwood edging boards and other products of Belarusian woodworking companies"<sup>657</sup>. BUTB is now focusing its efforts on developing new markets and expanding its presence in countries whose share in imports of wood products was previously insignificant. For this reason, apart from China, where sawn timber supplies have already tripled, such Asian countries as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, Lebanon, and Turkey, which are ready to increase imports of Belarusian sawn timber products, are seen as very effective. Thus, "in the first three months of 2022, more than half of last year's total volume has already been sold to Azerbaijan alone"<sup>658</sup>. Recall that in mid-May 2022, more than 28.5 thousand companies from 70 countries were already accredited at BUTB. At present, "about 5 thousand items of goods are traded

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<sup>656</sup> Belarusian sawn timber first sold in the UAE through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-vpervye-prodany-v-oe-cherez-butb-485480-2022/>

<sup>657</sup> BUTB refocuses sawn timber exports to the Middle East and North Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-pereorientiruet-eksport-pilomaterialov-v-strany-blizhnego-vostoka-i-severnoj-afriki-491054-2022/>

<sup>658</sup> BUTB expands the geography of export: the first deals were made by UAE and Switzerland [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-geografiju-eksporta-pervye-sdelki-proveli-oe-i-shvejtsarija-493578-2022/>

here, with more than 400 thousand transactions per year"<sup>659</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that these figures will only increase in 2022.

Speaking about the promotion of BUTB's interests in Central Asia, it should be noted that in March 2022 the Belarusian exchange platform accredited a new broker in Kazakhstan - First-KO LLP, which became the 16th in the network of BUTB exchange brokers representing 11 countries. It is expected that the arrival of this broker will increase the number of traders from Kazakhstan, of which 85 were accredited as of 1 March 2022, and will also contribute to the growth of Belarusian-Kazakhstani trade turnover. For reference, we note that in 2021 "the exchange turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan amounted to about \$30 million. The Kazakh market was mainly supplied with meat and dairy products, leather goods and sugar, while the most demanded goods for Belarusian buyers were coal and ferrous metal products"<sup>660</sup>. The new broker is going to simplify the work of Kazakh enterprises in the Belarusian market as much as possible and focus on goods for which Belarus is a leader in the post-Soviet space, such as dairy products, potatoes, tyres, and spare parts for special equipment.

Uzbekistan is another partner of BUTB in Central Asia. For reference, we note that as of 1 April 2022, 5,673 foreign companies, including 40 Uzbek companies, were accredited to participate in trading on the Belarusian exchange platform. And in the same April, the first deal was made here to export chemical industry products to this Central Asian country. As part of the trade session, "an Uzbek company purchased 20 tonnes of polyacrylonitrile fibre on terms of shipment from the warehouse of the manufacturing plant. Previously, the Uzbek market through the exchange platform was supplied exclusively with goods of agricultural group - primarily meat and meat by-products"<sup>661</sup>. Given the fact that synthetic fibres are in stable demand among Uzbek textile industry enterprises, there is every reason to believe that the exchange transaction will be the first step of Belarusian exporters to expand the potential of this sector in the Uzbek market. The reasons for such a conclusion can be seen in the rather high level of development of the Uzbek

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<sup>659</sup> More than 28.5 thousand companies from 70 countries are accredited on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovano-bolee-285-tys-kompanij-iz-70-stran-502289-2022/>

<sup>660</sup> BUTB accredited a new broker in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-novogo-brokera-v-kazahstane-490807-2022>

<sup>661</sup> BUTB expanded the commodity nomenclature of exports to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirila-tovarnuju-nomenklaturu-eksporta-v-uzbekistan-494941-2022/>

textile, garment and knitwear industry and the ever-growing demand of local enterprises for quality raw materials.

BUTB took another interesting step towards expanding the potential of exchange trading with Asia and the Middle East in February 2022, when it registered as a new broker the Belarusian CJSC Meat and Dairy Company, which is an official exporter of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus. This company represents the interests of all Belarusian exporters of meat and dairy products. Joining its efforts with BUTB can certainly ensure more efficient work of domestic agricultural organisations in the markets of non-CIS countries, as well as contribute to the expansion of the geography of sales. In this case we are talking not only about intensive work in the Chinese market. Apparently, other Asian countries, as well as the Middle East region, will not be neglected. These are areas with great export potential, which <...> together with the exchange will have to be unlocked"<sup>662</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that in the near future, this interaction will be highly effective in terms of increasing Belarusian exports to Asian countries.

