

From regions to innovations

In 2021, the People's Republic of China launched the 14th Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan to 2025, which will take new steps in reform policy and build a new architectonics of mutually beneficial international cooperation to comprehensively enhance the country's opening up to the outside world, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, promote innovation and trade development, promote high-quality development of One Belt Joint Construction Project The Chinese side is aimed at creating new advantages in international cooperation. Openness to the outside world is the main state policy of the country. As for Belarus, we are confident that the two countries should continue to use the advantages of their economies, which complement each other to a great extent, to develop the existing potential for cooperation, including within the framework of the One Belt, One Road project and the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, as well as expand cooperation between the regions of the two countries. How are these plans implemented in practice? The answer is in the proposed study.



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From regions to innovations

Peculiarities of the Belarusian-Chinese strategic partnership

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Regional cooperation is the engine of development

In 2019, the Belarusian-Chinese relations of trust-based comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation continued to develop intensively, demonstrating impressive dynamics. Suffice it to say that "in January-June this [2019], the volume of trade between China and Belarus reached \$2.053 billion, increasing by 22.3% compared with the same period last year; Belarusian exports to China increased by 81.9%"¹.

Among the Belarusian regions that have made a significant contribution to the achievement of such indicators is **Minsk Region**, whose exports "to China more than doubled during the first nine months of this year [2019] - from \$178 million to \$367 million (growth rate - 206%"². The basis of these supplies were potash fertilizers, as well as meat and dairy products of such enterprises of the capital region as OJSC Agrokombinat Dzerzhinsky, Velez-Mit LLC, OJSC Smolevichi Broiler, KUP Minobl'miasomolprom, OJSC Minsk Dairy Plant №1, OJSC Slutsk Cheese Factory. Such positive export dynamics is largely due to the fact that almost all milk processing plants and a number of meat processing plants in Minsk Region already have permission to supply their products to the Chinese market. Therefore, meat and dairy products worth more than \$17 million were shipped to China in the first eight months of

1 Grishkevich, A. China's development cannot do without the support and assistance of Belarus - Cui Qimin // A. Grishkevich [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/razvitie-kitaja-ne-mozhet-obojsis-bez-podderzhki-i-pomoschi-belarusi-tsuj-tsimin-367736-2019/>

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

2019. And, judging by all appearances, the scale of these supplies will only increase.

The volume of Chinese direct investment in the Minsk Region's economy continues to grow in 2019. In the first nine months of this year, they have already increased by almost ten percent, reaching 115 million dollars. The bulk of them, more than \$90 million, was attracted due to the development of the car assembly facility of BelJI CJSC. But there are other interesting examples. In particular, in November 2019, the first stage of the Belkali-Migao LLC plant was opened in Soligorsk District, Minsk Region. It is not only the first joint project of Belaruskali OJSC and the Chinese company Migao Corporation Limited, but also the first plant for the production of potassium nitrate on Belarusian soil, whose products are expected to be sold to the European Union, Turkey, Russia, China, as well as to enter the markets of North Africa and Latin America. Today the plant with a total staff of 150 people is already working around the clock. It is also important that "the new jobs in the new plant employ 30 engineering graduates of Soligorsk Mining Chemical College. The annual output of the first stage of the new plant is 80 thousand tons of potassium nitrate and 62 thousand tons of the granulated nitrogen-potassium fertilizers. Within ³the next year, the second phase of BelkaliMigao plant should be completed and put into operation. This will allow to increase the annual capacity to 160 thousand tons of potassium nitrate that is successfully used in metallurgy, glass manufacturing, pyrotechnics and explosives besides the agricultural industry.

³ "Belaruskali" and China's Migao launch potassium nitrate production facility [Electronic resource]. –2019. – URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaruskalij-i-kitajskij-migao-zapustili-predpriятие-po-proizvodstvu-nitrata-kalija-368329-2019/>

A significant event for the development of the Chinese vector of international cooperation of Minsk Region was the participation of five enterprises of the Belarusian capital region in the second international exhibition of import goods and services China International Import Expo in **Shanghai**, which was held in November 2019. One of the exhibitors - Slutsk Cheese Factory OJSC - even managed to sign a "product supply contract for \$2 million with the Greenland Group Corporation. Another document was signed with Shanhai Pujia Food Technology Co." ⁴. The Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park Great Stone, located in the Minsk Region, registered two new residents during the same exhibition in Shanghai: Satellite Communications of Eurasia (China), which will set up a research and development center to develop satellite communication and control systems, and Flex-n-Roll Pro (Belarus, USA) with a project in the field of industrial printing.⁵

Another important factor that contributes to the successful promotion of Minsk Region enterprises to the Chinese market is the development of effective interregional cooperation with partners in China, including, above all, **Guangdong** Province, with which the Belarusian capital region signed a cooperation roadmap for 2020-2021 in November 2019. This document, according to the parties, will enable the formation of a common market based on the principles of transparency and mutual benefit, as well as strengthen trade and economic ties. Direct cooperation of regions is among the

4 Minsk Region and China's Guangdong Province signed a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-guandun-podpisali-dorozhnuju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-368717-2019/>

5 Scientific-research center of satellite communication systems will be created in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nauchno-issledovatel'skij-tsentr-sputnikovyh-sistem-kommunikatsii-sozdatut-v-velikom-kamne-368325-2019/>

main goals. In particular, there is already talk of establishing a joint milk processing enterprise in the Chinese province. And in the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park Velikiy Kamen, a project related to medical equipment can be implemented. The Chinese enterprise from Guangdong province which is interested in this project "has already been certified for the European market and it is interested in placing production in the Great Stone. <...> It will be a large-scale and significant project not only for the Minsk Region, but also for the country⁶.

Among other Chinese regions that have markedly stepped up their engagement with Belarusian partners lately is **Sichuan** Province. In November 2019, the Belarusian National E-Commerce Pavilion was registered at the international railway port of its administrative center, Chengdu, a city with a population of 20 million people; construction and installation works are scheduled to be completed in early 2020. Belarusian companies will be able to present their export potential, including food and beverages, agricultural products and handicrafts, in seven zones covering almost 1,500 square meters. The very location of this pavilion - in a free trade zone with good logistics, as nearby there is a railway port and two major wholesale markets, each of which employs more than seven thousand Chinese wholesalers. It is also interesting that the pavilion will be presented in the form of the Mir castle and decorated with the Belarusian national symbols. It is also important that "on the basis of the Belarusian national pavilion, China and Belarus are ready to create a comprehensive bilateral platform of

⁶ Minsk region more than doubled its exports to China in January-September [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-uvlechila-eksport-produktsii-v-kitaj-za-janvar-sentjabr-bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-369062-2019/>

ties, which will include such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investments, and services⁷.

Gomel Region exporters are going to actively use the potential of the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu. They will be mostly producers of food products - "meat and dairy <...>, alcohol, and confectionery products, which have already proved themselves in foreign markets"⁸. There are a number of reasons for this. Thus, back in May 2015 the Gomel region and Sichuan province signed an agreement on cooperation, which envisaged organization of interaction on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in such areas as economy, agriculture, health and culture, education, sports and tourism. In addition, "direct contacts and twinning between cities of the two regions will be established to develop cooperation in the above-mentioned areas"⁹.

And, indeed, three years later - in August 2018 - an agreement on the establishment of twinning relations was signed already by the administrative centers of the region and the province - Gomel and Chengdu, stating their intention to develop cooperation in trade, education, culture, and tourism, with special emphasis on the great prospects of fruitful cooperation in the economic sphere. Chengdu is referred to as a window opening for international cooperation of the western part of China with Europe. The freight train of international

7 In Chengdu, China, the ceremony of awarding the plaque of the Belarusian national pavilion was held [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-kitajskom-chendu-sostojalas-tseremonija-vruchenija-tablichki-belorusskogo-natsionalnogo-paviljona-368575-2019/>

8 Gomel manufacturers will present their products in the Belarusian pavilion in Chengdu [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskie-proizvoditeli-predstavjat-pischevuju-produktsiju-v-belorusskom-paviljone-v-chendu-358191-2019>

9 Sidorchik, V. Gomel region and the Chinese province of Sichuan will cooperate / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://news.tut.by/society/447548.html>

importance "Chengdu - Europe" connecting China, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus has already become a kind of business card of this Chinese city¹⁰. In addition to the economy, the parties see education and healthcare among the promising areas of partnership development, as evidenced by the documents signed in August 2018 - the Memorandum of Strategic Partnership between Chengdu Health Investment Corporation and the Gomel Regional Clinical Hospital for the Disabled of World War II and the Agreement on Establishing Cooperation between Wuhou High School and Gymnasium No. 71 of Gomel.

Among the Gomel enterprises whose products will be presented at the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu, we should name, first of all, JSC Milkavita, which shipped its products to the Chinese market seven times (!) more in the seven months of 2019 than during the same period in 2018. "Every month, the company supplies about 500 tons of products to the PRC - dry dairy products and liquid products with a long shelf life. The main volume in exports to China is dry whey - about 80%" .¹¹By exhibiting their products at the Belarusian National Pavilion in Chengdu, Gomel exporters hope to significantly expand their presence in Sichuan province. This would allow Milkavita, OJSC, to increase the supply of its products to China up to the planned three million dollars by the end of 2019.

It should be noted that Gomel Region develops partnership and twinning relations with other Chinese regions as well. Thus, in

10 Gomel and China's Chengdu became sister cities [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-chendu-stali-gorodami-pobratimami-315608-2018/>

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

June 2019, "Gomel Region and the Chinese **Inner Mongolia** Autonomous Region signed a cooperation program for 2020"¹² . Gomel has established partnership and twinning relations with several Chinese cities as well. Specifically, an agreement on friendship and cooperation was signed in 2015 with Harbin, the administrative center of **Heilongjiang** Province. The parties agreed that "the establishment of joint ventures in such areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, and processing of agricultural products <...> should eventually become a priority of economic cooperation between Homiel and Harbin"¹³. The longest relations between the city of Homiel and Huayan in **Jiangsu** Province have been established since 1997. Thanks to these ties, the already mentioned above JSC Mlekovita took part in the International Food Industry Exhibition in this Chinese city in May 2019, and in June 2019, a meeting between the leadership of Homiel and Huayan stated that the parties have "great potential for further development of cooperation in various areas, <...> that the food products produced in Homiel are of particular interest"¹⁴. All this diversity of ties with Chinese partners allowed Homiel to exceed the volume of mutual trade with China at the level of forty million dollars in 2018, and in four months of 2019 to come close to the trade turnover of 17 million dollars.

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

13 Sidorchik, V. JV creation may become a priority of economic cooperation between Gomel and Harbin / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - – 2015. - URL: <http://mozyrisp.gov.by/special/ru/obl-news-ru/view/sozdanie-sp-mozhet-stat-prioritetom-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-gomelem-i-xarbinommn-2135/>

14 Chinese partners are interested in supplies of Gomel food products [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskie-partnery-zainteresovany-v-postavkah-gomelskoj-pischevoj-produktsii-354606-2019/>

Quite a powerful development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic activities in 2019 was also observed in **the Vitebsk Region**, as evidenced by the figures. Suffice it to say that in the first eight months of this year, the trade turnover of this Belarusian region "with the provinces of China amounted to \$69.6 million, exports - \$13.5 million, which is 2.1 times higher than during the same period in 2018"¹⁵. One of the effective partners of the Vitebsk region in China is the province of **Shandong**, which is one of the three leading Chinese regions. As a reminder, the parties signed the first Memorandum of Cooperation back in 2006. As part of the agreements reached at that time, the cities located in these regions - Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao - began to cooperate.

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

¹⁵ Bogacheva, O. In Vitebsk region together with China will produce peat products / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-vitebskoj-oblasti-sovmestno-s-kitaem-budut-vypuskat-torfoproduksiju-366630-2019/>

summer schools for high school students, where children learn about Chinese culture and lifestyle" ¹⁶. And in terms of more complete use of tourist potential of the two cities, it was proposed to create a joint tourist product, which would be in demand and popular, especially among Chinese citizens.

As for the cities of Navapolatsk and Weihai, the twinning relationship between them was established in 2006, "but they have not been particularly active yet"¹⁷. Nevertheless, already in October 2019, on the margins of the Twin Regions Forum held in the Chinese province of Shandong, representatives of the two cities were able to note the areas in which twinning relations could be successfully developed. First of all, they talked about ecology and logistics within the framework of the project "One Belt, One Road". Second, taking into account the fact that Weihai is famous for its production of the most modern medical equipment, Novopolotsk sees prospects of cooperation in this area. In turn, Weihai is very interested in cooperation with the Belarusian city in the field of higher and specialized secondary education. Therefore, we can hope that the emergence of specific twinning projects is not far off.

Finally, the Chinese city of Qingdao and Orsha District of Vitebsk Region signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly relations in September 2018. At the same time, "representatives of Chinese business expressed interest in opening a trade facility of Belarusian meat and dairy and bakery products in

16 Antonov, S. Vitebsk and Jinan defined the main directions of cooperation for the period until 2020 / S. Antonov // [Electronic Resume]. - – 2017. - URL: <http://vitvesti.by/politics/vitebsk-i-tczinan.html>

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

Qingdao".¹⁸, as well as to cooperate in the construction of the Bremino-Orsha multimodal industrial and logistics complex. In addition, in July 2019, it became known about the intention of the Qingdao municipal education department to participate in the construction of a school in Orsha for 1020 places. "Such a school can become an experimental site for testing jointly developed programs of optional classes in Chinese language, literature, theater and art in general"¹⁹.

Returning to the interregional interaction between the Vitebsk Region and Shandong Province as a whole, it should be noted that in October 2019, these regions already reached an agreement on friendship and comprehensive cooperation, in which they identified as priorities of partnership relations "development of an effective mechanism for cooperation in trade and investment, development of cooperation in industry, transport logistics, creation of joint companies in petrochemistry, water treatment, electronics"²⁰. All these areas will be concretely implemented in the cooperation road map to be drawn up in the near future. One of the real projects that will apparently be included in this program of cooperation between the Belarusian and Chinese regions will be a joint venture for the

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

19 There are plans to build a new school in Orša. Not just any, but with Chinese investments [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://gorod216.by/new/2723>

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

production of peat products, which is planned to be set up in the Viciebsk Region. Its participants will be "a Chinese agricultural company, which is interested in supplying peat products in large volumes, and UE Vitebskoblgaz, which has a peat extraction and processing branch in the Dokshytsy District²¹.

To summarize, "in 2020, the Year of Belarus Regions in China is planned²². These plans mean that in the near future, both countries intend to further develop interregional cooperation and strengthen trade and economic, scientific and technological, production and cooperation, and cultural and tourism ties, expanding the number of participants in this interaction in every way possible.

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

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

Towards new technologies and investments

In July 2019, the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" hosted the International Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development under the Belt and Road Initiative aimed at attracting new investments and investors, strengthening ties between the international investment community, business representatives and government authorities, improving competitiveness and investment attractiveness at the international level and consolidating the status of the most open and comfortable platform for doing business along the Economic Belt. It was the first regional international forum within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, the idea of which "belongs to the leaders of Belarus and China - they agreed on it at the meeting in Qingdao. <...> It's about inviting business circles from major technology and investment owning countries to this event" ²³.

It is worth reminding that in June 2018, at the meeting of the Council of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in the Chinese city of Qingdao, it was noted that Belarus had already taken the first step in the joint action plan to dock national development strategies, as well as to interface the Eurasian Economic Union with the Belt and Road Initiative. In our country, the identification of new points of contact and expansion of areas of cooperation "fully corresponds to the implementation of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone. It is not in vain

23_ Matveev, V. Results of the Belarusian delegation's visit to China: new agreements in trade and course for direct investments / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/itogi-vizita-belorusskoj-delegatsii-v-kitaj-novye-dogovorennosti-v-torgovle-i-kurs-na-prjamyje-345691-2019/>

that the name "the pearl of the Silk Road" has stuck to it.²⁴ In April 2019, the leaders of Belarus and China put their signatures under the concept of holding the Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The facts show that the stage of infrastructure construction, setting up of conditions, creation of some regulatory documents in the China-Belarus Industrial Park is already behind us. And today, "the success of the project depends primarily on our residents"²⁵. As of the beginning of May 2019, there were 44 residents registered at Great Stone. Importantly, they include not only companies from China and Belarus, but also investors and manufacturers from Austria, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Russia and the United States. Their activities are illustrative of the fact that the Great Stone is no longer "just or even so much a production zone as it is primarily an original and unique incubator of innovative ideas about how synergy between the challenges of organizing an efficient production process with the development of a sustainable, environmentally friendly and socially efficient urban environment can be achieved"²⁶. In the future, it can become a prototype of new type of industrial-logistic urban centres that can make the Belt and Road network truly sustainable and efficient.

24_ Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zasedanie-soveta-glav-gosudarstv-shanxajskoj-organizatsii-sotrudnichestva-18898/

25 Krutoy, D. The success of China-Belarus Industrial Park today depends on its residents / D. Krutoy // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/uspeh-kitajsko-belorusskogo-industrialnogo-parka-segodnja-zavisit-ot-ego-rezidentov-6857/>

26_ Dapkiunas, A. Belarus intends to strengthen its role in the development of trans-European economic conjugation / A. Dapkiunas // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-namerena-usilit-svoju-rol-v-razvitii-transjevrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-soprazhennosti-6823/>

Another characteristic detail of the China-Belarus Industrial Park is that 28 residents of Great Stone have either already started manufacturing their products or are in the active construction phase. Among the residents who have already mastered production are MAZ-Weichai LLC, as well as Chengdu Xinju Silk Road Development LLC, which has opened a plant to produce supercapacitors. American manufacturer IPG Photonics of RuchTech was due to start producing fiber lasers in 2019. All in all, about ten more production facilities were expected to be commissioned here by the end of the year. In general, "more than 4 thousand high-performance jobs will be created once the enterprises already located on the territory are put into operation"²⁷. Belarusian, Swiss and Chinese companies may soon be among the new residents of the "Great Stone. A resident from Belarus is expected to come with new technologies and materials in packaging. The Swiss project relates to software products, big data storage and processing. A Chinese company will present a large project in the field of automotive components. In general, "the park plans to increase the number of residents to 60 this [2019] year"²⁸.

Another landmark project discussed at the International Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative is the industrial and logistics complex Bremino-Orsha, where investors are also granted benefits and preferences. And where the first steps towards its

27 The number of Great Stone residents could double in the coming years [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-v-blizhajshie-gody-mozhet-vyrasti-vdvoe-343201-2019/>

28 Lisatovich, T. The forum on regional cooperation will help attract new investors in the "Great Stone" - Yaroshenko // T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/forum-po-regionalnomu-sotrudnichestvu-pomozhet-privlech-novyh-investorov-v-velikij-kamen-jaroshenko-347184-2019/>

development are already being taken. In particular, in May 2019, Bremino Group LLC and the Chinese company Shaanxi Zhongqiao Silk Road Technology Development Co., Ltd. agreed that under a comprehensive strategic cooperation agreement they will establish an international construction materials town in the Bremino-Orsha Special Economic Zone. At the same time, "investment in the first stage, which will last three years, will amount to approximately \$100 million²⁹. And, by all appearances, this is not the only project that the Chinese company is ready to implement in Belarus.

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29_ International construction materials town will appear in the special economic zone "Bremino-Orsha". [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnyj-gorodok-strojmaterialov-pojavitsja-v-osoboj-ekonomicheskoy-zone-bremino-orsha-346313-2019/>

A project that will shape the future

May 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the visit of the leaders of the two countries - A. Lukashenka and S. Jinping - to the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. Jinping. This event became a kind of a starting point in the history of the Park for its rapid development. And, indeed, for such a short period of time it has paved roads, supplied with water, electricity, heating and gas, built more than 60 thousand square meters of standard production buildings, built the first office building, a residential house and a research center, attracted about 60 investment projects, the declared volume of investments exceeding one billion dollars. All this allows us to agree with the conclusion that "for five years, the China-Belarus Industrial Park has become a good testing ground for bilateral cooperation, promoted mutual understanding between China and Belarus and ties between their enterprises, and facilitated cultural exchange. That is why the Great Stone, as a comprehensive strategic platform for trade and economic cooperation between China and Belarus, has attracted the attention of potential partners from both our two countries and other states, and become a model for cooperation on the Belt and Road³⁰.

Note that such high praise for Great Stone is no longer only voiced in Belarus or China. In November 2019, the World Federation of Free and Special Economic Zones (FEMOZA) held a summit in Monaco, the main theme of which was strengthening cooperation and transforming successful experience of free

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

economic zones (FEZs) into working tools. This large-scale event was attended by over 400 representatives from FEZ of Great Britain, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Asian and African countries, as well as chambers of commerce and industry, public authorities, potential foreign investors. It should be reminded that FEMOZA - is a non-governmental and non-profit organization supported by the United Nations, which was established in 1999 in Geneva to support and promote free and special economic zones around the world and in particular - in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to assist in penetration of FEZ residents projects into the international market and attract foreign investment. FEMOZA functions include elaboration of norms, rules and guidelines for FEZ development, provision of technical, legal and economic assistance, and training of specialists. Statistics state that "today there are 3,500 free zones in 130 countries, accounting for more than 70 million jobs" ³¹. But, "despite the benefits and preferences that are given to them in all countries, <... > only 300-400 are effective. All this is because of the technological lag that prevents FEZs from becoming part of the global economy."³²

The Republic of Belarus has been actively participating in FEMOZA activities for several years now. The summit in Monaco

31. Barcelona to become the capital of free zones in 2019 [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL:

https://ru.wikinews.org/wiki/%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%B%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0_%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82_%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%B9_%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D1%8B%D1%85_%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%BD_%D0%B2_2019_%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%83

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

became truly significant for the Belarusian side, as it was there that the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" was awarded the FEMOZA Awards 2019, winning in the "Fastest Growing Industrial Park" category. What made this nomination special is that "the key in determining the winner was Great Stone's promise for global investment and its rapid pace of development"³³. Indeed, today the Belarusian side has created solid benefits for the residents of Great Stone - both tax benefits and acquisition of land ownership, as well as a favorable regime in which the registration of enterprises takes place in the shortest possible time on a "one-stop-shop" principle. As a result, "today this park shows tremendous growth, investors from all over the world come to us"³⁴.