And let us consider one more topical topic concerning BUTB in this context. Today, the Belarusian side is looking for new forms of industrial and business development. Import substitution is one of such solutions in 2022. This process has already involved not only large enterprises, but also private, medium and small businesses. "Import substitution has become the most important task of every import-related enterprise to work ahead of the curve"<sup>663</sup>. And there are already some interesting examples.

In particular, BUTB has been operating an import substitution platform for more than three months, which is gaining momentum, proving its effectiveness and which already has about three hundred companies from Central Asia and the Far East, including from the People's Republic of China and the Commonwealth of Independent States. During this time, "since 27 May 2022, 6387 transactions worth Br46.6 million have been made on the BUTB import substitution platform"<sup>664</sup>. In June-August, the structure of sales of import-substituting goods was dominated by products for construction,

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<sup>662</sup> The official exporter of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food became a broker of BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ofitsialnyj-eksporter-minselhozproda-stal-brokerom-butb-482741-2022/>

<sup>663</sup> Zalesky, B.L. The most important task of every enterprise / B.L. Zalesky // *Materialy XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Nauka: teoria i praktyka - 2022"*, Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 15.

<sup>664</sup> About 300 companies from the countries of Central Asia and the Far East work on the site of import substitution BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-300-kompanij-iz-stran-srednej-azii-i-dalnego-vostoka-rabotajut-na-ploschadke-importozameschenija-521269-2022/>



components and materials for industry, electrical connections and electrical equipment, heating equipment and air conditioning systems, as well as measuring devices and workwear. "In particular, plastic and rubber products, adhesives, LED lighting fixtures, and paint and varnish products are in particular demand from customers. These groups of goods account for more than a quarter of the total amount of transactions made on the exchange floor since its launch"<sup>665</sup>. The vast majority of suppliers are domestic small and medium-sized businesses, which, thanks to the import substitution service, received an additional sales channel and were able to find new business partners, including among large public sector companies. Also, "the Belarusian Metallurgical Plant and Bellesbumprom enterprises are now successfully operating on the site"<sup>666</sup>. In the second half of August, a new company from China was accredited to participate in the bidding at the import substitution site.

BUTB expects to establish exchange trade with Pakistan through the import substitution platform. The plan is to work out the issue of selling sawn timber, which is in high demand in the construction and furniture industries, to the Pakistani market, as well as exporting petrochemical products, which are already actively purchased by companies from India. Pakistan is a new market for BUTB, but it has great potential both in terms of sales of Belarusian goods and imports of Pakistani products. To this end, the first brokerage company from Pakistan, AP Sakafat Forever, was accredited with BUTB in July 2022 and has been participating in the export exchange trading of lumber products as a trade visitor since December 2021. "As a professional bidder, it intends to attract buyers of sawn timber and agricultural group goods to the exchange platform, as well as to assist Pakistani producers of rice, non-ferrous metals and textiles in finding business partners in Belarus"<sup>667</sup>. With the help of the new broker, it is possible to establish supplies of Belarusian synthetic fibre, polyethylene, ammonium sulphate and other chemical and petrochemical products to Pakistan. The brokerage company has planned "a turnover of about \$150 million and will try to use all exchange instruments to achieve it"<sup>668</sup>. A

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<sup>665</sup> In the leaders of sales on the site of import substitution BUTB goods for construction and industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-liderah-prodazh-na-ploschadke-importozameschenija-butb-tovary-dlja-stroitelstva-i-promyshlennosti-520451-2022>

<sup>666</sup> Parkhomchik told what enterprises work on the site of import substitution BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-rasskazal-kakie-predprijatija-rabotajut-na-ploschadke-importozameschenija-butb-521262-2022/>

<sup>667</sup> BUTB plans to establish trade between Belarus and Pakistan through the import substitution platform [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-torgovlju-belarusi-i-pakistan-cherез-ploschadku-importozameschenija-515035-2022/>

<sup>668</sup> BUTB accredited first broker from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovan-pervyj-broker-iz-pakistan-519087-2022/>

Pakistani company, which produces sports equipment, expressed its desire to enter the Belarusian market by placing its products in the electronic catalogue of import-substituting goods. As for transactions, the option of bidding through a broker is being considered at the initial stage.