The facts show that Great Stone has already become an international platform for the creation of high-tech enterprises. As of early November 2019, 57 residents were registered here. And there is every reason to believe that their number "may grow to 80 by the end of 2020"³⁵. A project to create a production of solar panels is already underway here. In July 2019, the industrial park began construction of a Belarusian-Chinese factory for the production of mechanical gearboxes with an investment of \$17 million. In October 2019, an engine production plant MAZ-Weichai LLC opened here, where they produce "small-knot assembly of Euro-5 and Euro-6

33_ "Great Stone" recognized as the fastest growing industrial park in the world [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-priznan-samym-bystrorastuschim-industrialnym-parkom-v-mire-369159-2019/>

34_ Megalgos in "Great Stone" and IT records - Rumas talked about opportunities to invest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/megalgoty-v-velikom-kamne-i-rekordy-it-rumas-rasskazal-o-vozmozhnostjah-investirovat-v-belarus-370269-2019/>

35_ The number of Great Stone residents may increase to 80 by the end of 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-k-konsu-2020-goda-mozhet-uvelichitsja-do-80-365696-2019/>

standard engines for trucks, special vehicles and buses. Under a single-shift operation mode the production capacity will amount to 10 thousand engines per year"³⁶. But even more impressive plans are being adopted here for implementation in the near future.

In late October 2019, the 12th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" was held in Beijing, where its participants focused on such areas of development of this special economic zone as: improving the legal environment of the park; establishing additional comfortable conditions to attract investments in creating competitive production facilities; creating a sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure; digital construction; developing the park as a smart city. Among the tasks for the industrial park's development in 2020 the following were singled out: "the priority of export orientation, attraction of anchor investors with high-tech projects and expansion of international activities"³⁷. At the same time, they intend to continue to be guided by four main development principles: "Firstly, it is globalization, as the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Secondly, it is industrialization. The main task is to attract international industry clusters. Thirdly, it is digitalization, which should give great advantages to the development of the park. <...> Fourthly, ecologization. Environmental protection and compliance

36 Opening of the Maz-Weichai LLC engine production plant in the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9051>

37 Great Stone Industrial Park to be presented at China International Import Expo in November [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-v-nojabre-predstavjat-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-367476-2019/>

with environmental requirements are the key to sustainable development" ³⁸.

As a reminder, as of early 2020, there were already 60 residents registered in Great Stone from 15 countries, including: 33 - from the People's Republic of China; 15 - involving companies from Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Switzerland and the United States of America; 12 - created by Belarusian business entities. By this time, in less than five years, 32 kilometers of roads have been built, 400 kilometers of water and gas pipelines, power lines, sewage lines have been laid, 25 buildings with a total area of about 300 thousand square meters have been constructed. And the total volume of concluded contracts and investments has exceeded one billion dollars from 11 countries of the world.

Speaking about the trends observed in the industrial park today, there are several major ones. One of them is to develop Great Stone as a smart city with innovative industry and high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020, the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation of the Republic of Belarus, the Industrial Park Development Company CJSC and the Velikiy Stony administration signed an agreement to develop 5G technology in the industrial park. It was noted that one of the most promising directions of 5G technology development here is unmanned transport. As a result, the China-Belarus Industrial Park should

38_Zheng, H. "Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoi-platform-dlja-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>.

become "the first exemplary base in Belarus for implementation of 5G technologies"³⁹.

It should be noted that the priority areas of Great Stone's development remain engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, new materials, and logistics. At the same time, emphasis is placed on innovative activity of the residents. And about 20 projects have already yielded results. Among them is the commercial and logistics company China Merchants, which received a certificate to operate Belarus' only bonded customs bonded warehouse for general use. In November 2019, the opening of the production building of a subsidiary of Swiss company Garrosserie Hess AG - Hess Great Stone LLC - for the production of electric passenger transport took place in Velikiy Kamen. "This type of transport will feature zero carbon emissions and quiet operation. The batteries on the roof will be charged at the terminus in a few minutes"⁴⁰. This resident of the industrial park plans to reach full production cycle in 2021, when up to fifty bus bodies will be produced here.

The park's resident innovation activity is evidenced by this fact: in March 2020, Assomedica LLC, a manufacturer of a wide range of medical products registered as a resident in Great Stone in 2017, "mastered new production of single-use breathing masks and bacterial-viral filters for adults, children and infants"⁴¹ - products

39_Nemankova, Yu. Pilot project on 5G development is implemented in "Velikiy Kamen" / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyj-proekt-po-razvitiyu-5g-realizujut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>

40 Aliaksandr Turchyn: Belarusian-Swiss cooperation has serious potential [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9136>

41_Production of breathing masks is opened in the industrial park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnyh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-383799-2020/>

that provide maximum respiratory protection from germs and viruses, which can be used within 12-24 hours.

The industrial park is also thinking about the future. This is evidenced by the fact of registration in March 2020 as a resident of Great Stone of the Chinese company Sinomach with a project to create a zone for scientific and technical cooperation and innovative development, within which a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and supporting infrastructure is planned to be built. In the first stage, four R&D projects related to optical devices, automobile sensors, semiconductors and new materials will be realized here. The company also plans to implement a second phase of the project⁴².

In terms of expanding the international activity of the Great Stone Industrial Park, one of the most effective tools could be such a form of attracting new residents as the creation of sub-parks in it, which means "the arrival of not one investor, but a pool of prominent companies under the leadership of a separate management company. Thus, there are great prospects just for large corporations" ⁴³. We shall add that the offer is addressed by the administration of the park not only to Chinese provinces, "but also to investors from Europe, in particular from Switzerland and Japan" ⁴⁴. The main condition for the future residents, which in this case should be met, is the creation of high-tech enterprises in the

42. New resident with Chinese capital registered in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistirovan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>

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

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

industrial park. And there will be enough space and opportunities to build technology clusters and sub-parks on a national basis.

It should be noted that the sub-park format is already used in practice at Velikiy Kamen. Back in May 2017, the first stage of the retail and logistics sub-park was opened here on 29 hectares. This is a hundred thousand square meters of real estate, half of which is occupied by warehouses, and another almost a quarter - the exhibition center. "We have invested about \$120 million in the construction of the sub-park. In total the territory of the sub-park will occupy more than 90 hectares, the volume of investments is \$500 million"⁴⁵.

At the 11th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, held in November 2018 in Beijing, it was noted that the necessary support would be provided in the near future for the practical implementation of subparks in the Great Stone of Harbin City in Heilongjiang Province and Guangdong Province. It was also planned to "substantially work on the establishment of sub-parks in the industrial park with Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces and Hangzhou City by the end of 2019" ⁴⁶. As for Guangdong Province, back in January 2017 in its administrative center, Guangzhou City, "a signing ceremony was held to establish the China (Guangdong) LED Sub-Park in the Great Stone Industrial

45 Anatoly Kalinin took part in the opening of the first stage of the trade and logistics subpark in the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7228>

46 Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Working Group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://belaruschina.by/data/fck/file/minekonomiki/protocol_11.pdf

Park" ⁴⁷as well as five more documents on the intention of specific companies to join this sub-park.

Another landmark document in the context of this topic was signed in November 2018 at China's first import trade fair in Shanghai. It is an agreement on the establishment of the Chengdu-European Industrial Sub-Park on the territory of the "Great Stone". The point is that Chengdu, the administrative center of Sichuan province, has considerable industrial potential, including well-developed automotive and aerospace industries, which corresponds to the priorities of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park. In addition, "Chengdu is the most economically closest city to Europe in China" ⁴⁸.

We should note an important detail: a number of important meetings and negotiations have recently taken place to address the establishment of national subparks of European countries in the Great Stone. Specifically, in August 2019, this topic was discussed in the Belarusian government with representatives of the Swiss business community, including the leadership of Ceres Group Holding AG and the Swiss industrial park BUSS, who positively assessed the Belarusian proposal not just to establish a Swiss subpark in Great Stone, but also "to act as a developer in it and both engage in development and attract Swiss businesses to cooperate with Belarus"⁴⁹. It is noteworthy that already in December 2019, the

47_A subpark of LED products will be created in Great Stone Industrial Park [Electronic resource]. - – 2017. - URL: <https://industrialpark.by/novosti/2017/v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-budet-sozdan-subpark-svetodiodnoj-produkcii.html>

48 China's Chengdu considers setting up high-tech industries in the Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: https://interfax.by/news/policy/ekonomicheskaya_politika/1251824/

49 Kryzhevich, I. On the territory of "Great Stone" may create a Swiss subpark / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/na-territorii-velikogo-kamnya-mogut-sozdat-shveytsarskiy-subpark-.html>

60th resident was registered in the industrial park - the already mentioned above "Swiss company Hess Great Stone for the production of electric passenger transport" ⁵⁰. And in January 2020, the issue of "the possible establishment of an Italian-Belarusian subpark in Great Stone in the future" was ⁵¹considered in practical terms at a meeting in Rome with owners and executives of Italian companies interested in investing in the industrial park's projects.

Undoubtedly, all these facts underline the very high dynamics of development of the Velikiy Kamen industrial park, a project whose role in the Belarusian economy will very soon become landmark both in terms of innovation and investment, as well as in terms of technology.

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50 The Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" has the 60th resident [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://interfax.by/news/biznes/businesses/1268182/>

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

The aim is to innovate

The scientific and innovation vector occupies an important place among the main areas of trust-based comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. Three priority components can be singled out in this segment of the bilateral cooperation. "The first one is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in innovation activities, where a network of joint innovation centres and research laboratories is being formed and developed. The third is in education, where specialists, teachers and students receive mutual training and internships"⁵². The focus on innovations is especially felt today in the development of the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", which allows creating here competitive production, sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure, to conduct digital construction in order to turn the park into a "smart city". At the same time, the pace of innovative movement forward has accelerated markedly in 2020. Here are just a few examples that confirm this observation.

In May 2020, the first stone was laid at the site of the future construction of the Science and Technology Cooperation and Development Zone or Fakel project by China's Sinomach Corporation. As a reminder, in June 2014, the Belarusian government signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with this corporation, on the basis of which large-scale investment projects

52 Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskii. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 115-116.

are now being implemented in Belarus. As for the Fakel project, this zone will be "aimed at creating conditions to attract Chinese and European technologies, implement and test them in the park and further export to Europe and China."⁵³ There are plans to construct office buildings and premises for scientific research, where "four research and development projects are planned to be implemented - in the sphere of optical technologies, mechanics, electronics and new materials. They also envisage the construction of laboratories, office-type co-working spaces, complex training facilities and high-tech pilot commercial units"⁵⁴. The project will involve not only research institutes and enterprises of Sinomach Corporation, but also enterprises of the Chinese Zhongguancun Technopark and structures of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

The mention of Zhongguancun Technopark in this context indicates a very serious attitude of the Chinese side to the Torch Project in the Great Stone. The fact is that this technology park, founded in 1988 in the northwestern part of Beijing, is considered the Chinese equivalent of Silicon Valley, is the first in China, one of the largest in the capital and consists of 16 science zones. It was here that the first Chinese vacuum cylinder, the first computer, the first commutator, etc. "appeared at one time. A total of 5,000-plus products were developed here, filling a void in the history of Chinese high-tech"⁵⁵. The research and development bureaus of many multinational corporations are now concentrated here.

53 On the development of SINOMACH S&T cooperation and development zone in the Great Stone Park [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/cf39e9ad1f75824a.html>

54 Sinomach "Torch" park will be built in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-postrojat-park-sinomach-fakel-390613-2020/>

55 Wei, V. Silicon Valley of China / W. Wei // Models, Systems, Networks in Economics, Technology, Nature and Society. - - 2013. - - C. 19.

Expectations in China are high for the park to "deliver on the ambitious Made in China 2025 strategy, which will make the country technologically independent and take it to the forefront in many fields. The Chinese government will spend about \$300 billion to implement the program" ⁵⁶. Speaking of this technology park, one cannot but mention the following figure: between January and November 2019, it recorded a revenue growth of almost 14 percent. At the same time, "revenues of leading high-tech enterprises in the technology park reached 5.43 trillion yuan (about \$779 billion) during this period" ⁵⁷.

Returning to innovative affairs at the Great Stone, it should be noted that another landmark event took place here in May 2020, showing that one of the promising facets of development of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park is digitalization. An electric-powered unmanned bus, based on technology developed by Singaporean scientists, was tested here for the first time. "The maximum speed that the prototype can reach is 40 km/hour. <...> It has a range of about 180km. A full charge will take no more than 4 hours" ⁵⁸. It is planned to work out the technology of the novelty operation on the territory of Great Stone, after which, to all appearances, commercial operation of this unmanned transport will be possible in the not too distant future.

56 Krasilnikova, Y. Beijing launches a program to attract foreign IT-specialists / Y. Krasilnikova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing_lures_talent

57 In the first 11 months of 2019, Beijing Zhongguancun Technopark recorded 13.8 percent revenue growth [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/2020-01/07/c_138685700.htm?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.by%2Fnews

58 The first unmanned electric bus was tested in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-bespilotnyj-elektrobus-protestirovali-v-velikom-kamne-390612-2020>

Also in May 2020, the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park registered a new resident, Crownhomes Scientific and Technical Company for Wood Structures LLC, which will create a "production line center for the woodworking industry based on Industry 4.0 principles" in Velikiy Kamen⁵⁹. This production facility, which is based on innovative technology, is expected to be put into operation in 2022.

Furthermore, in 2020, the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park Great Stone, despite the alarming epidemic situation, continued demonstrating quite high development rates, remaining the landmark project of the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" in Eastern Europe. Suffice it to say that "as of the end of October, there were 66 companies from 14 countries among its residents, and the amount of investment agreed upon was about \$1.2 billion⁶⁰. This fact also speaks volumes: in the first nine months of 2020, the revenues of the industrial park residents increased by almost three and a half times compared to the same period of 2019. "At the same time, the proceeds from the sale of goods, products, works and services outside Belarus amounted to Br36.8 million (8.7 times growth) .

⁶¹And the number of employees employed at Great Stone came close to one thousand - 970 people. And, apparently, the industrial park does not intend to stop there, as evidenced by a number of facts of

59 The new resident of Great Stone will produce products for woodworking [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-vypuskat-produktsiju-dlja-derevoobrabotki-390684-2020>

60 Xiaoyun, S. China opposes outside interference in the internal affairs of Belarus / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kitaj-vystupaet-protiv-vmeshatelstva-izvne-vo-vnutrennie-dela-belarusi-7572/>

61 Revenue of the Great Stone residents in January - September increased 3.4 times to Br126.2 million [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vyruchka-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-v-janvare-sentjabre-vyrosla-v-34-raza-do-br1262-mln-416031-2020/>

the second half of 2020, showing that this special economic zone is now actively searching for new ways of development in many areas, including optimization of logistics and introduction of innovations.

Thus, in September 2020, Eurasian Railway Gateway CJSC was registered as a resident of Great Stone, a company that "will implement an investment project to build a bimodal rail terminal in the park"⁶². The list of participants of this project, construction work on which will begin in 2021, is very substantial. They are the world's largest intercontinental port Duisburger Hafen AG from Germany, the leading network operator of intermodal transportations in Europe Hupak Intermodal SA from Switzerland, Brest Department of Belarusian Railway RUE, and China Merchants CHANNEL Commercial and Logistics Company, a resident of the park. It is expected that when the terminal reaches its design capacity, it will bring the Great Stone residents to a qualitatively new level of implementation of their logistics capabilities.

Speaking about innovative prospects of the industrial park's development, it should be recalled that, again in September 2020, the China-Belarus Innovation Center of Industrial Technologies, created by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Guangdong Provincial Academy of Sciences, and the Foshan Research Institute of Industrial Technologies, became a new resident of Great Stone. The founders of the center see it as a platform for "implementation of scientific and technological achievements between the two countries. The task of this platform is to develop scientific ideas and bring them to industrial implementation.

62. A new resident of Great Stone will build a railway terminal [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-postroit-zhd-terminal-407959-2020/>

Research ⁶³and development in such spheres as new materials, modern industrial technologies, digitalization in production, bio- and eco-technologies initiated here today are expected to grow into specific technologies and productions in two-three years. In addition to being a linking point for scientific and technological cooperation between institutes of the Guangdong Provincial Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the centre will provide business consultancy and other support services for the selected incubated enterprises, including business plan consultancy and training. A special \$1.5 million fund of the Belt and Road Initiative is planned "to ensure commercialization of R&D results of the Industrial Technology Centre". ⁶⁴This fund will be used to support the commercialization of selected research projects and incubated enterprises.

Another innovation center - commercialization of scientific and technological achievements - was planned to be opened in Velikiy Kamen by the end of 2020. It was in this vein that this issue was discussed in September 2020 at a meeting of the Belarusian part of the commission for scientific and technical cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese intergovernmental cooperation committee, where the implementation of the program of scientific and technical cooperation between Belarus and China for 2019-2020 was considered. This center should become a comprehensive platform for nurturing startups.

63. The Sino-Belarusian innovation center of industrial technologies appeared in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajsko-belorusskij-innovatsionnyj-tsentr-promyshlennyh-tehnologij-pojavilsja-v-velikom-kamne-408221-2020/>

64. Innovation center in the "Great Stone" is planned to open by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/innovatsionnyj-tsentr-v-velikom-kamne-planirujut-otkryt-do-kontsa-goda-408059-2020/>

Finally, in November 2020, there was another event which can seriously contribute to the implementation of innovations in this special economic zone. We are talking about the agreement signed by the National Intellectual Property Center and the administration of the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone" on the establishment of the Technology and Innovation Support Center on the territory of the park. The new facility is expected to "facilitate researchers' search for information about existing scientific achievements, and intensify scientific work of young scientists and startup organizations. In ⁶⁵particular, in this center all the employees of the park residents will get free access to patent and non-patent databases of the World Intellectual Property Organization. Thus, there are great opportunities for innovation here.

It should be noted that Great Stone today also tries to make the most of the experience of other innovative structures operating in different parts of the world. This is evidenced by the fact that the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park joined the Innovation Alliance of Special Economic Free Trade Zones, established in autumn 2020 in Shenzhen, China. The initiative, whose participants also include the 47 counties and regions of the People's Republic of China's innovative alliance of free trade zones, intends to "actively respond to global and regional plans such as the UN 2030 sustainable development agenda, the Belt and Road initiative, the EU investment plan, the Africa 2063 agenda" ⁶⁶. The new alliance, in

65_ Technology and Innovation Support Center created in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-podderzhki-tehnologij-i-innovatsij-sozdali-v-velikom-kamne-415194-2020/>

66 "Great Stone" entered the innovative alliance of special economic zones of free trade [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-voshel-v-innovatsionny-aljans-osobyh-ekonomicheskikh-zon-svobodnoj-torgovli-405052-2020/>

addition to Great Stone, includes many other foreign participants, interaction with whom could yield interesting results in the future, as each of them is an innovative platform with its own unique creative operating experience. They include Lekki Free Trade Zone in Nigeria, Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia, Djibouti International Free Trade Zone in East Africa, Hambantota Industrial Park in Sri Lanka, Ethiopia Eastern Industrial Park, Thailand-China Industrial Park in Rayong, Suez Canal Economic Zone. Let's take a closer look at them.

For example, **the Lekki Free Trade Zone**, located in the Nigerian state of Lagos, is one of the most promising in this African country. Its project is a versatile complex "divided into separate sectors for oil and gas, industrial production, finance and commerce, tourism, recreation and private housing⁶⁷. The FTZ covers five kilometres of coastline. The port of Apapa, the largest in West Africa, is half a hundred kilometres away, and Murtala Mohammad International Airport is 70 kilometres away.

Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone is a foreign economic and trade cooperation area in Cambodia, which was established by Chinese companies together with the Cambodia International Investment and Development Group to promote a favorable market environment, where a large industrial center was built in 2010 in addition to the port. By early 2019, "153 enterprises from China, Europe, America, Southeast Asia and other countries and regions were registered here. Among them, 139 industrial enterprises, mainly engaged in industries such as textile and garment industry, manufacturing of suitcases, bags and other leather goods, machinery

67 Rendeavour expands Lekki Free Trade Zone development project [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.prnewswire.com/ru/press-releases/ru-584836431.html>

and mechanisms, electronics, woodworking" ⁶⁸. Over five years, they have managed to create over 22 thousand jobs here.

As for **Djibouti's international free trade zone** in East Africa, it was inaugurated in July 2018 with the active participation of the Chinese company China State Construction. Once all phases of construction are completed, it is expected to "become the largest free trade zone in Africa and <...> a new engine for Djibouti's economic development, helping Djibouti build a financial, shipping and trade hub in Northeast Africa" ⁶⁹. The creators of this FTZ see it as a test bed for the so-called "Silk Road Station" in order to replicate China's successful experience in developing global enterprises here.

To create a maritime transit hub for the entire South Asian region - this is the goal of the Sino-Lankan project to **renovate the port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka**, which is located very close to the main international shipping routes. "Previously, ships hardly ever entered this small fishing town. But all that has changed with the launching of a joint Sino-Lankan project to revive the seaport"⁷⁰. Thousands of new jobs have already been created through the implementation of China's Port-Industrial Park-City model, which essentially means that once the port is developed, an industrial park will be set up to help develop the city. This, in turn, will make the

68 Yifeng, H. A new industrial district is being built in Sihanoukville province / H. Yifeng, S. Mengkhon // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/beltandroad/khm/ruindex.shtml>

69 Heads of State of five countries attended the opening ceremony of the International Free Trade Zone in Djibouti [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: https://ru.cscec.com/xwxw_ru/gsxw_ru/201810/2891561.html

70 The port of Hambantota in Sri Lanka implements Sino-Lankan cooperation project [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://newsru.cgtm.com/news/3d3d414e6646444d77597a6333566d54/p.html>

port of Hambantota one of the key elements of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road.

The Eastern Industrial Park of Ethiopia is another "Chinese overseas trade and economic cooperation zone of national level, it already hosts more than 80 enterprises, most of them Chinese"⁷¹ engaged in the pharmaceutical, textile, metallurgical and a number of other industries. Note that this is not the only project implemented by the Chinese side in this African country. "Drawing on the experience of China's economic growth, 15 industrial parks using Chinese technology will be built in Ethiopia in the coming years."⁷² The Chinese are the only project being implemented in this African country, and this is not the only one that is being implemented by the Chinese.