The Iraqi company Al Seraj Al Mubeen Co. plans to work out the issue of organising supplies of Belarusian dried milk and beef to Iraq. The firm "specialises in import and wholesale of foodstuffs, the demand for which has grown significantly against the background of continuing instability in the world food market"<sup>669</sup>. As a result, there was a need to expand the geography of purchases, and Belarus is seen as one of the most promising markets.

Another country that is very active in the BUTB in working out commodity directions with Belarusian partners is Switzerland. In particular, in the first half of 2022, agricultural products accounted for 95 per cent of Belarus's exchange trade with Switzerland, "which is a net importer of Belarusian goods, as all 16 Swiss companies accredited at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange act exclusively as buyers at the auction. In January-June of this year, the sum of transactions made by Swiss companies on the exchange floor totalled about \$6 million, of which exports of Belarusian rapeseed oil and "vet-blue" leather brought more than \$5 million"<sup>670</sup>. This is evidence of the high demand for Belarusian agro-industrial products in the Swiss market and the significant potential for deepening cooperation in this area. Not only rapeseed oil, but also other no less liquid items, such as milk powder and whey, cattle meat, and beet molasses. It remains to add that agricultural products are by no means the only group of Belarusian goods that are in demand in Switzerland. There are other directions as well.

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<sup>669</sup> Iraqi company intends to buy Belarusian dried milk and beef [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/irakskaja-kompanija-namerena-zakupat-belorusskoe-suhoe-moloko-i-govjadinu-515773-2022>

<sup>670</sup> BUTB: agricultural products accounted for 95% of the exchange turnover of Belarus and Switzerland [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-produktsija-selskogo-hozjajstva-sostavila-95-birzheвого-tovarooborota-belarusi-i-shvejtsarii-515347-2022>

## Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Asian vector expands co-operation

Increasing supplies of Belarusian goods to Asian and Middle Eastern countries is one of the top-priority tasks of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB). Figures show that at the end of 10 months of 2022, exports of domestic products via the BUTB to a number of Asian countries increased significantly: to Singapore - 6.6 times, to Turkey - 21 times, to Uzbekistan - 30 times.

In this context, in 2022, the **Chinese** segment of electronic exchange trading on the BUTB was also significantly activated. However, even "in 2021 the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times"<sup>671</sup>. And in October 2022, 100 companies from China, three of which have the status of stock brokers, were already working on the BUTB. In the first nine months of 2022, the amount of their transactions totalled \$27 million. At the same time, more than \$24 million was provided by sawn timber - mainly sawn softwood planks. The 100th Chinese company accredited to participate in trading on BUTB was China Township Enterprise Co., Ltd. (CTEC), which at the initial stage intends to use the exchange platform to purchase wood products. In fact, since the end of October 2022, BUTB has resumed the practice of holding special trading sessions for the sale of sawn timber to China with delivery in containers to the destination. "In addition to sawn timber, this year the exchange also supplied unrefined rapeseed oil and skimmed milk powder to China. The total amount of transactions totalled over \$3 million"<sup>672</sup>. Taking into account that one of CTEC's activities in China is trade in agro-industrial complex products, it is not excluded that in the future the Chinese company will master this segment of the exchange commodity market.

Returning to the topic of export supplies of sawn timber products to China, we note that following a special trade session held in the first decade of November 2022 at BUTB, more than 20 thousand cubic metres of Belarusian-made sawn timber were sold to the Chinese market. Eleven residents of China took part in this session. "At the same time, several bases of goods delivery were provided for the convenience of buyers, namely the cities of Taicang, Tianjin, Shanghai and Changsha. The key feature of the special

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<sup>671</sup> Zaleski, B. Systemic partnerships. Specifics of economic interaction between Belarus and the post-Soviet republics / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 45.

<sup>672</sup> The 100th company from China has been accredited at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-100-ja-kompanija-iz-kitaja-530408-2022/>

trading sessions is that they are targeted at a specific outlet market -- in this case China."<sup>673</sup> . In December 2022, at the end of a special export trading session on the Belarusian stock exchange, these trades became record-breaking both in terms of the amount of transactions made and the volume of resources sold to the Chinese market. This is more than 60 thousand cubic metres of sawn timber "with a total value of 85.5 million yuan, or \$12.3 million in equivalent <...>. As a result, residents of the PRC and Singapore purchased 10 lots of 62.2 thousand cubic metres of sawn timber, i.e. half of all the lumber products put up for auction"<sup>674</sup> . It should be noted that special trading sessions for the sale of sawn timber to China have been held on the BUTB since December 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus in order to diversify export supplies of products of domestic woodworking enterprises and increase export revenues through the use of a competitive mechanism of exchange trading.