The Thailand-China Industrial Park in Rayong province was built back in 2005. The cluster was the only one in Thailand certified by the Chinese government as an overseas trade and economic cooperation area. By 2017, more than 90 enterprises were already operating here, which "brought more than \$2.5 billion worth of investment to Thailand, solved the employment problem for more than 20,000 locals, and became an industrial hub and export base for priority sectors of traditional Chinese industries in Thailand"⁷³. An interesting detail: based on the experience of the industrial park in Thailand's Rayong province, the Chinese Huali Corporation opened

71 Ethiopia-China cooperation is a classic example of China's cooperation with Africa - Ethiopian President [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/2018-08/14/c_137387915.htm

72 Tighter the belt of cooperation, shorter the way out of the "trap of backwardness" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://finance.rambler.ru/markets/43964485-zhenmin-zhibao-kitay-obedinennye-obschey-tselyu-chast-2/>

73 Huali Corporation: let's create an "industrial Chinese quarter" on the "One Belt, One Road" [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: http://russian.china.org.cn/exclusive/txt/2017-04/13/content_40612178.htm

the Beimei Huafushan Industrial Cluster already in Mexico in October 2015 to help other Chinese companies to enter and develop the US market.

The Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt was established in 2015, when a new 72-kilometer long canal bed was put into operation to attract foreign investment for an international industrial and logistics hub project. It is expected that "with the development of the Suez Canal, the industries and service enterprises housed there will form up to a third of the country's total economy"⁷⁴. In spring 2019, 77 residents were already operating in the Sino-Egyptian part of this seven square kilometre zone. In May 2018, an agreement was signed to establish a Russian industrial zone in the region. In February 2020, the Belarusian side announced its desire to participate in the creation of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone.

Undoubtedly, the innovative experience of developing all these special free trade special economic zones will be very useful for the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", which, in turn, has something to share with its partners in the new alliance.

⁷⁴ The President of Egypt issued a decree on the establishment of the Suez Canal Special Economic Zone [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/2181686>

To build on the existing interaction potential

In 2021, the People's Republic of China launched the 14th Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan through 2025, which will take new steps in reform policy and form a new architectonics of mutually beneficial international cooperation to "comprehensively enhance the country's opening up to the outside world, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, promote innovation and trade development, promote high-quality development of the One Belt One Road project joint construction"⁷⁵ Chinese side will focus on creating new advantages in international cooperation and competition, as it believes "international economic interaction and exchanges are still an objective requirement for global economic development. Openness to the outside world is the main state policy of the country"⁷⁶. As far as Belarus is concerned, the Chinese side expresses its confidence that both countries should continue to mutually use the advantages of their economies, which complement each other to a great extent, develop the existing potential for interaction, including within the framework of the One Belt, One Road project and the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, and expand cooperation "in such areas as the fight against epidemics, trade and economy, education, science and technology, culture, interregional relations"⁷⁷.

75 Communiqué of the Fifth Plenum of the 19th CPC Central Committee [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <http://ru.china-embassy.org/rus/ggl/t1832267.htm>

76 Qimin, C. China in 2021-2025 intends to implement a new development plan / C. Qimin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kitaj-v-2021-2025-godah-nameren-realizovat-novyj-plan-razvitiya-7479/>

77 Xiaoyun, S. Taking the Bull by the horns / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vzjat-byka-za-roga-sovety-posla-knr-kak-pravilno-vstretit-kitajskij-novyj-god-7657/>

It should be reminded that by today the Republic of Belarus has built quite strong and open relations with the People's Republic of China, which are characteristic of only three countries now - Russia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by such figures. "The PRC is Belarus' second foreign trade partner after Russia, with an annual turnover of \$5 billion. <...> About 500 Belarusian exporters have already established themselves in this competitive market. More than 100 agricultural enterprises have been accredited. 24 projects worth nearly \$4.5 billion have already been implemented in Belarus using China's resources"⁷⁸.

The flagship project in this context is undoubtedly the Sino-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park, which has already seen \$650 million in investment over its incomplete six years of existence, with 68 residents from 14 countries already registered with a reported \$1.2 billion in investment, of which about half have commenced operations. As a result, "a supercapacitor, truck cranes, laser equipment, drones, Euro 6 engines and heavy duty gearboxes, a pilot 5G communication zone and a multi-modal container terminal are just a few examples of the projects currently implemented in the park"⁷⁹. In 2021 they are planning to attract another 17 new residents here. In this regard, high hopes are pinned on a project to create a multimodal rail terminal with the participation of Germany, China and Switzerland, which will soon begin construction, as well as the arrival here of the American company Ivy Global, which is

78_Yaroshenko: Belarus has built strong and open relations with China [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-belarus-vystroila-prochnye-i-otkrytye-otnosheniya-s-kitaem-428410-2021>

79_Investments in Great Stone during the project implementation amounted to \$650 million - Yaroshenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-v-velikij-kamen-za-vremja-realizatsii-proekta-sostavili-650-mln-jaroshenko-428432-2021/>

considering the possibility of opening a "pharmaceutical plant to produce a wide range of drugs, including to combat COVID-19" ⁸⁰in the "Great Stone" . In the same year, "when the second phase of development of the park will begin, there are also plans to build a second residential complex with 173 apartments and a second substation" ⁸¹.

Continuing the construction theme, it should be noted that in 2021 the construction of a national football stadium and an international standard swimming pool in Belarus using Chinese grant aid will also come to the fore, with completion of these projects in 2023, as well as the beginning of the third stage of social housing construction on Belarusian soil in the first half of 2021 using Chinese grant aid again. We would remind you that during the first two phases of the project, 38 houses for 3,286 apartments were built in six regions and in Minsk, thus improving the living conditions of more than ten thousand people. During the third phase "it is planned to build 1166 social housing flats in 20 houses. The total built-up area will amount to about 66 thousand square meters. The apartments will be provided to citizens who are registered as being in need of better housing conditions and are entitled to receive social housing"⁸².

Finally, with regard to the coronavirus pandemic, the two countries joined forces from the outset to fight it, providing each

80_American company Ivy Global is considering opening a pharmaceutical plant in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amerikanskaja-kompanija-ivy-global-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-otkrytija-v-velikom-kamne-farmzavoda-426540-2021/>

81_Great Stone Industrial Park expects to attract about 17 residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-rasschityvaet-v-2021-godu-privlech-okolo-17-rezidentov-423412-2021/>

82_China is going to build 20 more social houses in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-sobraetsja-postroit-v-belarusi-esche-20-sotsialnyh-domov-426882-2021/>

other with assistance and support. As a result, "40 tons of humanitarian medical supplies were sent from Belarus to China. From China - two shipments of urgent medical aid worth about 32.6 million yuan, provided by the Chinese government, and 110 tons from twin regions and partner companies"⁸³. Taking into account the current situation with repeatedly observed outbreaks of epidemic, the parties intend to continue to work together actively to confront this global challenge, confirming with concrete actions the existing level of trustful comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation.

As far as the interaction between regions of the two countries is concerned, back in January 2021 the parties proposed "to declare a Year of Regions of Belarus and China and hold it for three years, from 2021 to 2023, in order to develop interregional cooperation"⁸⁴. A number of Belarusian and Chinese regions are already taking active steps to update these partnerships. For example, back in 2020, the Belarusian **Grodno Region** and the Chinese province of **Hainan** signed an agreement to establish twinning relations, which provides for a significant expansion of interaction between the regions in the economic, trade and cultural spheres. This is not the first partner for Grodno Region in the Celestial Empire.

Back in 2007, the twinning relations were established between Grodno Region and **Gansu** Province. In 2014, "the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation to strengthen economic and trade

83 Qiuyan, C. Covid is not a hindrance - trade between Belarus and China turned out to be stress-resistant / C. Qiuyan // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kovid-ne-pomeha-torgovlja-belarusi-i-knr-okazalas-stressoustojchivoj-7641/>

84 Jinping Telephone conversation with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/telefonnyy-razgovor-s-predsdatelem-kitayskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-si-czinpinom>

cooperation and developed the Program of cooperation of the Grodno Region and Gansu Province for 2014-2020, which systematically tried to take into account the most important aspects of bilateral partnership and twinning relations"⁸⁵.

The Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, which has established multifaceted cooperation with 10 Chinese universities, has become one of the active participants of this interregional cooperation. Today Chinese students study in Grodno "at all levels - from the preparatory department to postgraduate studies. Several joint scientific projects in biochemistry are also being developed. Previously, a project in the field of mechanical engineering was implemented, now we also count on a project in the field of logistics"⁸⁶. In August 2018, in the building of Yanka Kupala GrSU opened an internship center for employees of Gansu province. Already in 2019, four investment projects based on Chinese investments were implemented in Grodno. In particular, the former hotel "Grodno" was reconstructed. A Chinese resident registered in the free economic zone Grodnoinvest, who was planning to implement a logistics project there. In addition, "a traditional Chinese medicine center and a trade and exhibition center was also opened in Grodno, where goods of the region's partners from China are presented" ⁸⁷.

85 Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskii. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - – C. 105.

86 Yanka Kupala State University develops joint research projects with Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grgu-im-janki-kupaly-razvivaet-s-kitajskimi-vuzami-sovmestnye-nauchnye-proekty-344391-2019/>

87 4 investment projects with Chinese capital are implemented in Grodno region [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-grodnenskoj-oblasti-realizujutsja-4-investproekta-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-344505-2019/>

In 2018, Grodno Region signed a Protocol of Intent to establish friendly relations with **Fujian** Province. In official language, "the document outlines important areas of interregional complementary cooperation - trade, investment, logistics, and culture⁸⁸. In addition, the fact that the Chinese province has a welldeveloped industrial sector - electronics, mechanical engineering, and the Belarusian region - agriculture - contributed to the rapprochement of the regions. And this is "only one of the avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation in the trade and economic area⁸⁹. Besides, Belarusian flax and woodworking products are in demand in the Chinese market, and the Chinese side declared its readiness to increase investment in Grodno Region in a wide range of areas: from nuclear power plants to high technologies. And now the parties are working on the implementation of the agreements reached.

In short, the People's Republic of China has become a strategic partner for the Belarusian western region, as evidenced by the figures. Grodno Region companies exported more than \$160 million worth of goods to the Chinese market in 10 months of 2020. These are mainly food and oil products. The appearance of new Chinese partners, namely Hainan Province, means that Grodno actualizes cooperation in other areas as well - in high technology, electrical engineering production, and implementation of more global and ambitious projects. These include "construction of a

88 On the establishment of regional ties of the Grodno Region with the Chinese province of Fujian [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html

89 Grodno region and the PRC province of Fujian will actively develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-knr-futszjan-budut-aktivnee-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-313085-2018/>

logistics center at Grodno airport and opening of direct flights between Grodno and Hainan province. This will allow, firstly, more actively develop tourism and humanitarian cooperation and, secondly, promote the mutual supply of goods⁹⁰. In the future, the logistics center can become a transport hub and a gateway to promote Chinese goods not only to Belarus, but also to the nearest European countries. In addition, it is safe to say that the establishment of twinning arrangements between the Hainan and Grodno Regions will help develop cooperation between the cities of Belarus and China. Thus, agreements between such cities as **Lida** and **Sanya**, **Ostrovets** and **Tsyunhai** are already at the draft stage. The administrative centers of **Grodno** and **Haikou** will not be spared from this process.

Another interesting example is the **Gomel Region**, which signed a twinning agreement with China's **Sichuan** Province in April 2021 to expand cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres. As a reminder, the Belarusian and Chinese regions established friendly relations six years ago, when in May 2015 they signed an agreement on cooperation, which envisaged "organization of cooperation on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in such areas as economy, agriculture, healthcare and culture, education, sports and tourism," and also agreed to establish direct cooperation between the two countries.⁹¹ They also agreed to establish direct contacts and twinning arrangements between the cities of the region and the province. And already three years later -

90_Grodno Region and the Chinese province of Hainan signed an agreement on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hajnan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-421086-2020/>

91_Zalessky, B. Potential of multi-vectorism. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. - - C. 63.

in August 2018 - the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations was adopted by the administrative centers of the regions - the cities of **Gomel** and **Chengdu**.

By that time, interregional cooperation of the Gomel region on the Chinese vector was developing in three more directions - with the **Inner Mongolia** (2011) and **Xinjiang Uygur** autonomous regions (2016), as well as **Jiangsu** province (2016). This allowed the region's enterprises to increase exports of goods to China almost three and a half times, from \$3.9 million to \$13.5 million by the end of 2018. The main export items then were dairy products, flax, wool, and lumber. And the list of accredited enterprises to supply dairy products to the Chinese market already included "five Gomel producers: Milkavita, Rogachev Dairy Canning Plant, Turov and Kalinkovich Dairy Plants, and Mozyr Dairy Products"⁹².

The next two years showed an even more impressive growth of export supplies from Gomel region to China, convincingly demonstrating how much demand for these products is in the Chinese market. In particular, "in 2020, with an increase of 32%, \$91 million worth of goods were sent to this country"⁹³. The basis of these supplies has already made up wood pulp, timber, meat and dairy products, confectionery products. And it should be assumed that the current level of interaction with Chinese regions is far from exhausting its potential, as "Gomel producers are ready to meet the needs of the Chinese side in flax, confectionery products, chocolate,

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

93 Enterprises of Gomel Region increased exports to China by a third [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-tret-uvlichili-eksport-produktsii-v-434841-2021/>

alcoholic beverages, carbon fibers, nonwoven carbon fiber, lumber and furniture" ⁹⁴. In addition, there is considerable interest in expanding supplies of Gomselmash corncob and forage harvesters to China.

It should be noted that there are great development reserves for the Homiel Region in interaction with virtually every Chinese partner or twin region, agreements reached earlier with which need to be updated today. For instance, in the same province of Sichuan, where more than 90 million people live, in its administrative center Chengdu, the Belarusian National Pavilion was opened back in November 2019, divided into seven zones, where Belarusian goods, including food and drinks, agricultural products and handicrafts began to be sold. At the same time, the Belarusian and Chinese sides said they were ready "to create a comprehensive bilateral platform for ties that will cover such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investment and services" on the basis of the pavilion⁹⁵. Let us hope that the agreement signed in April 2021 to establish twinning relations between the Homiel Region and Sichuan Province will become another real tool, which will help to solve the set task.

Interesting opportunities may open up in 2021 in cooperation between the Gomel Region and China's **Inner Mongolia** Autonomous Region. After all, in 2019, the regions already adopted a cooperation programme for 2020. And backed up this document at

94 Gomel Region and China's Sichuan Province signed agreements on twinning arrangements [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-sychuan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

95 Mozgov, E. In Chinese Chengdu the Belarusian national pavilion was opened / E. Mozgov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/v-kitayskom-chendu-otkrylsya-belorusskiy-natsionalnyy-pavilon.html>

the same time with the Agreement of Intent regarding the establishment of twinning relations between the administrative centers of the region and the autonomous district - the cities of **Gomel** and **Huh Hoto**, which provided for the development of cooperation in economy, trade, science, technology, environment, culture, education, sports, tourism, health. The fact that Inner Mongolia is an area rich in "natural resources: forests in the east, iron ore in the west, cattle breeding in the north and grain growing in the south"⁹⁶ opens up additional opportunities for expanding this cooperation. At the same time, the Hohhot side listed "mechanical engineering, in particular the production of agricultural machinery" as a priority area for cooperation, as well as food processing and construction.⁹⁷ The country's economic development, as well as food industry and construction were also mentioned as priority areas for cooperation. The seriousness of Gomel enterprises' intentions to enter the Inner Mongolia market with their products was evidenced by their participation in the Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Hohhot in June 2019, where "investment potential of Gomel region, <...> Gomel meat and milk company, JSC Spartak were presented with separate presentations"⁹⁸. It should be assumed that all these intentions of the parties to cooperate today are already entering the phase of implementation of specific joint projects.

96_Signed agreement of intent [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo

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

98 Grishkevich, A. Belarusian-Chinese regional forum was held in the city of Hohhot / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/belorusko-kitajskij-regionalnyj-forum-proshel-v-gorode-xux-xoto_i_99900.html

As a result, we emphasize that all these facts once again confirm the correctness of the chosen course in Belarus to establish and develop various twinning and partnership relations of Belarusian regions with their colleagues from other countries, the experience of implementation of which already shows that this is "an important and effective sector of international cooperation, characterized by openness, mutual trust, tolerance and kind-heartedness". The experience already available shows that this is "an important and effective sector of international cooperation, characterized by openness, mutual trust, tolerance and kind-heartedness, with⁹⁹ consistent and steady development of which the partners move to the promotion of mutual investment, expansion of industrial cooperation in creating high-performance industries.

99_ Batura, B. Twinning movement - small links of great friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenjja-bolshoj-druzhby-7603>

Regions as a factor in inclusive strategic partnerships

In January 2021, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China reached an agreement at the highest level on holding the Year of Regions of the two countries during the next three years - from 2021 to 2023. This decision once again emphasizes the enormous role that the intensification of interaction at the level of autonomous regions, oblasts, provinces, and cities of the two countries plays in the development of bilateral Belarus-China relations, and the potential of which is only beginning to be fully explored by the two countries. This is evidenced by the results of 2020, when trade turnover between Belarus and China exceeded \$4.5 billion and export of Belarusian goods increased by almost 10 percent. In this regard, "agriculture and wood processing products became the driver of Belarusian export to China, with deliveries doubling.¹⁰⁰ It is also important that more than a hundred Belarusian agricultural producers have already been accredited in China, and the overwhelming majority of them are located in the regions of Belarus.

The facts show that the two countries are taking a variety of measures to unlock the full potential of the bilateral cooperation between Belarus and China. Particular attention in this regard is paid to addressing the issues related to the access of Belarusian goods to the Chinese market. In particular, at the December 2020 meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, a practical platform has been created to work out all the issues of access to the Chinese market, as well as veterinary,

100 On the results of bilateral trade with China in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c603710a55ba783e.html>

quarantine supervision and logistics chains, in the form of the Commission on Customs and Quarantine Cooperation. A working group comprising experts from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, which was formed in late 2020, will also simplify trade procedures and create a basis for active trade. The working group is to work out an agreement on trade in services and investments, "the realization of which will change the essence and depth of mutual development, simplify mutual investments without restrictions and prohibitive lists. Simplification of trade in services at the present stage is the basis for active trade, because modern goods consist of services by 80%" ¹⁰¹. At the same December (2020) meeting of the intergovernmental cooperation committee, there was also a need for the prompt involvement in the economic turnover in Belarusian regions of the remaining Chinese credit resources in the amount of about USD 4 billion for specific projects to develop social and transport infrastructure.

As we can see, the tasks set at the interstate level are ambitious and specific. Obviously, it will hardly be possible to resolve them without the most committed involvement of the regions themselves. It is here that regional media should have a say in promoting the ideas of the Belarusian-Chinese comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation in the next three years. The more so because they are now facing no less ambitious tasks to update both their form and content.

¹⁰¹ Belarus and China set up a platform to work out the issues of access to the Chinese market [Electronic resource]. - - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kr-sozdali-ploschadku-dlja-otrabotki-voprosov-dostupa-na-kitajskij-rynok-420487-2020/>.

It should be reminded that at the February 2021 board meeting of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, regional print media, which constitute a significant segment of the Belarusian media sphere and cover almost the entire territory of the country, were named among the most important issues of developing the information field of our country to be elaborated and solved as a matter of priority. The priority of their activities should be the creation of a high-quality media product. At the same time, they "should meet the challenges of time, be able to quickly adapt to the needs of the reader".¹⁰² and contribute to the formation of the positive image of Belarus. In this respect, the most active participation of the Belarusian regional media in covering the implementation of the "three-year plan" of the regions of Belarus and China can and should become a very important step in the formation and development of its international segment. All the more so because the thematic focus of the publications devoted to the cooperation between the regions of the two countries can and should already be quite diverse.

In particular, such form of cooperation between the regions of the two countries as twinning and partnership relations should receive an especially powerful impetus for development in the next three years. Their current level is eloquently demonstrated by the following fact: every Belarusian region and Minsk have already become twinned or partnered with two or more Chinese regions, which ensures that almost all provinces in the Middle Kingdom are covered. The Brest region is represented by Hubei Province (since

102 Igor Petrishenko: Today a journalist should be a universal media worker, able to work on different platforms - in the newspaper, on the website, in social networks and messengers [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9758>

1994), Qinghai Province (2015) and Qinghai Province (2015).), Qinghai (2015), Anhui (2016), Shanxi (2019); Vitebsk region - Shandong (2004), Heilongjiang (2005), Guizhou (2015), Jiangxi (2018); Gomel - Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (2011), Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (2016), Sichuan (2011) and Jiangsu (2016); Grodno - Gansu (2007), Fujian (2018), Hainan (2019) Minsk has Chongqing (2002), Guangdong (2012) and Zhejiang (2015); Mogilev has Jiangsu (1997), Henan (2008), Hunan (2016), Shaanxi (2018) and Tianjin (2019); the Belarusian capital has Changchun (1992), Beijing (1997), Shenzhen (2013), Shenyang (2016) and Shanghai (2018). In addition, "more than 20 agreements on the establishment and development of cooperation at the city-city level between regional centers and cities of Belarus and administrative centers and cities of central subordination of China have been concluded" ¹⁰³.

It is characteristic that the process of expansion and actualization of twinning and partnership relations continues today. Thus, in terms of the development of twinning relations between **the Grodno Region and Hainan Province**, "agreements between such cities as Lida and Sanya, Ostrowiec and Qionghai are already at the draft stage"¹⁰⁴. In April 2021, the **Gomel region and Sichuan province** decided to significantly expand twinning relations in the economic, social and cultural spheres. At the end of March 2021 the **Brest Region and Hubei Province** discussed the whole range of

103 Belarus-China Interregional Cooperation and Twinning [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral/regional/info/>.

104 Zalessky, B.L. Grodno region: Chinese vector of interregional cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2021", Volume 4. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - P. 8.

interaction. As a result, "the parties agreed to agree on a roadmap for the development of cooperation in the near future" ¹⁰⁵.