For reference, 103 Chinese companies were already accredited on BUTB as of 1 November 2022. Among the new participants of the Belarusian electronic platform was a company from China, which bought tanned semi-finished product "vet-blue" for the first time on BUTB. Thus, the geography of sales of this product through this platform has expanded to eight countries. "The tanned semi-finished product "vet-blue" is in stable demand among tannery producers all over the world. Companies from Russia, Kazakhstan, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Lithuania and Poland regularly buy this product at exchange trades. In January-October this year, the total amount of transactions totalled \$6.5 million"<sup>675</sup> . So far, such products have not yet been sent from Belarus to China. Apparently, after the pilot deal, new supplies of tanned leather are not far off.

Another interesting fact. In November 2022, a large Chinese trading company with headquarters in Chongqing, specialising in the supply of cattle meat, chicken and seafood to the southern provinces of China, expressed interest in bidding for agricultural products at BUTB. The firm "has an extensive network of suppliers around the world, including Belarus, but all relationships were put on pause during the pandemic. Using the BUTB trading

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<sup>673</sup> Companies from China and Singapore purchased sawmill products worth more than \$4 million at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/piloproduktsiju-na-bolee-chem-4-mln-priobreli-na-butb-kompanii-iz-kitaja-i-singapura-533965-2022/>

<sup>674</sup> Saw timber worth \$12.3 million sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilomaterialy-na-123-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-541419-2022/>

<sup>675</sup> Now also China: the geography of exports of Belarusian leather products through BUTB has expanded [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/teper-i-kitaj-geografija-eksporta-belorusskoj-kozhevennoj-produktsii-cherez-butb-rasshirilas-533733-2022/>

platform, where leading domestic suppliers of meat and meat products are represented, the Chinese importer intends to establish new business contacts and resume purchases of frozen beef in Belarus"<sup>676</sup>. Moreover, in recent years Belarusian products have gained popularity in the Chinese market and are in high demand among Chinese consumers. Therefore, the company does not expect any problems with sales. In addition to the office and wholesale outlets in Chongqing, the company has representative offices in other provinces of China, which will ensure the widest possible geography of sales of meat purchased at the exchange.

In order to facilitate the development of Belarus-China e-commerce, BUTB continues to expand the list of partners from the Middle Kingdom to further strengthen trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. In particular, in September 2022, BUTB signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Chinese branch of the BRICS Institute for Future Networking Studies (BIFNC) to promote more active involvement of Belarusian and Chinese companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises, in cross-border exchange trading. "One of the promising areas of interaction could be the accreditation of BIFNC as a broker. This will allow not only to fully utilise BIFNC's wide network of business contacts to attract sellers and buyers from China to exchange trading, but also to conclude transactions on their behalf, thus ensuring the growth of exchange trade turnover between Belarus and China"<sup>677</sup>. It is expected that at the initial stage the main focus will be on supplies of Belarusian sawn timber and fuel pellets to China as the most demanded commodity items in the Chinese market.

Another new partner for BUTB in November 2022 is the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisors of China. The Chinese side is interested in such highly liquid commodity items as sawn timber, rapeseed oil, and vet-blue leather, as "in the near future, the level of demand will increase, including for Belarusian-made goods that have proven themselves in the Chinese market"<sup>678</sup>. So the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade appears to be reaching a new qualitative level.

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<sup>676</sup> A large Chinese importer of meat and seafood is interested in co-operation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-mjasa-i-moreproduktov-zainteresovalsja-sotrudnicestvom-s-butb-536236-2022/>

<sup>677</sup> BUTB and the China branch of the BRICS Institute will promote the development of electronic exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskij-filial-instituta-briks-budut-sodejstvovat-razvitiju-elektronnoj-birzhevoj-torgovli-525751-2022/>

<sup>678</sup> BUTB and the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisors of China identified areas of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-alijans-ekonomicheskikh-i-kommercheskich-sovetnikov-kitaja-opredelili-napraavljenija-sotrudnichestva-535514-2022/>

BUTB also has big plans with other countries on the Asian continent, including **India, Pakistan, Turkey and Mongolia**.

For example, in September 2022, the BUTB and the Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) headquartered in New Delhi (**India**) decided to join forces to attract Indian companies interested in entering the Belarusian market to the Belarusian exchange platform. After all, the use of the exchange mechanism will not only help strengthen trade relations between Belarus and India, but also create favourable conditions for closer cooperation in related areas. It should be reminded that ICCI has more than 10 thousand members all over India. These are mainly small and medium-sized businesses operating in various sectors of industry and agriculture, which receive services from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for effective business, including market analyses, assistance in attracting investments, training courses for employees, and search for business partners in India and abroad. The main task of ICCI is to assist in scaling up business, which usually involves entering the markets of other countries, including Belarus. Given its low risks, wide product range and direct access to leading Belarusian enterprises, BUTB is the optimal solution for ICCI to start its operations in Belarus. In particular, "Belarusian acrylic fibre and other petrochemical products are in high demand in India, as transactions in this group of goods are regularly made <...>. Lumber, dairy products, and light industry products are no less promising items"<sup>679</sup>.

Another curious fact: in November 2022, a pharmaceutical company from India - Tosco Pharmachem, which produces and sells special chemical compounds and reagents for the Indian pharmaceutical industry, was accredited on the BUTB for the first time for the purpose of purchasing petrochemical products. "Tosco Pharmachem plans to buy acetone cyanohydrin on the Belarusian exchange platform, and in the future other chemicals and preparations it needs"<sup>680</sup>. This company's interest in the BUTB platform is due to a number of reasons. Firstly, India is one of the three world leaders in terms of pharmaceutical production. Secondly, the Indian company will use exchange trading to open new export opportunities for Belarusian companies in the petrochemical industry. Thirdly, in addition to increasing the Belarusian-Indian exchange trade turnover, BUTB will provide experience in

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<sup>679</sup> BUTB and Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry plan to co-operate in exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-indijskaja-torgovo-promyshlennaja-palata-planirujut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-524659-2022/>

<sup>680</sup> BUTB plans to start exporting petrochemical products for the Indian pharma industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-nachat-eksport-neftehimicheskoy-produktsii-dlja-indijskoj-farmotrasli-535977-2022/>

the Indian market, which may be useful in selling other in-demand commodity items, including synthetic fibres, to this South Asian country. In December 2022, the first transaction was registered on BUTB: Tosco Pharmachem bought 23 tonnes of Belarusian acetone cyanohydrin at the end of the trading session. The small volume of purchase is due to the desire of the Indian company to work out the whole scheme of importing goods from Belarus. "The Indian side is interested in long-term cooperation with the stock exchange, which implies regular participation in exchange trading and increasing the volume of purchases. At the same time, due to the lack of practical experience of working in the Belarusian market through the exchange platform, the company preferred to first conclude a trial transaction for a small amount to minimise possible risks"<sup>681</sup>. In this regard, BUTB expects an increase in supplies of Belarusian petrochemical products to India. For reference: export exchange trading in chemical and petrochemical products has been held on BUTB since October 2021. The entire range of goods produced by the petrochemical industry of Belarus is supplied abroad. In 2022, synthetic fibres, petrol, oils and solvents were in particular demand from foreign buyers. The main markets are a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the countries of the "far arc" - China, Syria, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

In 2022, certain steps to intensify exchange trading were also made between Belarus and **Pakistan**. In particular, the first broker company from this country has already been accredited to the BUTB, and thanks to the efforts of the Embassy of Pakistan in Belarus, the central office of the exchange was visited by 70 representatives of the Pakistani business community, who are interested in purchasing products from Belarus. And it is not only sawn timber, but also chemical and petrochemical products. For example, "Belarusian acrylic fibre is in high demand in Pakistan, which has recently been regularly supplied to this market through our trading platform. The volumes of transactions are not very large yet, so expanding the circle of Pakistani buyers is a task of paramount importance"<sup>682</sup> to actually increase trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan.