As for **the Mogilev Region**, it signed a roadmap for cooperation with China's **Henan Province** in June 2021 to continue cooperation in trade and build it up in the investment sphere. In addition, according to the parties, "among the important issues that need to be worked on is the improvement of transport communication and logistics between our countries"¹⁰⁶. It should be recalled that the agreement on the establishment of friendly relations with Henan Province was signed by the Mogilev Region back in 2004. Ten years later, "in July 2014, Zhengzhou, the administrative center of this province, became Mogilev's twin"¹⁰⁷. Perhaps, this is the reason why the development of engagement with Chinese partners for this Belarusian region has been gaining momentum since that time, as evidenced by the figures. In particular, since 2015, the trade turnover between the Mogilev Region and the People's Republic of China has increased 13-fold, amounting to nearly USD 95 million in 2020.

It should be noted that the Mogilev Region, in addition to Henan Province, has four more partners among Chinese regions. These are Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi provinces and the city of Tianjin. In addition, friendly relations have been established between the partner cities: Mogilev - Nanjing, Bobruisk - Wuxi, Osipovichi -

105 Chinese Hubei and Brest Region Intensify Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskij-hubej-i-brestdskaja-oblast-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-434998-2021/>.

106 Roadmap for cooperation development signed by the Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dorozhnuju-kartu-po-razvitiju-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-444325-2021/>

107 Zalessky, B. Real multi-vectorism. Belarus in the system of foreign relations / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2015. -- C. 26.

Yangzhou, Krychiv - Lianyungang. In September 2019, during the first Regional Belarusian-Chinese Cooperation Week in Mogilev, it was noted that "relations with each of these partners are developing in several areas: the parties are interested in cooperation in the medical and educational fields, industrial and tourism sectors, as well as in terms of interregional exchange"¹⁰⁸. With the same province of Henan, back in July 2017, there were discussions about opportunities for investment projects in the Mogilev Free Economic Zone (FEZ) and the southeastern region, where there are serious preferences for business. In particular, in the south-east of Mogilev Region, there are vast vacant lands for "the establishment of a joint venture for the production of beef, taking into account the culinary requirements and needs of the Chinese side with the subsequent supply of products to the Celestial Empire"¹⁰⁹.

As for **Shaanxi** province, its Department of Commerce in April 2019 signed an agreement of intent to promote economic development and friendly cooperation with the Economy Committee of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee, in which the parties agreed to "provide active support and information assistance to enterprises interested in investing and establishing import-export relations"¹¹⁰. And in December 2020, the Mogilev Regional Development Agency hosted an online meeting of over 30

108 Mogilev region has increased beef exports to the PRC 9 times in the last year [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zapovednij-god-mogilevskaja-oblast-v-9-raz-uvelichila-eksport-govjadiny-v-360961-2019/>

109 Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan intend to more actively develop investment cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017 - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-henan-namereny-aktivnee-razvivat-investsotrudnichestvo-257928-2017/>

110 Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Shaanxi intend to develop economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-shensi-namereny-razvivat-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-342757-2019/>

representatives of the parties' enterprises, including FEZ "Mogilev", JSC "Red Foodstuffs", Bobruisk meat processing plant, JCS "Oasis Group", JSC "Babushkina krynka", Mogilev Ice Cream Factory, CJSC "Servolux", Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA). One of the concrete results of this meeting was the established partnership "between BGSAA and the North-West University of Agriculture and Forestry. There are already some developments in testing Chinese varieties of wheat and other cereals" ¹¹¹.

Mogilev residents got a concrete result of cooperation with the city of **Tianjin** back in June 2017, when a social building was commissioned in the regional center, the general contractor of which was Tianjin Electric Construction Company. "The 10-storey new building with 120 apartments is located in the under-construction micro-district Kazimirovka on Grunwaldska street. This is one of the three houses, which were built in Mogilev region, thanks to the implementation of the first stage of the project "Construction of social housing" with the technical and economic assistance of the People's Republic of China. Similar facilities appeared in Bobruisk and Osipovichy" ¹¹². In May 2019, the parties signed a Memorandum on twinning. And in November 2020, such companies from the Chinese city as Tianjin Constant International Trade Co., Bonyum International Trading Co., Tianjin Mengdong International Trade Co., Zhonggong Huamu (Tianjin) Food Co.

111 Emelianova, O. Issues of trade and economic cooperation and education were discussed during the online meeting between representatives of the Mogilev region and Shaanxi province / O. Emelianova [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/voprosy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-obrazovaniya-obsudili-vo-vremya-onlayn>

112 Emelyanova, O. A social house built with China's technical assistance was commissioned in Mogilev / O. Emelyanova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/postroennyj-s-tehpomoschju-kitaja-sotsialnyj-dom-sdali-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-mogileve-254650-2017/>

China's **Jiangsu** province, which signed an agreement in 2015 to establish twinning relations with the Mogilev region, became the first region of China, with which in July 2020 Mogilev residents held a contact and cooperation exchange via video conference, which participants from the Chinese side were more than 20 companies working in the meat and dairy industries, flax processing, alcoholic beverage production. The interest in the event is understandable, since entrepreneurs of Jiangsu Province in 2020 "allocated additionally more than \$2 million for the further development of their enterprises" only based on the previously implemented projects. Chinese investors are currently implementing and planning to implement projects on the cultivation and processing of flax, the production of mushrooms and various medical products.¹¹³ Finally, **Hunan** province in this context is interesting because in January 2018 it presented Mogilev with two new electric buses at once. And Zoomlion is implementing a project to produce special equipment here.

Speaking about **Minsk** Region in this context, it should be noted that in July 2021, the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and China SAMSE Engineering Corporation JSC signed a memorandum under which major healthcare facilities will be built in the Belarusian capital region with the help of the Chinese side. In particular, the adopted document envisages "construction of an infectious diseases hospital in Barysau and a surgical block in the regional hospital, export-import trade in agricultural products, establishment of a baby food factory and solution of the garbage

113 Business communities of the Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Jiangsu discuss the prospects of cooperation at the contact and cooperation exchange [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/delovye-krugi-mogilevskoy-oblasti-i-kitayskoy-provincii-czyansu-obsuzhdayut-perspektivy>

processing problems"¹¹⁴. Recall that in our country SAMSE - a subsidiary of China National Machinery Corporation Sinomach from Beijing - owns shares of NWA O Industrial Park Development Corporation, acted as the general contractor for the construction project of a sulphate bleached pulp plant on the basis of Svetlogorsk CCC and on such facilities in the Great Stone Industrial Park as engineering and transport infrastructure, the administrative management building, the plants of Zumlion Bel-Rus LLC and MAZ-Weichai LLC.

It should be noted that the Chinese vector of trade and economic cooperation is now playing an increasingly important role in the foreign economic activities of Minsk Region. In 2020, the People's Republic of China became the second largest trade partner of the Belarusian capital region, accounting for 14.3% of total foreign trade. And there is every reason to believe that this figure will only increase in the coming years, as Minsk Region "pays special attention to the Chinese market, which is promising for food supplies"¹¹⁵. In particular, all milk processing enterprises of the Myasomolprom holding have already received permits to export butter, cheese, milk whey, skimmed and sterilized milk powder to that country. As for the meat processing enterprises and poultry farms of Minsk Oblast, they are actively working on the accreditation for the delivery of their products to China. Velez-Meat, Slutsk meat packing plant and Stolbtsy meat packing plant have

114_Health care facilities will be built in Minsk Region with the participation of a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-pri-uchastii-kitajskoj-korporatsii-postrojat-objekty-zdravoohranenija-449374-2021/>

115_Foreign economic activity [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.minsk-region.gov.by/ekonomika-i-finansy/vneshneekonomicheskaya-deyatelnost5898/>

already received permits to export frozen beef, while Agrocomplex Dzerzhinsky and Smolevichi Broiler have received permits to ship poultry products. Permission to supply pasteurized milk, cream and milkshakes to the Celestial Empire was also granted to Nesvizh Children's Food Factory LLC.

The existing twinning arrangements have great potential for stepping up cooperation with Chinese partners. In particular, back in June 2002, an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas was signed between the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and the People's Government of **Chongqing**, which is now home to more than 30 million people. In 2016, this interaction was resumed at the initiative of the Belarusian capital region. At the same time, a memorandum was signed to develop twinning relations between the Kopyl district of Minsk Region and the Wanzhou district of Chongqing. A year later, it came to the adoption of the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations between the Belarusian region and the Chinese city.

In March 2019, Chongqing hosted the Days of Minsk Region, during which a business forum attended by over 225 representatives of business communities from both sides signed the Roadmap for Cooperation for 2019-2020, cooperation agreements between the Chongqing International Chamber of Commerce and the Minsk branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chongqing Education Committee and the Main Department of Education of the Minsk Region Executive Committee, as well as a number of "product supply agreements between business

representatives totaling USD 24 million" ¹¹⁶. At the same time a representative office of Veles-Mit LLC was opened in Chongqing. Just two months later, the capital's own representative office also appeared there to assist in the search for "potential partners for promotion of products of Minsk region enterprises to the Chongqing market. Chongqing" ¹¹⁷. And in August 2019, the two sides signed two investment cooperation agreements on the projects "Village with Chongqing flavor in Belarus" and "Village with Belarusian flavor in Chongqing," where "rural dwellings of Chongqing's Bayu culture and architectural features of eastern Sichuan" will serve as prototypes of the development, respectively ¹¹⁸. In China, one of the dominants of the future settlement will be an exact copy of the Nesvizh Castle.

However, the arrival of the pandemic slowed down the implementation of the plan. And in 2020, the interaction between the parties was expressed in the provision of humanitarian assistance to each other at the most critical moments. In particular, last February, when the whole COVID-19 affair was just beginning, a batch of medical masks was sent to Chongqing from Minsk Region in response to an appeal by the Chinese side. Now opportunities are opening up for a return to the projects of the "pre-coronavirus" era.

116 Chongqing hosts visit of Minsk region delegation [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/novosti/glavnye-novosti/v-g-chuntsin-prohodit-vizit-delegatsii-minskoy-oblasti/>

117 On the opening of the Minsk region's representative office in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a7ecb1467556d183.html>

118 A settlement with Chinese flavor will be built near Minsk [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <http://www.belmir.by/2019/08/01/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D1%81-%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81/>

And it is typical of the interaction between Minsk Region and another Chinese twin region, **Guangdong** Province, whose cooperation roadmap for 2020-2021 was signed in November 2019 and included "issues of supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China and establishment of a joint dairy processing enterprise"¹¹⁹. Let us hope that the effective implementation of Minsk Region's cooperation plans with this Chinese region is not far off.

The Belarusian capital also has interesting developments in its engagement with Chinese partners. In November 2019, **Minsk** and **Shanghai** signed an agreement on the establishment of twinning relations. Interestingly, before this document appeared, the Belarusian capital had already "signed 22 cooperation agreements with the cities of China, including 3 on twinning (Beijing, Changchun, Shenzhen)"¹²⁰. This may be the reason why Chinese companies have already invested about USD 30 million in Minsk. When signing the new twinning document, the parties "identified the priority areas for cooperation - increase of mutual trade, infrastructure construction, tourism"¹²¹. Minsk's are interested in Shanghai's experience in a number of areas. In particular, it deals with organization of the working process in educational establishments, medical infrastructure facilities, social service and rehabilitation centers for people with disabilities. Minsk's administrative and business circles are also interested in the

119 Minsk Region and China's Guangdong Province signed a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://belaruschina.by/ru/news/2019/November/12November-2087.html>

120 Minsk Days in Shanghai will be held on November 7-9 [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-minska-v-shanhae-projduť-7-9-nojabrja-368252-2019/>

121 Grishkevich, A. Minsk and Shanghai established twinning ties / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-shanhaj-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svjazi-368815-2019/>

Shanghai Free Trade Zone, which is used by the People's Republic of China for economic and social reforms.

One of the most effective forms of coordination of trade and economic cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai has already become an annual business forum of the business communities of the Belarusian and Chinese cities. For example, a similar forum organized in Minsk in September 2018 brought together "more than 130 domestic and Chinese companies interested in cooperating in mechanical engineering, construction, information technology, chemical industry, food, and jewelry production"¹²². At that time, the Belarusian capital was visited by Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothes and fabrics, medical equipment packaging, cosmetics, toys, and jewelry, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, and computer equipment interested in finding business partners in Minsk.

The Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, which was held in November 2019 and brought together over a hundred Chinese and more than thirty Belarusian enterprises and companies, was equally broad in scope. The program of the forum provided for discussion of topical issues of cooperation "in specialized three sections: 1) Foodstuffs, food industry; 2) Tourism and hospitality of Minsk and Shanghai; 3) Industry" ¹²³. The high practical value of this event is proven by the documents adopted following its results. In particular, the Minsk City Executive Committee signed a Memorandum of Intent to establish cooperation with the Lotusland Shanghai Corporation to introduce heat pump technology and equipment in

122 Zalessky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskii. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 149.

123 Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, November 8, 2019. [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: https://www.tppm.by/announcement/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=23213

the construction of industrial and civil facilities in the Belarusian capital. The point is that "the application of heat pump installations for the satellite towns of Minsk would allow abandoning the laying of many kilometers of heating networks"¹²⁴.

A memorandum on strategic partnership in the field of tourist exchanges was the result of negotiations between representatives of the Belarusian RUE "Tsentrkurot" and the Chinese group tourist company Shanghai Airlines Tours International (Group) Co. An agreement on cooperation in the field of international exhibitions was signed by CJSC "MinskExpo" and Shanghai industry and commerce exhibition Co. Besides, the Minsk free economic zone "Minsk" and Shanghai Allynay Technology Co., Ltd, as well as JSC "Confectionary Factory "Slodych" and Shanghai Teemo Foods have formalized their intentions to actively cooperate in the near future. Kommunarika is also going to increase supplies of its confectionery products to the Shanghai market, having signed a memorandum with the Chinese Misier Trading and Economic Company LLC.

The fact that the market of this Chinese city attracts serious attention of the Belarusian capital's manufacturers is also confirmed by the fact that nine Minsk enterprises took part in the second China International Exhibition of Imported Goods and Services, which was held in Shanghai in November 2019. Among them were Kommunarika SAO, Minsk Grape Wine Factory CJSC, Krinitisa OJSC, Slodych OJSC, Kristall OJSC, Minsk Bakery Products Plant OJSC, Minskkhlebprom KUP and Minsk Refrigeration Plant No.2 TUPUP.

124 Beluga, V. Forum of business cooperation "Minsk - Shanghai" was held in China / V. Beluga // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/forum-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-minsk-shanghai-prohodit-v-kitae/>

Also. The memorandum on the establishment of friendly relations between the Moscow district of the Belarusian capital and the Jiading district of Shanghai, which was signed in November 2019, also opens up interesting prospects for interregional cooperation. Just a month later - in December - a delegation of Jiading district already visited Minsk, where they discussed with the leadership of the Moscow district of the Belarusian capital ways to implement the memorandum in the context of "intensifying bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in the exchange of students of the two districts" ¹²⁵. One of the concrete results of this visit was an invitation from the Chinese side to the students of the Moscow district of Minsk to visit a summer camp in Shanghai. It appears that in the near future the friendly ties between the Sovetsky District of Minsk and another Shanghai district - Changning - will be intensified as well.

All these facts suggest that the topic of Belarus-China inter-regional cooperation should be firmly and permanently "fixed in the Belarusian regional press and reflect the experience already gained in this respect as much as possible" ¹²⁶. This will require creative strategies specific to international regional issues, which should be developed by representatives of this segment of Belarusian journalism in the near future.

125 About the visit of the delegation of Jiading district of Shanghai to Minsk [Electronic resource]. - - - 2019. - URL: http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html

126 Zaleskii, B.L. Information sovereignty and international journalism / B.L. Zaleskii // Rehiyanal'nyy Mass Media of the Republic of Belarus in the personal era: from lokal'naya problematyki to iinfarmatsiyyy bias of the country: materialy Resp. nauk. Practical conference, Minsk, May 5, 2020 / Belarusian State University; editor: V. M. Samusevich (editor-in-chief) [and others]. - Minsk: BDU, 2020. - - C. 114.

Towards a medical cluster

In June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the park's 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; and 4) creating preferential conditions for large investment projects with investments of over USD 50 million.

New areas of Great Stone's activities include, first of all, creation and development of productions in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, medical products and medical services. A very attractive innovation in this regard are 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 of foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a license for medical services. The terms will be significantly reduced and the procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as for clinical trials, will be simplified for manufacturers. In other words, all these changes "open up great opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine" ¹²⁷.

127 Koroteev, K. Support for start-ups, preferences for investors, simplification of land relations - about the innovations of the decree on the development of the Great Stone Park / 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/>

The focus 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 prevention, treatment and rehabilitation after diseases. <...> It not only has a good therapeutic effect on mild COVID-19, but also has clear advantages in treating critically ill patients, so that mortality in severe cases has dropped from 21% to 5%" ¹²⁸. Using the Great Stone platform to realize the existing potential of Belarus-China collaboration in the field of public health can give a serious positive result in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

It should be reminded that today the Velikiy Kamen industrial park has 73 residents, 12 of which operate in the medical area. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia and the USA" ¹²⁹. An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be the company "Novoera Biotech", which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include Jingtai Institute of Culture and Economy, Xishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic LLC (Beijing) and Xishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company LLC (Beijing). The new resident will take up a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "Medicines, supplements planned to be produced are based on environmentally friendly natural material. They will be in demand not only to help in the treatment of

128 Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: growth of business cooperation and interaction in drug production in coronavirus treatment / 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/>

129 Center for Expertise and Testing in Health Care and Great Stone Park have agreed to cooperate [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/>

coronavirus, but also in the treatment of colds, flu, asthma" ¹³⁰. In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be organized. It is assumed that at the first stage, the produced drugs, the production of which is planned to start in 2021, will be exported to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

In March 2021, plans were also announced to set up the Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine at Great Stone, which will provide medical services to the industrial park's residents, its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions, healthcare institutions of Belarus and neighboring countries to share experience in traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a memorandum on cooperation was signed by the Industrial Park Development Company and the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. And in July, Great Stone signed an agreement to establish a Sino-Belarusian zone for advanced cooperation and an international park for traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare there, which imply a new model for cooperation between Belarus and China in the above area.

All these facts testify to active steps to deploy in the industrial park "an extensive cluster, which will gather the developments in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> A medical center for diagnostic services is expected to appear in the future. This area is already in the works"¹³¹. Besides, the development of medical tourism is also

130 New Great Stone resident launches Chinese medicine project [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-medsiny-433283-2021/>

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

envisaged here, for which a kind of Medical Village will be built near Volmian Reservoir - clinics and different medical facilities in the area of rehabilitation.

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Global Data Security Initiative as a response to challenges in cyberspace

In September 2020, the People's Republic of China launched the Global Data Security Initiative at the International Symposium on Global Digital Governance to address data security issues and challenges and promote global digital governance. The initiative arose as "the U.S. continues to put pressure on China's largest technology companies and persuades countries around the world to block them"¹³². According to the U.S. side, Chinese technology companies pose threats to national security in the process of collecting user data and then sending it to Beijing. In this regard, back in May 2020, US lawmakers approved a bill under which "foreign companies whose shares are traded on US exchanges will have to comply with a number of requirements, which should strengthen control over such companies and make their reporting even more transparent"¹³³. And in August 2020, the U.S. President's Administration unveiled a program of measures that could be imposed on Chinese technology companies.

China's Global Data Security Initiative generally calls on all countries of the world to make efforts to ensure the openness and stability of the global information and communication technology supply chain. In all, it contains **eight** main points, which **include**:

(1) Countering the use of information technology to damage other countries' critical infrastructure or steal sensitive data;

132_China blames US for global economic pressure [Electronic resource]. - – 2020-. - URL: <https://www.finversia.ru/publication/kitai-obvinyayet-ssha-v-globalnom-ekonomicheskoy-pressinge-80960>

133 China proposed global data security [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4483436>

2) taking measures to prevent and suppress actions related to violation of confidentiality of personal information;

3) It is unacceptable to request data located in other countries directly from companies or individuals;

(4) Information technology should not be misused to conduct widespread surveillance of other countries or to illegally collect personal information about citizens of other countries;

5) The requirement to respect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of other countries as well as their data management rights;

(6) Requiring information technology product and service providers not to create any loopholes in their products to illegally obtain user data;

7) The requirement for the authorities of the countries that supported the initiative not to compel companies operating in those states to store data created and received abroad in their country;

8) Requirement for IT companies not to exploit the dependence of users of their products for illicit gains.

In other words, this global initiative aims to comprehensively develop the integration of the digital and real economies, accelerate the transformation of new and old development impulses, and create new industries and management practices. The relevance of this issue is underscored by its scale, as the digital economy already accounts for more than 15 per cent of global gross domestic product. To effectively respond to the existing risks and challenges in data security, according to the Chinese side, certain principles must be followed, among which "we must adhere to multilateralism. Joint

discussion, construction and use is the true way to solve the global digital governance deficit¹³⁴.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize that this Global Initiative is already supported in many countries of the world. Russia, for instance, has been paying great attention to it. The September 2020 joint statement of the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers, in particular, notes that the security of digital data storage affects national security, the public interest and the rights of individuals in each state. For this reason, the document calls on all countries "to achieve participatory global digital security rules that reflect the aspirations of all states and are based on respect for the interests of all parties." In addition,¹³⁵ the two sides intend to further collaborate on international information security through the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Security Forum and a number of other global and regional platforms.

The Global Initiative was also supported by Pakistan, which attaches importance to the application of digital technologies to stimulate socio-economic development. Islamabad believes that "dialogue and international cooperation are necessary to create an open, secure, peaceful and inclusive cyberspace, it is also crucial to strike a balance between technological progress, economic development and protection of national security¹³⁶. As for Belarus,

134 Cui, C. China welcomes the participation of Belarus in the Global Data Security Initiative / C. Cui // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/KNR-privetstvuet-uchastie-belarusi-v-globalnoj-initsiative-po-bezopasnosti-dannyh-7487/>

135 Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, Moscow, September 11, 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4335948

136 Pakistan welcomes China's Global Data Security Initiative [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/2020-09/15/c_139369622.htm

where the Digital Neighborhood Belt initiative was announced at the highest level in 2019, our country also "supports the global information security initiative proposed by China" ¹³⁷. In short, having received broad international support, the Global Data Security Initiative could become a prototype for shaping international digital security rules worldwide, the need for which is very great today, not to mention the day of tomorrow.

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137 On the meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej with the Ambassador of China [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/af6c3e35067d43fd.html

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