**Turkey** is another country in Asia that is very promising for the sale of Belarusian goods through BUTB. Over the three quarters of 2022, 27 Turkish

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<sup>681</sup> Indian company makes its first deal on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskaja-kompanija-vpervye-sovershila-sdelku-na-butb-537935-2022/>

<sup>682</sup> BUTB organises supplies of Belarusian sawn timber for the industry of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-organizuet-postavki-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-dlja-promyshlennosti-pakistana-535371-2022/>

companies were accredited at the exchange. "This year, they bought domestic lumber, as well as scrap and waste non-ferrous metals at the exchange trading. If we compare it with January-September last year, the amount of transactions made by Turkish participants increased almost 1.5 times"<sup>683</sup>. Not only traditional export-import transactions involving Belarusian enterprises, but also transit transactions between non-residents are considered as possible areas of cooperation.

In November 2022, the BUTB agreed to develop exchange trade in agribusiness and wood products with the Istanbul Commodity Exchange (ISTIB) in order to "join efforts to increase mutual trade between Belarus and Turkey, with the main focus on agricultural and wood products, for which demand is consistently high in both countries"<sup>684</sup>. In this regard, the Belarusian partners hope for support and assistance from ISTIB, whose members are more than ten thousand Turkish companies, and for many of them ISTIB could become a "window" to the market of Belarus and the Eurasian Economic Union. After all, the exchange platform is an effective tool for establishing direct contacts between producers and consumers of the two countries, which will make it possible to organise regular trade in such highly liquid commodity items as sawn timber and dairy products.

Starting from December 2022, in order to make the exchange mechanism more attractive for foreign companies, including potential buyers of fuel pellets or pellets and other wood products, the BUTB introduced a simplified accreditation procedure for residents of Turkey. It should be noted that "the simplified accreditation procedure already applies to residents of 21 countries, which makes the exchange mechanism more accessible to foreign companies and favours the growth of supplies of Belarusian goods to these markets"<sup>685</sup>. More than 18 thousand cubic metres of light and grey pellets were offered at the first export bidding, which was aimed at the Turkish market and took place in the first decade of December 2022. More than 20 Turkish companies expressed interest in buying Belarusian biofuel. Apparently, the clear logistics and significant capacity of the Turkish market make it one of the most promising export destinations for Belarusian fuel products.

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<sup>683</sup> BUTB will present the advantages of exchange trading at an exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predstavit-preimuschestva-birzhevoj-torgovli-na-vystavke-v-turtsii-529829-2022/>

<sup>684</sup> BUTB and Istanbul Commodity Exchange will develop trade in agricultural and wood products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-stambulskaja-tovarnaja-birzha-budut-razvivat-torgovlju-produktsiej-apk-i-derevoobrabotki-533002-2022/>

<sup>685</sup> BUTB simplifies accreditation for Turkish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-uproschaet-akkreditatsiju-dlja-turetskih-kompanij-537787-2022/>



Also. In January 2023, the first company from **Mongolia** was accredited to participate in trading on the BUTB. This means that the geography of Belarusian exchange trading has expanded in the new year and now covers 71 countries on four continents. Through BUTB, "the Mongolian company plans to supply Belarus with mining products, including fluorspar and slags used in the metallurgical industry, as well as to purchase Belarusian metal products and agricultural goods"<sup>686</sup>. The interest of Mongolian business in the Belarusian stock exchange is not accidental. All metallurgical enterprises of Belarus are accredited and participate in trading on BUTB, and the amount of transactions in the metal products section in 2022 exceeded two billion Belarusian rubles. The exchange concentrates the largest consumers and producers of goods that the Mongolian company intends to trade. The situation is similar in the agro-industrial segment: the BUTB offers the widest range of products from Belarusian agricultural enterprises, including exporters of milk, cream, and butter, which are especially in demand in Mongolia. It is expected that the next step in the cooperation between the Belarusian exchange platform and the Mongolian company will be to grant it the status of an exchange broker, which will allow it to act as an official representative of BUTB in Mongolia and attract new importers and exporters to the Belarusian market.

In general, speaking about BUTB's co-operation with Asian countries, it should be noted that this area of relations has a huge export potential. And "already in the near future this co-operation will demonstrate high efficiency"<sup>687</sup>. And the first steps in this respect have been taken.

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<sup>686</sup> The first company from Mongolia is accredited on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovana-pervaja-kompanija-iz-mongolii-545414-2023/>

<sup>687</sup> Zaleskii, B. Potential of the exchange mechanism. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

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